

**CLARK COUNTY
FAMILY AND YOUTH SERVICES
AND JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES
INCARCERATED YOUTH REPORT**

March 2003

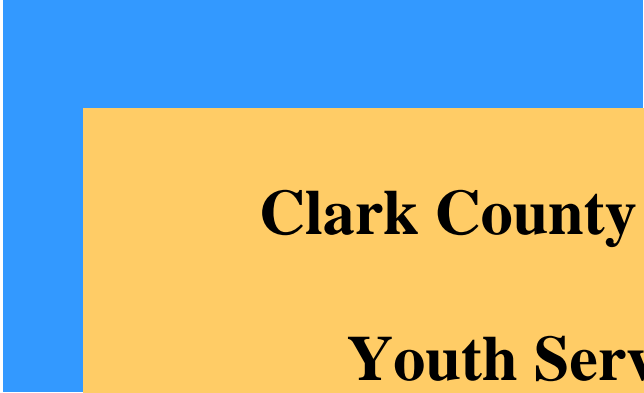



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**Family and Youth Services
and
Juvenile Justice Services**

SP-03-05




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Youth Services and
Juvenile Justice Services
Incarcerated Youth Report**

March 2003

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REPORT

Clark County Family and Youth Services and Juvenile Justice Services Incarcerated Youth

Introduction

This study was conducted in collaboration with the Clark County Family and Youth Services and Juvenile Justice (CCFYJJS) to understand youth perceptions of their detention experience and to aid in the development of in-facility and community re-entry programming. The data for this study was obtained from surveys of incarcerated youth in the Spring Mountain and Bonanza youth detention facilities administered in December 2002. This administration follows an initial survey that was conducted in the Spring of 2001. In both surveys youth responded to questions designed to assess perceptions of the overall facilities, staff, and future programming. Many of the items included in the initial survey were developed as a result of youth focus group discussions. This survey remains very similar to the initial survey, with the addition of items focusing on gambling, involvement in sexual activities, and items designed to assess impulsivity levels. As with the initial survey, youth were informed that their participation in the survey was voluntary and that they could skip any item they wanted. To insure accurate and honest responses, the surveys were anonymous.

The sample consisted of 269 male and female detainees. Chart 1 shows the demographic composition of the survey participants. Eighty-five percent of the subjects were fifteen years of age or older, and 86% were male. The ethnicity of the subjects was distributed as follows: 31% Hispanic-American, 29%, African-American, 25% European-American, 6% Multi-ethnic, 2% Native American, and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander-American.

Almost half of the respondents said they were current gang members.

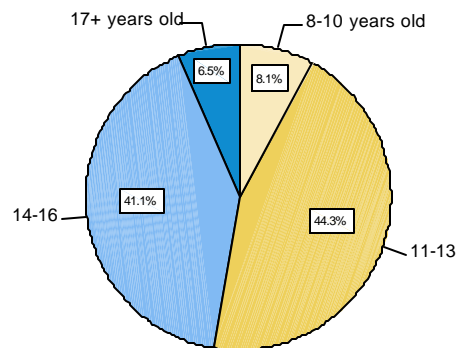
Sixty-two percent had been gang members for more than two years.

Demographics

Seventeen percent reported living with both biological parents before their incarceration, 32% with only their mothers, 7% with only their fathers, 19% in step-families, and 25% with grandparents, foster parents, or in other living arrangements. Twenty-one percent reported that their mother/stepmother/ guardian was unemployed, 37% said she works the day shift, and 22% said she works the evening or night shift. Seventeen percent said their father/stepfather/guardian was unemployed, 33% said he works the day shift, and 17% said he works the evening or night shift (see Table 1, page 3).

Seventy-seven percent said they had lived in Las Vegas for 4 or more years before being detained. Ninety-three percent of the respondents said they had been incarcerated in the detention facilities for six months or less, with 77% reporting that they had been arrested 3 or more times. The top five crimes that youth reported being detained for were robbery or burglary (23%), violation of parole or probation (23%), stealing cars (17%), drugs (15%), and assault and battery (12%) (see Table 2, page 4).

