



Redirection Saves \$36.4 Million and Avoids \$5.2 Million in Recidivism and Prison Costs

at a glance

Over the past four years, the Redirection Program has operated at a lower cost than residential juvenile delinquency programs and has achieved better outcomes. Youth who successfully completed the Redirection Program were significantly less likely to be subsequently arrested for a felony or violent felony, adjudicated or convicted of any offense, or committed to a residential program or sentenced to prison after treatment than similar youth who successfully completed residential commitment. The Redirection Program has achieved \$36.4 million in cost savings for the state since it began four years ago due to its lower operating costs compared to residential delinquency programs; the program has also achieved a cost avoidance of \$5.2 million in recidivism and prison costs due to reduced recidivism by its graduates. Given these outcomes, the Legislature may wish to consider expanding the program.

Scope

As directed by the Legislature, this report is the latest in a series of OPPAGA reports that examine the Redirection Program for juvenile offenders.¹

¹ *More Youth Are Admitted for Less Serious Offenses, in Part to Meet Treatment Needs*, [OPPAGA Report No. 03-76](#), December 2003. *Redirection as Effective as Residential Delinquency Programs, Achieved Substantial Cost Avoidance*, [OPPAGA Report No. 06-34](#), March 2006. *Redirection Pilots Meet and Exceed Residential Commitment Outcomes; \$5.8 Million Saved*, [OPPAGA Report No. 07-10](#), February 2007. *Redirection Program Achieves Lower Recidivism and a \$14.4-Million Cost Savings Compared to DJJ Commitment*, [OPPAGA Report No. 08-41](#), June 2008.

Background

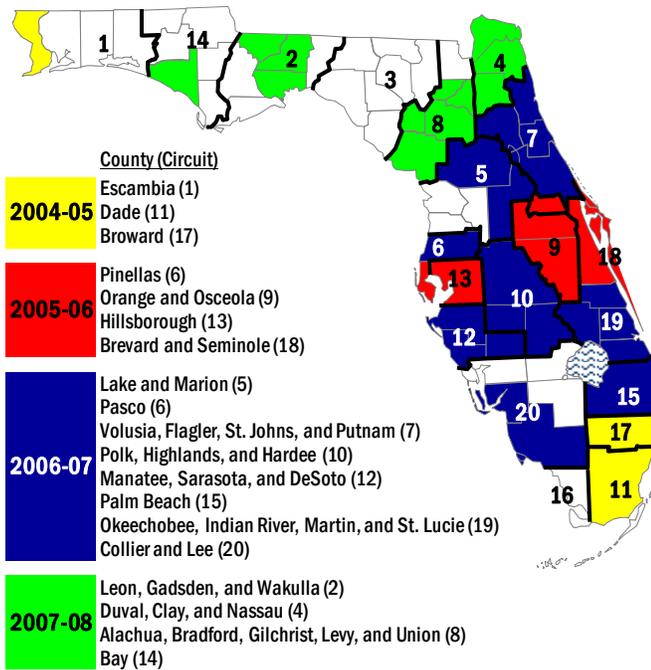
The Redirection Program is a community-based, family-centered alternative to residential juvenile justice commitment programs. The Legislature initially authorized the Redirection Program to address a growing trend of committing juvenile offenders to residential delinquency programs for non-law violations of probation. Non-law violations occur when a youth does not follow court-ordered probation requirements such as keeping a specified curfew or attending school. The Redirection Program diverts appropriate youth from residential programs to less costly therapy-based community programs.²

The 2006 Legislature expanded the program to serve additional youth, including those with no prior violent felony adjudications who are being considered for commitment due to a misdemeanor offense. In response to positive program outcomes, the 2007 Legislature appropriated an additional \$6 million to further expand the program to additional areas of the state and to serve non-violent youth being considered for commitment for non-violent third degree felonies. Due to the state budget shortfall, the 2008 Legislature reduced funding for the Redirection Program for Fiscal Year 2008-09 by \$1.4 million from the previous year.

² Youth initially were not eligible for Redirection if they were before the court for any charge other than a violation of probation. Youth with a history of violent offenses were and continue to be excluded.

As a result, three program sites in Circuits 4 and 17 were closed, and expansion plans were not implemented. Exhibit 1 shows the Legislature’s expansion of the program by fiscal year over the four preceding legislative sessions.

**Exhibit 1
Redirection Currently Serves 18 Judicial Circuits**



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice and Evidence-Based Associates.

