

## Less crime for less money— Solutions for working with juvenile offenders

### Briefly

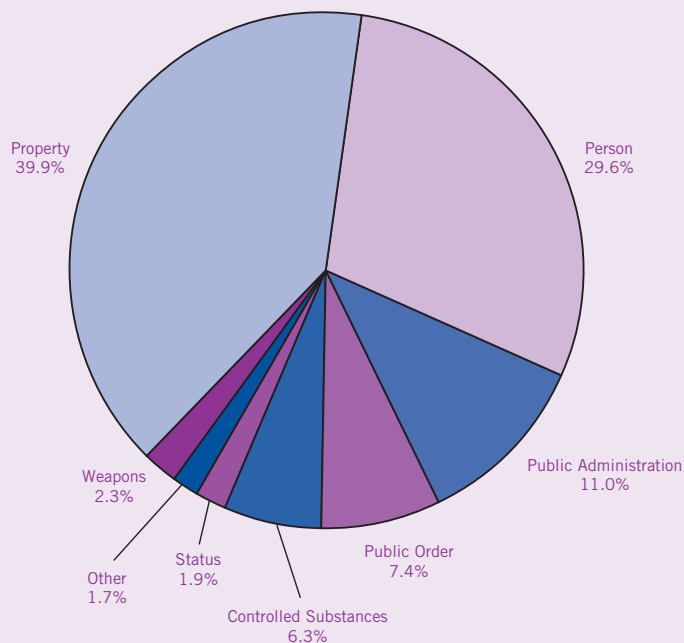
Juvenile delinquency case filings in Indiana are on the rise, and so are their costs. The number of juvenile cases went up from 16,039 in 1992 to 26,101 a decade later – an increase of 63 percent<sup>1</sup>.

Depending on their crimes, teenage offenders typically spend from nine to 17 months in one of Indiana's 10 juvenile facilities<sup>2</sup>. The average age of these offenders is 17<sup>3</sup>.

Meanwhile, state and county governments spend more than \$63,000 per year, per offender, or nearly \$175 per day to keep juvenile offenders in detention facilities<sup>4</sup>. That adds up to an annual cost of nearly \$80 million – a jump of 13.5 percent over the previous year<sup>5</sup>.

These dramatic increases in juvenile delinquency cases and their resulting financial costs reveal the urgent need to find cost-effective solutions that bring both justice and rehabilitation to juvenile offenders while reducing crime and saving money.

Type of Juvenile Offense Committed\*:  
Indiana, 2004



\* Offenses are categorized by most serious offense committed; for example, if a juvenile committed a crime against a person and possessed controlled substances, the offense would be categorized under "person" in this chart.

Source: Indiana Department of Correction, Finance and Performance Division. Juvenile Facilities Fiscal Year 2003-2004 Report.

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<sup>1</sup> Supreme Court of Indiana, Division of State Court Administration.

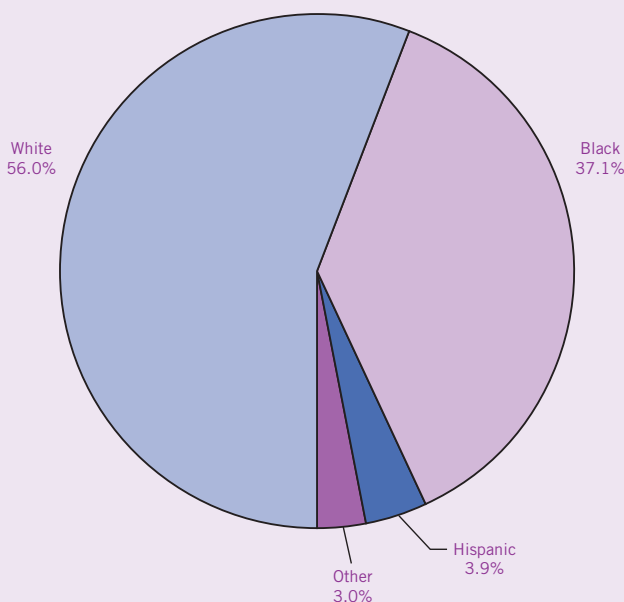
<sup>2</sup> Indiana Department of Correction. Fact Card, January 1, 2005: Juvenile. <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/pdf/facts/jan05.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Finance and Performance Division, Indiana Department of Correction. Juvenile Facilities, Fiscal Year 2003-2004. December 2004. [Http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/pdf/factsFY0304JuvenileFinancial.pdf](http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/pdf/factsFY0304JuvenileFinancial.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Race and Ethnicity of Offenders in Indiana Department of Correction Juvenile Facilities: Indiana, 2004