Chart 1. Age at first arrest



Approximately 48% of the youth said that they are currently members of a gang, with 62% reporting being members for more than 2 years (see Table 2, page 4).

Chart 2. Gang membership of respondents

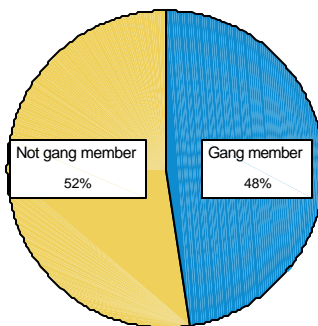




Table 1. Demographic characteristics of survey participants

Demographic Characteristics	Survey Participants	
	Count	Percentage
Age		
<i>12 years of age or younger</i>	4	1.6%
<i>13 years of age</i>	7	2.8%
<i>14 years of age</i>	27	10.6%
<i>15 years of age</i>	52	20.5%
<i>16 years of age or older</i>	164	64.6%
Gender		
<i>Female</i>	36	14.2%
<i>Male</i>	217	85.8%
Ethnicity		
<i>Hispanic-American</i>	78	31.3%
<i>African-American</i>	71	28.5%
<i>European-American</i>	62	24.9%
<i>Multi-ethnic</i>	15	6.0%
<i>Native American</i>	4	1.6%
<i>Asian/Pacific Islander-American</i>	3	1.2%
<i>Other</i>	16	6.4%
Family Makeup		
<i>Both biological parents</i>	45	17.4%
<i>Only mother</i>	82	31.7%
<i>Only father</i>	19	7.3%
<i>Mother and stepfather</i>	41	15.8%
<i>Father and stepmother</i>	8	3.1%
<i>Foster parents/Guardians</i>	10	3.9%
<i>Grandparents</i>	21	8.1%
<i>None of the above</i>	33	12.7%
Mother/Stepmother/Guardian Work Schedule		
<i>Unemployed</i>	51	20.5%
<i>Day Shift (8am – 5pm)</i>	92	36.9%
<i>Evening Shift (3pm – 11pm)</i>	29	11.6%
<i>Night Shift (midnight – 6am)</i>	27	10.8%
<i>Don't know</i>	50	20.1%
Father/Stepfather/Guardian Work Schedule		
<i>Unemployed</i>	24	11.6%
<i>Day Shift (8am – 5pm)</i>	68	32.9%
<i>Evening Shift (3pm – 11pm)</i>	16	7.7%
<i>Night Shift (midnight – 6am)</i>	20	9.7%
<i>Don't know</i>	79	38.2%

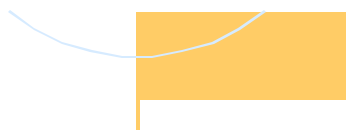
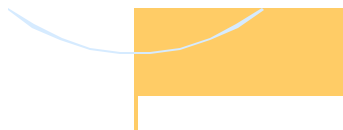




Table 2. Criminal background and time in Las Vegas

Characteristic	Survey Participants	
	Count	Percentage
Time Detained		
Less than one month	94	38.1%
1 – 2 months	87	35.2%
3 – 6 months	49	19.8%
7 – 12 months	15	6.1%
1 – 2 years	2	.8%
Number of Arrests		
Once	24	10.3%
Twice	31	13.2%
3 – 5 times	80	34.2%
6 or more times	99	42.3%
Crime		
Robbery/burglary	58	23.3%
Violation of probation/parole	56	22.5%
Stealing cars	41	16.5%
Drugs	37	14.9%
Assault/battery	29	11.6%
Other jurisdiction	14	5.6%
Sexual offense	8	3.2%
Fighting	2	.8%
Truancy	2	.8%
Vandalism	2	.8%
Gang Involvement		
Not currently an active member of a gang	128	52.5%
Currently an active member of a gang	116	47.5%
Length of membership:		
Less than 1 year	11	9.6%
1 – 2 years	29	25.2%
More than 2 years	75	65.2%
Length of time in Las Vegas before detention		
Less than 6 months	15	6.0%
7 months to 1 year	19	7.6%
1 – 3 years	23	9.2%
4 – 10 years	72	28.9%
More than 10 years	120	48.2%





Physical Abuse

Participants were asked if they had ever been physically abused (Table 3). Of the 45% who said they had been physically abused, 55% said they told their parents and 69% told their friends. Seventy-two percent said they did not tell authorities and 89% said that no charges were pressed. Sixty-four percent said an adult family member physically abused them.