The Legislature specified that Redirection provide Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy.³ These therapy models have been identified as Blueprint Programs for Violence Prevention by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, based on high-quality evaluations showing sustained reductions in recidivism for serious and violent offenders. Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy programs provide therapy in the home and focus on helping parents implement more effective ways to communicate with, monitor, and discipline their adolescent children.

³ Multisystemic Therapy is an intensive family-based treatment that addresses multiple causes of serious antisocial behavior in youth; it generally lasts four months. Functional Family Therapy is a family-based treatment that focuses on family dynamics and accountability; it generally lasts three months.

Methodology. To assess the outcomes of the Redirection program, we analyzed subsequent juvenile and adult criminal offenses of 1,721 youth who successfully completed Redirection and 4,872 who successfully completed residential commitment from February 1, 2005, through August 31, 2008. We tracked arrest, adjudication, and commitment outcomes for these youth through December 31, 2008.⁴ The comparison group included youth who had criminal histories similar to Redirection youth and were committed to low-, moderate-, and high-risk programs for offenses that would have made them eligible for Redirection. We used survival analysis to statistically control for remaining differences between Redirection and comparison group youth on factors correlated with recidivism. (See Appendix A for more information on our research methodology.)

Findings

The Redirection Program has continued to reduce juvenile justice costs and lower recidivism. Over a follow-up period of just under four years, the program has saved the state \$36.4 million in initial juvenile commitment costs and avoided \$5.2 million in subsequent juvenile commitment and adult prison costs. Youth completing Redirection were significantly less likely to be arrested, adjudicated or committed for subsequent crimes than similar youth released from residential commitment facilities.

Redirection has allowed the state to save \$36.4 million and avoid \$5.2 million in incarceration costs

Redirection has achieved substantial cost savings and avoidance. As of December 31, 2008, total Redirection costs for 2,867 youth discharged, both those who successfully completed and those who failed to complete the program, were approximately \$14.4 million, and a total of 2,033 youth had successfully completed the Redirection Program. If these successful completers had been committed to residential commitment programs

⁴ The follow-up period was a minimum of four months and a maximum of 3.9 years, depending on when the youth completed the commitment or Redirection program.

instead of Redirection, they would have stayed an average of almost eight months until release, at an estimated cost of \$50.8 million.⁵ As a result, Redirection has saved \$36.4 million in state residential delinquency costs in its first four years of operation.

Due to reductions in recidivism, the state also has avoided an estimated \$5.2 million in costs associated with future juvenile residential and adult prison commitments. The reduction in recidivism allowed the state to avoid 144 additional juvenile commitments and \$3.5 million in juvenile commitment costs. In addition, prison costs avoided by reductions in adult prison commitments are estimated at \$370,000 annually, or a total of \$1.7 million given an average sentence length of 4.7 years for the comparison group youth.

Youth served by Redirection showed significant reductions in recidivism

Youth who successfully completed the Redirection Program achieved significantly better outcomes than youth successfully completing residential juvenile delinquency commitment programs. We measured recidivism and found significant differences at three points in the criminal justice process:

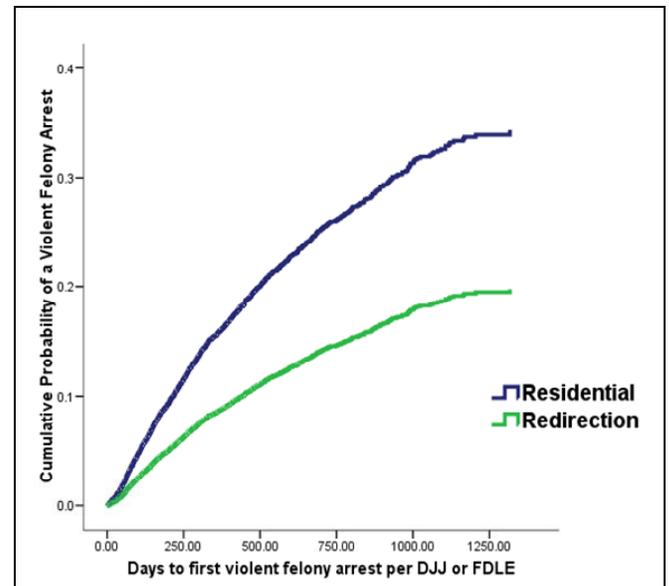
- arrests, made by law enforcement officers of persons suspected of committing a crime;
- adjudication or conviction, when a juvenile or adult court finds youth guilty; and
- commitment or prison, when youth are sentenced to serve time in a secure juvenile residential facility or adult prison.