Source: Indiana Department of Correction, Finance and Performance Division. *Juvenile Facilities Fiscal Year 2003-2004 Report*.

### What's working: Allen County

Founded on the belief that it's in the community's best interest to address underlying family, peer and personal causes for youth delinquency, the Allen County Juvenile Re-Entry Program provides a comprehensive continuum of therapeutic and treatment services for serious juvenile offenders. The distinguishing feature of this program is the local court's assumption of responsibility for youth re-entering the community from DOC facilities. Typically, the DOC would keep jurisdiction and handle supervision, but the court (and judge) feel strongly these offenders will respond better to local involvement and supervision. The program's goals are to reduce recidivism and enhance public safety. Program impacts include:

- 22.7% of Allen County program participants were re-arrested and had formal charges filed against them, below the average of 33% sited in other studies<sup>6</sup>.
- 6.8% of program participants were re-committed to the Department of Correction; the Indiana average for re-commitment is 17%.
- 34.1% of participants successfully completed the program since its inception in 2003, and an additional 54.5% were currently participating in the program under court jurisdiction.
- A 54.5% reduction in Allen County juvenile DOC placements between 2002 and 2004 saved the county \$1,427,758 (net) in annual costs associated with DOC placement.

<sup>6</sup> All information about local programs was taken from: Indiana Youth Institute. 2005. *Juvenile Justice: What Works in Indiana. A Case Study Report*. Unpublished report. Average recidivism statistics taken from: Wisconsin Department of Corrections "Institutional Recidivism Among Youth Released from Wisconsin Correctional Institutions" and Department of Juvenile Justice, State of Georgia. "Research Brief: Baseline Recidivism Rates for 1998-2002." Indiana re-commitment statistics provided by the Indiana Department of Correction.

**Key to success:** A variety of re-entry services, such as substance abuse treatment and counseling, are provided throughout the juvenile’s involvement with the criminal justice system at sentencing, during incarceration, and during the transition and aftercare phases. Services are based on a formal risk assessment and are modified throughout the process according to evolving personal and family needs and the progress of the juvenile. Parents or guardians are required to participate, and the youth’s success is strongly tied to parental involvement and support. Probation officers exhibit a caring concern for the welfare of the youth, yet provide clear boundaries and expectations with consistently applied sanctions for misbehavior.