Adult family members were most often reported as the physical abuser.

Almost two-thirds (65%) of the females surveyed said they had been physically abused, with 77% of those female respondents saying that no charges were pressed. An adult family member was reported to be responsible for the abuse by 77% of the female respondents.

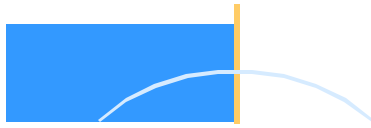
The majority of incidences of physical abuse went unreported.

Forty-two percent of the males surveyed reported being physically abused, with 62% saying an adult family member abused them. Ninety-two percent of males who said they were abused said that no abuse charges were pressed.

Table 3. Physical Abuse

	All Participants	Females	Males
Experienced Physical Abuse			
Yes	45.3%	64.7%	42.3%
No	54.7%	35.3%	57.7%
Told Parents			
Yes	55.1%	54.5%	54.9%
No	44.9%	45.5%	45.1%
Told Friends			
Yes	69.4%	59.1%	73.5%
No	30.6%	40.9%	26.5%
Told Authorities			
Yes	27.8%	50.0%	22.9%
No	72.2%	50.0%	77.1%
Pressed Charges			
Yes	11.2%	22.7%	8.5%
No	88.8%	77.3%	91.5%
Abused by Adult Family Member			
Yes	63.6%	77.3%	62.2%
No	36.4%	22.7%	37.8%
Abused by Adult Non-Family Member			
Yes	46.2%	40.9%	47.6%
No	53.8%	59.1%	52.4%
Abused by Another Youth			
Yes	35.8%	22.7%	39.5%
No	64.2%	77.3%	60.5%





Sexual Abuse

Participants also were asked if they had ever been sexually abused (Table 4). Of the 14% who said they had been sexually abused, only 39% said they told their parents and 42% told their friends. Eighty percent said they did not tell authorities and 94% said that no charges were pressed. Fifty-four percent said an adult non-family member sexually abused them.

Sixty-nine percent of female respondents reported being sexually abused.

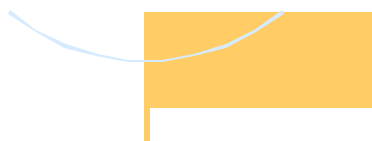
Approximately two-thirds (67%) of the females surveyed said they had been sexually abused, with 75% of those female respondents saying that they did not report it to authorities and 92% saying that no charges were pressed. An adult non-family member was said to be the abuser by 65% of the female respondents.

Only 8% of female respondents who reported being sexually abused reported pressing charges.

Only 9% of the male respondents who said they had been sexually abused said they told authorities, and none reported filing charges.

Table 4. Sexual Abuse

	All Participants	Females	Males
Experienced Sexual Abuse			
Yes	14.2%	66.7%	5.3%
No	85.8%	33.3%	94.7%
Told Parents			
Yes	38.9%	33.3%	54.5%
No	61.1%	66.7%	45.5%
Told Friends			
Yes	41.7%	41.7%	45.5%
No	58.3%	58.3%	54.5%
Told Authorities			
Yes	20.0%	25.0%	9.1%
No	80.0%	75.0%	90.9%
Pressed Charges			
Yes	5.6%	8.3%	
No	94.4%	91.7%	100%
Abused by Adult Family Member			
Yes	31.4%	41.7%	9.1%
No	68.6%	58.3%	90.9%
Abused by Adult Non-Family Member			
Yes	54.3%	65.2%	36.4%
No	45.7%	34.8%	63.6%
Abused by Another Youth			
Yes	40.0%	39.1%	36.4%
No	60.0%	60.9%	63.6%