Youth served by Redirection had fewer felony and violent felony arrests. Redirection youth were less likely to be arrested than comparable youth completing residential programs, and the reduction in arrests was greatest for serious violations. The probability of an arrest for any violation, including a non-law violation of probation, was 25% less for Redirection youth than comparison group youth, a statistically significant difference.

⁵ This estimate is based on an analysis of the length of stay and average per diem cost of serving youth in residential commitment programs. For some youth, this involves stays in more than one program.

The probability of an arrest for a felony was 46% lower for youth completing the Redirection Program than comparable youth released from residential commitment. For a violent felony, the probability was 48% lower for Redirection youth. The upper line in Exhibit 2 shows the increasing probability that a youth completing a residential program who met Redirection criteria would be arrested for a violent felony over the 3.9-year follow-up period, and the bottom line shows the probability for a youth completing Redirection.

Exhibit 2
The Probability of a Violent Felony Arrest Was Significantly Lower for Redirection Completers



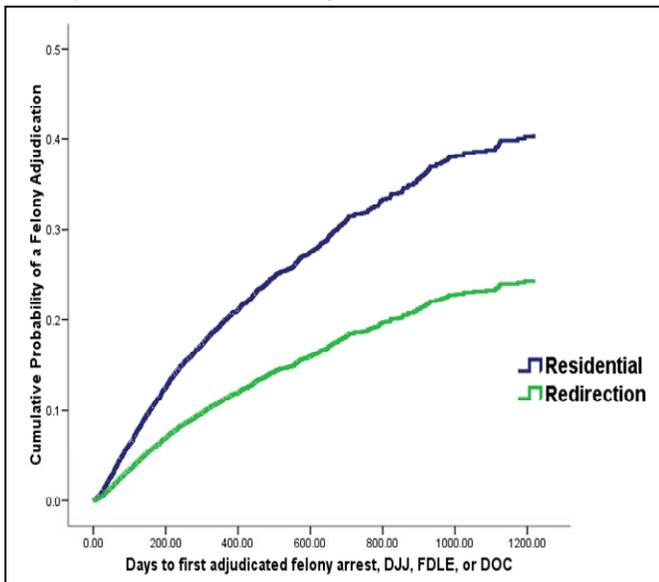
Source: OPPAGA analysis of data from the Departments of Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement.

The benefits of Redirection in reducing violent felonies are sustained and increase over time, contributing to an increase in public safety.

Youth served by Redirection had reduced adjudications and convictions, especially for felonies. Redirection had a positive outcome in reducing subsequent delinquency adjudications and convictions. Overall, youth completing Redirection were 23% less likely to be adjudicated or convicted for any offense, including a violation of probation, after treatment than similar youth released from residential commitment programs.

Redirection had a greater impact in reducing felony adjudications and convictions, as shown in Exhibit 3. The probability of a felony adjudication or conviction over time was 46% lower for youth completing Redirection than for youth completing residential commitment. This positive outcome was sustained and increased over time. This outcome is particularly relevant to achieving cost avoidance, since youth are more likely to be committed to residential programs or sentenced to prison after being convicted of a felony than a misdemeanor or a violation of probation.

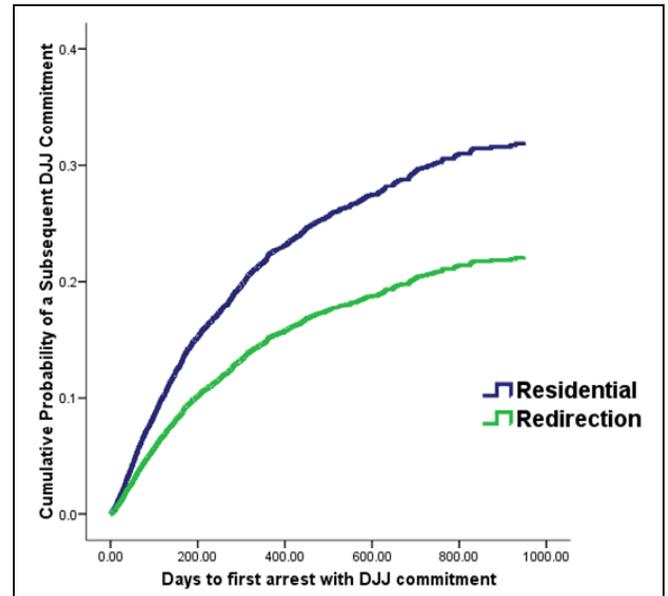
Exhibit 3
Redirection Significantly Reduced the Probability of an Adjudication for a Felony



Source: OPPAGA analysis of data from the Departments of Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement.