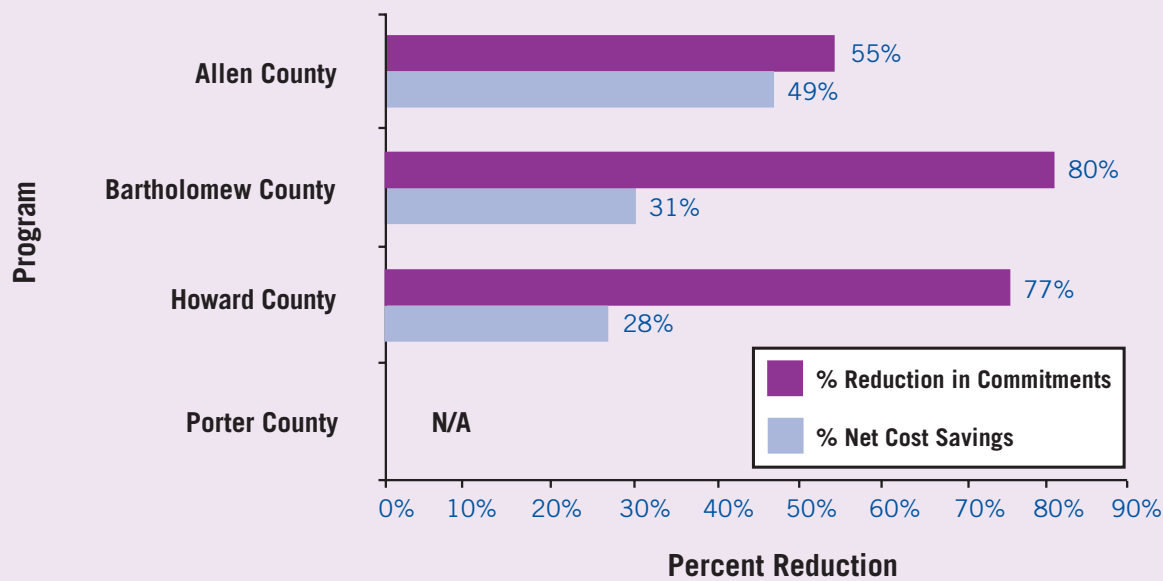
### **What’s working: Bartholomew County**

The Bartholomew County Day Treatment program attempts to prevent out-of-county placement through intensive supervision and rehabilitative services for medium-risk juveniles

adjudicated by the court. Youth must attend school and report to the day treatment center after school for late-afternoon and evening services. The youth sleep at home at night but are restricted in their activities and have curfew requirements. The youth move through the program in three phases that involve varying levels of supervision and program participation. They must “graduate” from several educational and therapeutic programs and comply with all terms of probation. Parent participation in a Parent Program (parenting skills and involvement process) is mandated as a condition for youth involvement. Among promising outcomes:

- An 80% reduction in Bartholomew County juvenile DOC placements since 1996, saving the county \$765,359 in annual costs associated with DOC placement.
- 58% of youth successfully completed program.
- Bartholomew County re-commit rates were 14% compared to the state average of 17%.

## Reduction in Juvenile Commitments and Expenditures on Juvenile Commitments



Cost savings and reduction in commitments before and after program implementation.

Source: *Indiana Youth Institute. 2005 Juvenile Justice: What Works in Indiana. A Case Study Report. Unpublished report: calculations by IYI using local program data and Indiana Department of Correction FY 04 per diem average cost of juvenile commitment.*

- Of those who successfully completed the program in 2004, 75% were still enrolled in school at the time of the case study.

**Key to success:** Program caseworkers have low caseloads to effectively monitor and guide the youth in daily activities and ensure program completion. Caseworkers display an appropriate mix of empathy and caring with a firm and consistent application of consequences for misbehavior.

### *What's working: Howard County*

The program's name, SHOCAP, defines its target: Serious Habitual Offenders Comprehensive Action Program. Its goals are to reduce the number of youth sent to state detention facilities and to control and rehabilitate participants who remain in the community. Supervision is intense—up to two contacts a day—and activities such as group therapy sessions are mandatory. Indicators of success include:

- In the decade from 1994-2004, the number of Howard County juveniles committed to correctional facilities has decreased from 43 in 1994 to 10 in 2004. This translates into a net annual savings of \$981,458 for the county.
- School attendance for SHOCAP youth has risen from 17% to 43%.
- The re-arrest record for SHOCAP participants is 59%, which compares favorably with national statistics, which range as high as 80% for untreated teens labeled “serious offenders.”<sup>7</sup>

**Key to success:** A shared database contains comprehensive case information about each SHOCAP youth. Agencies with access to the database range from the police department to the schools and from the courts to the prosecutor's

office. Because all partners contribute information as the youth moves through the program, the database monitors behavior, tracks progress and gives early warning when intervention is required. Probation officers are able to relate to the challenges of the youth and provide care and guidance as well as appropriate sanctions for misbehavior.