Rating of facility

Participants were asked to rate the facility they were in during detention (Table 5). Approximately two-thirds (66%) said that the food was *bad* or *very bad*. Nearly half (49%) said that the general facilities, which included their rooms, common areas, etc., were *good* or *very good*. Seventy percent rated treatment by staff as *good* or *very good*, and 67% said treatment by other youth was *good* or *very good*. Entertainment and recreation was rated as *good* or *very good* by 76% of respondents, and 67% said that the clothing was *bad* or *very bad*. School was rated as *good* or *very good* by 74% of respondents.

Seventy percent of respondents rated treatment by staff as “good” or “very good”.

Table 5. Respondents’ rating of facility

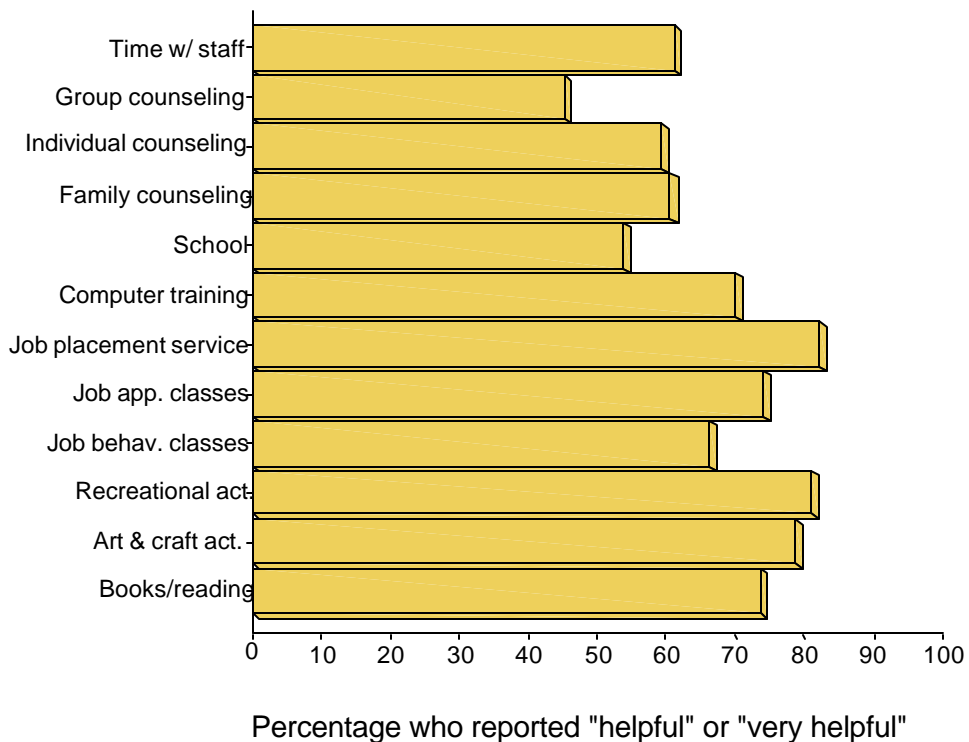
Category	Very Good	Good	Bad	Very Bad
Food	5.3%	28.6%	39.8%	26.3%
Facilities (room, etc.)	4.9%	44.5%	27.8%	22.8%
Treatment by staff	15.8%	54.0%	19.6%	10.6%
Treatment by other youth	5.7%	61.7%	22.6%	10.0%
Entertainment/Recreation	27.4%	48.3%	15.2%	9.1%
Clothes	7.7%	25.3%	32.6%	34.5%
School	18.2%	55.3%	16.3%	10.2%



Programs that would be helpful inside the facility

Participants were asked their opinion about activities that could be provided inside the facility that would help them succeed when they are released from detention (Table 6). All items were rated as being *very helpful* or *helpful* by most respondents, with the exception of family counseling. The five highest rated activities were job placement services (82%), recreational activities (81%), arts and crafts activities (79%), books and reading materials (74%), and classes on how to fill out a job application (73%).

Table 6. Respondents rating of how helpful particular programs are inside the facility



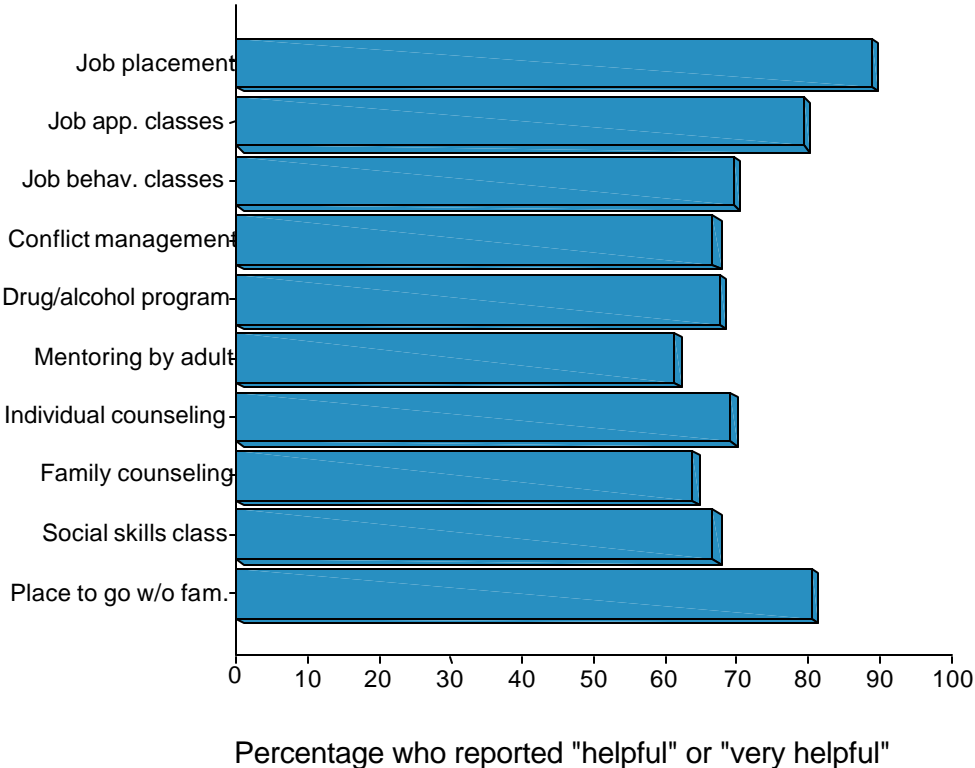


Programs that would be helpful outside the facility

Participants were asked their opinion about activities that could be provided outside the facility that would help them succeed when they are released from detention (Table 7). All items were rated as being *very helpful* or *helpful*, with the five highest rated activities being job placement services (87%), having a safe place from family (78%), classes on filling out job applications (79%), individual counseling (68%), and classes on how to act at work (68%).

Eighty-nine percent of respondents stated that job placement services would be "helpful" or very "helpful".

Table 7. Youths' opinions on outside facility programming that would be helpful





Youth involvement in activities before detention

Participants were asked about the amount of time they spent in activities before they were detained (Table 8). Most reported being involved five hours or less in organized team sports (77.5%), school activities (92.4%), activities outside of school (90.8%), art activities (86%), and working at a job (66.1%).