### *What's working: Porter County*

The Portage School-Based Intensive Supervision Program (Project PASS), part of a multi-faceted community effort, has three goals: increase school attendance, improve academic performance and decrease behavior problems. During the program's first year (2003-2004), 12 of the 15 participants (80%) did not re-offend. Among positive results, the youth averaged:

- 83% improvement in grade point average
- 87% decrease in school absenteeism
- 23% decrease in discipline reports
- 34% decrease in a school suspension.

**Key to success:** A probation officer is based at the schools where she monitors a maximum caseload of 22 medium-risk offenders. During school interaction and home visits, she encourages and supports students but is consistent in the consequences of misbehavior. The partnership that exists between the school district and the juvenile justice system is underscored by the acronym PASS: Probation and Schools=Success.

### *Common components*

The juvenile justice programs in Allen, Bartholomew, Howard and Porter Counties exhibit at least eight common traits that can be replicated by other counties:

<sup>7</sup> Langdon, P.A. and Levin, D.J. 2002. “Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994.” Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics; Weibush, R.G., McNulty, B., and Le, T. 2000. “Implementation of the Intensive Community-Based Aftercare Program Bulletin.” Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

# What Works in Juvenile Justice Programs

## *Common themes from four Indiana case studies*

**Balanced approach:** Striking an appropriate balance between strict compliance with the criminal sentence and opportunities for rehabilitation.

**Community collaborations:** Developing partnerships among courts, the probation department, the prosecutor's office, law enforcement, schools and social service agencies to work with juvenile offenders using the "balanced approach."

**Judicial leadership:** Enlisting a "point person" to form and maintain the inter-agency collaboration and the creation of alternative community-based programs for juvenile offenders.

**Caring and empathetic staff:** Youth and parents involved were clear and consistent in identifying caring and empathy from probation officers or caseworkers assigned to them as the primary benefit from the programs. The strong emotional bond formed was effective in changing the attitudes and behavior of the youth and established the motivational context for acceptance of the program and treatment interventions.

**Awareness of contributing factors:** For example, while offenders are held responsible for their actions, rehabilitation plans benefit from a recognition that the absence of fathers in the lives of juvenile offenders can lead to difficulties with authority figures, an inability to control anger and a lack of understanding about the consequences of certain behavior.

**Parental participation:** Involving parents in the program and, at the same time, increasing parenting skills and knowledge.

**Risk assessment tool:** Utilizing a credible, standardized tool to understand offenders' situations, target rehabilitative services, and make placement decisions based on their potential threat to public safety.

**Computerized database:** Creating and maintaining a shared database of juvenile offender case history information.

Source: *Indiana Youth Institute. 2005. Juvenile Justice: What Works in Indiana. A Case Study Report. Unpublished report.*



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## ***Indiana Youth Institute Resources***

- IYI's web site, [www.iyi.org](http://www.iyi.org), a growing source of reliable information to youth workers, policymakers and the media. The site contains new reports and studies on children, Indiana county data that can be downloaded and manipulated into reports and graphs, and information on IYI's services.
- Virginia Beall Ball Library, an outstanding collection of materials on healthy youth development, youth service delivery, nonprofit management and fundraising. All materials can be borrowed easily by youth workers throughout the state, either online, on-site, or through our toll-free main number.
- Custom data research, provided by qualified IYI staff at no charge to youth workers, policymakers, funders, program planners and the media.
- On-the-road trainings, at substantial discounts, taught by outstanding instructors on topics most requested by youth workers, including fundraising, working with children, and parent involvement.
- Professional Development Grants, mini-grants of up to \$750 for qualified youth workers to attend their choice of courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences.
- Youth Service Help Line, 877-IYI-TIPS, a free telephone assistance service that provides quick answers from professional mentors about fund development, legal questions, and working with children and parents.
- IYI consulting services provide low cost professional consultation on fundraising, evaluation, nonprofit management, technology, board development, strategic planning, marketing, volunteer recruitment and more.
- IYI Evaluation Associates, for organizations requiring comprehensive, long-term professional evaluation, billed at low contract rates.

**For more services, visit [www.iyi.org](http://www.iyi.org)  
or call 800-343-7060**



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