Table 8. Amount of time youths spent in activities before detention

Category	Not at all	1 – 5 hours	6 – 10 hours	More than 10 hours
Sports on organized teams	40.1%	37.4%	11.8%	10.7%
School activities	73.7%	18.7%	4.2%	3.4%
Activities outside of school	69.3%	21.5%	6.5%	2.7%
Band, dance, drama, music, other art activities	64.9%	21.2%	6.9%	6.9%
Working at a job	54.6%	11.5%	13.7%	20.2%

Youth perception of activities after detention

Participants were asked what they thought they might do after detention (Table 9, page 11). Eighty-eight percent said they thought it was *very likely* or *likely* that they would finish high school and 87% said they would *very likely* or *likely* get job training. Seventy-one percent said they would *very likely* or *likely* hang out with friends who don't get into trouble, and 56% said it was *unlikely* or *very unlikely* that they would use drugs or alcohol. Most (70%) said it was *very likely* or *likely* that they would avoid problems that lead to committing a crime, spend more time with positive family members and adults (83%), work harder at not getting into fights (73%) and getting long with their parents (92%) and other adults (86%).

Eighty-eight percent of respondents want to finish high school.

Seventy percent said they would “likely” or “very likely” avoid problems that lead to crime after getting out of detention.





Table 9. Youths’ perception of what they will do after detention

Category	Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Finish high school	58.1%	29.6%	8.8%	3.5%
Attend college	26.0%	33.7%	25.6%	14.7%
Get job training	48.1%	38.8%	9.6%	3.5%
Hang out with old friends	33.6%	31.7%	20.8%	13.9%
Hang out with friends from detention	6.9%	26.1%	31.4%	35.6%
Hang out with friends who don’t get into trouble	29.9%	41.4%	21.8%	6.9%
Use drugs and alcohol	20.7%	21.8%	27.2%	30.3%
Avoid problems that lead to committing a crime	42.8%	27.3%	18.2%	11.7%
Work harder to get along with parents	70.1%	22.2%	3.8%	3.8%
Work harder to get along with other adults	43.7%	42.5%	8.8%	5.0%
Work harder at not getting into fights	33.3%	39.8%	17.2%	9.6%
Spend more time with positive family members or adults	50.8%	32.4%	13.0%	3.8%

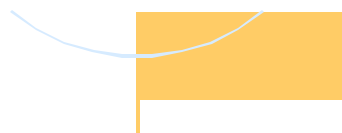
Youth perception of their behavior after detention

Participants also were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements about themselves (Table 10). Eighty-four percent said they *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that they felt good about their chances to succeed in life after detention, and that school could help them reach their goals (88%). Most (75%) said they *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that they would not commit any more crimes, and would get involved in more positive activities (75%). Seventy-six percent said they *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that they would get arrested again.

Eighty-four percent “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their chances of succeeding in life are good.

Table 10. Youths’ perception of their behavior after detention

Behaviors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Won’t commit any crimes	40.7%	33.8%	19.0%	6.5%
Get involved in more positive activities	40.8%	34.0%	19.1%	6.1%
Feel good about chances to succeed in life	52.7%	31.7%	11.5%	4.2%
Will get arrested again	6.1%	17.9%	35.9%	40.1%
School can help reach personal goals	62.1%	25.7%	6.9%	5.4%





Risk Behaviors

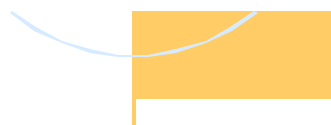
Table 11 shows the types of activities that survey participants said they were involved in during the year prior to being detained. Smoking marijuana (66.5%), drinking alcohol (63%), shoplifting (48%), and gambling (43%) were the four leading activities that most participants said they were involved in 3 or more times during the year prior to being detained. Almost 50% ran away from home at least once. Eighteen percent of youth attempted suicide at least once. Participants reported viewing pornography three or more times on the internet (15%), in magazines (26%), and in movies (33%).

Almost 20% of youth reported attempting suicide at least once.

Fifty percent reported running away from home.

Table 11. Risk Behaviors

Risk Behaviors	Never	Once or Twice	3 – 4 Times	5 or more times
Paint graffiti	58.6%	19.8%	3.0%	18.6%
Deliberately damage someone’s property	38.9%	28.2%	10.3%	22.5%
Shoplifting	23.2%	29.3%	11.0%	36.5%
Run away from home	51.7%	23.0%	8.8%	16.5%
Stealing	44.8%	24.9%	12.3%	18.0%
Use a weapon to steal	61.8%	16.8%	6.5%	14.9%
Fight between groups	34.6%	24.7%	13.7%	27.0%
Attempt suicide	80.6%	13.3%	3.0%	3.0%
Fight with another youth	62.1%	25.7%	6.9%	5.4%
View pornography on the internet	67.9%	17.2%	4.6%	10.3%
View pornography in magazines	46.2%	28.0%	8.7%	17.0%
View pornographic movies	43.1%	24.0%	9.9%	22.9%
Drink alcohol	20.5%	16.3%	15.2%	47.9%
Smoke marijuana	21.7%	11.8%	4.9%	61.6%
Use other illegal drugs	53.4%	8.4%	8.0%	30.2%
Assaulted by other youth	47.5%	40.2%	7.3%	5.0%
Threatened by a weapon	45.0%	34.2%	11.5%	9.2%
Victim of theft	32.9%	43.4%	11.6%	12.0%
Have gambled	37.1%	20.4%	15.8%	26.7%



Youth gambling

Participants were asked about their involvement with gambling (Table 12). Fifty-four percent said they had gambled for money, but that they had not stolen property (86%) or borrowed money (80%) to pay for gambling. Fifty-seven percent of youth who have gambled said that no one helped them and 33% said that older friends helped them gamble.

Fifty-four percent respondents said they have gambled for money.

Table 12. Youth Gambling

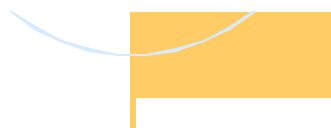
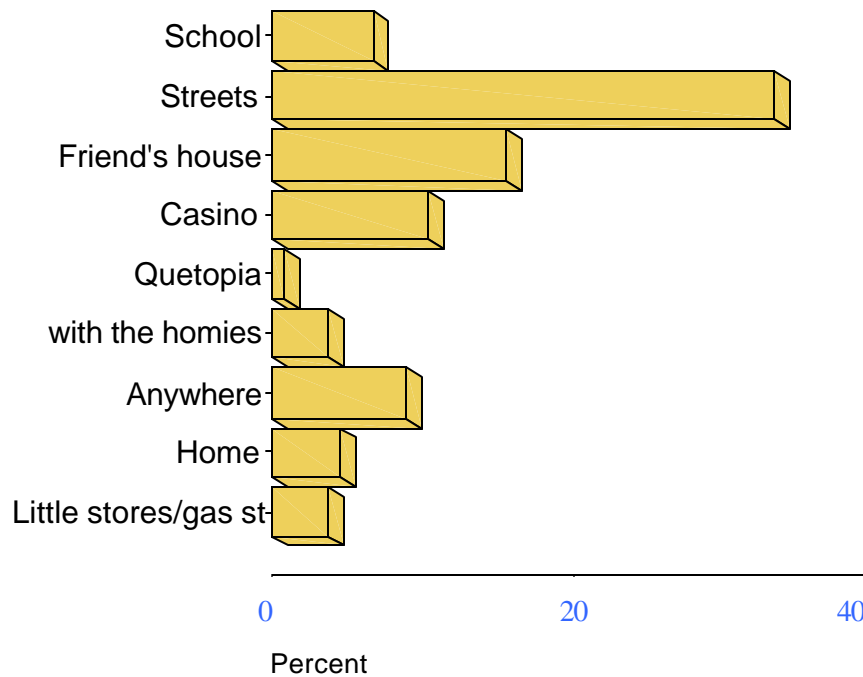
All Participants	
Gambled for money	
Yes	53.5%
No	46.5%
Have stolen property to pay for gambling	
Yes	13.7%
No	86.3%
Have borrowed money to pay for gambling	
Yes	19.7%
No	80.3%
Who helped youth gamble	
No one	56.5%
Older friends	33.3%
Others	8.0%
Family	2.2%
Where youth gamble	
Streets	38.1%
Friend's house	17.8%
Casino	12.7%
Anywhere	10.2%
School	7.6%
Home	5.1%
Little stores/gas stations	4.2%
With the homies	4.2%

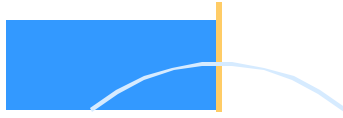


Where youth gamble

Participants were asked where they gambled (see Table 12, page 13 and Table 12a). Thirty-eight percent said that they gambled on the streets, 18% said they gambled at a friend's house, 13% said that they gambled at casinos, 10% said they gambled anywhere, and 8% indicated that they gambled at school.

Table 12a. Where youth gamble





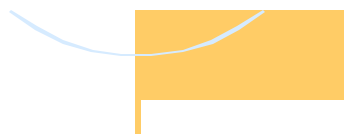
Youth in the sex industry

Participants were asked about their involvement with having sex or stripping (Table 13). Twenty-one percent said they had stripped for money or in exchange for things and 23% had been paid or given things to have sex or perform sexual acts. Fifty-two percent of female respondents said they had been given money or things to strip, and 52% said they had been paid or given things to have sex or perform sexual acts.

More than one-half of the females reported having been paid or given things in exchange for sex.

Table 13. Youth in the Sex Industry

	All Participants	Females	Males
Paid money to strip			
Yes	12.1%	38.7%	8.5%
No	87.9%	61.3%	91.5%
Given things in exchange for stripping			
Yes	8.7%	12.9%	7.6%
No	91.3%	87.1%	92.4%
Paid money to have sex or perform sexual acts			
Yes	12.7%	35.5%	9.2%
No	87.3%	64.5%	90.8%
Given things to have sex or perform sexual acts			
Yes	10.1%	16.1%	9.2%
No	89.9%	83.9%	90.8%
Age of People youth had sex with			
< 18 years old	31.0%	--	71.4%
18 – 25 years old	31.0%	42.9%	22.1%
25 years old or older	37.9%	57.1%	6.5%
Amount paid to have sex with someone			
< \$50	14.3%	18.2%	31.3%
\$50 - \$99	21.4%	9.1%	15.6%
\$100 - \$200	25.0%	36.4%	21.9%
\$201 - \$399	7.1%	9.1%	6.3%
\$400 or more	32.1%	27.3%	25.0%



Discussion and Conclusions

As in the initial survey, the youth who participated in this survey were primarily:

- ◆ *16 years old or older,*
- ◆ *detained for 6 months or less,*
- ◆ *arrested 6 or more times,*
- ◆ *detained for robbery and probation/parole violations, and*
- ◆ *had experienced some degree of physical or sexual abuse.*

These demographics indicate a need for intervention programming aimed at assisting this high-risk population successfully break the cycle of criminal behavior. In particular, findings regarding the abuse history of female detainee are indeed alarming. Moreover, many of the females who reported being abused have not had the opportunity to discuss the issue with professionals. Clearly, there is a need to begin to work systematically to assist young women in coping with a history of abuse.

The high rate of gang involvement in respondents also suggest that a intervention program be developed for current gang members to learn how to cycle out of gang involvement once they are released.

Based on youth perceptions of what programs they thought would help them succeed, there are several areas that present opportunities for programming. Job training and computer training, both as inside and outside of facility programs, were activities that were rated highly as being important in helping youth succeed outside of detention. This indicates that youth are eager to receive training that will help them prepare for and obtain a job once they are released. Another programming option that was highly rated for outside the facility was having a safe place for youth to go when needed. This finding suggests that youth need additional positive options outside of their family environment.

The highly positive ratings of several items by the majority of youth in this study reflect their desire to participate in constructive programs. Although offering programs to incarcerated or recently released youth presents a unique set of challenges, it is evident that there is tremendous need and opportunity. Not preparing these youth to succeed means running the risk of having them repeat past mistakes, because, as studies have shown, youth who are incarcerated have a greater likelihood to become incarcerated adults.

Communities have a responsibility to try and help youth not travel this path. A collaborative effort between the juvenile justice system and programming professionals could help curb this trend, and help this high risk population succeed at reaching their fullest potential.