Youth served by Redirection had fewer subsequent sentences to juvenile residential commitment. Another important source of cost savings was that Redirection youth were significantly less likely to be sentenced to a juvenile commitment program after program completion. As shown in Exhibit 4, this positive outcome was sustained and increased over time. The overall probability of a commitment or recommitment to a juvenile residential program for those who were younger than 18 at release was 35% lower for Redirection youth than for comparison group youth.

Exhibit 4
Youth Served by Redirection Had a Significantly Lower Likelihood of Juvenile Commitment

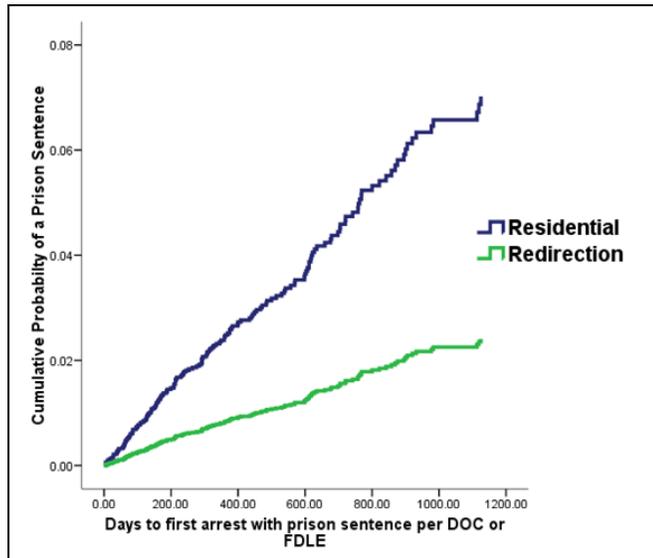


Source: OPPAGA analysis of data from the Departments of Juvenile Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections.

Redirection cut prison admissions among youth who turned 18 during the study period.

With almost four years since the first Redirection youth were released, a sufficiently large number of Redirection and comparison group youth had reached age 18 during the follow-up period to evaluate the initial impact of Redirection on prison outcomes. The likelihood of a prison sentence after release for those who were age 18 or older during the study period was 66% less for youth completing Redirection, than for similar residential youth, controlling for age, prior referrals, and other factors related to recidivism, as shown in Exhibit 5. Since many youth in the study had not yet reached age 18 by the end of the follow-up period, the impact of this recidivism reduction is likely to increase with time.

Exhibit 5
Youth Served by Redirection Had a Significantly Lower Likelihood of Subsequent Sentence to Prison



Source: OPPAGA analysis of data from the Departments of Juvenile Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections.

Given these outcomes, the Legislature may wish to consider restoring past funding cuts or limiting future funding cuts to the program. Given the effects of Redirection in reducing recidivism and saving state dollars, the Legislature may wish to consider expanding the program or maintaining current funding during Fiscal Year 2009-10. The program could be expanded by restoring \$1.4 million in funding that was cut in Fiscal Year 2008-09; this would enable the program to serve an additional 184 youth in counties that currently have a Redirection program, and would result in a potential cost savings of \$2.1 million. Maintaining current funding would prevent cost increases in other juvenile justice programs that would occur if youth presently served by Redirection were otherwise placed in more expensive residential commitment beds, and would also avoid the future need for residential commitment and prison beds through increased recidivism.

Agency Response

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Department of Juvenile Justice to review and respond. The Secretary’s written response has been reprinted herein in Appendix B.

Appendix A

Methodology Used to Analyze Redirection and Residential Outcomes

To assess the outcomes of the Redirection Program, we analyzed data on two cohorts of juvenile offenders—those that successfully completed the Redirection Program and those that successfully completed a residential commitment program between February 1, 2005, and August 31, 2008. We compared these youths' juvenile and adult arrest records through December 31, 2008, a minimum period of four months and a maximum of 3.9 years after they had completed treatment.

Data. The Department of Juvenile Justice provided data on the youths' demographics, school attendance, drug use, prior delinquency and commitment history, and delinquency referrals, adjudications and commitments after release. The Department of Law Enforcement provided data on adult arrests and convictions, and the Department of Corrections provided data on probation and prison sentences.

Study population. The 1,721 treatment group youth in our study successfully completed the Redirection Program between February 1, 2005, and August 31, 2008. These youth had been referred to the Redirection Program while being evaluated for commitment to a residential program for a non-law violation of probation, a misdemeanor, or, in 2007-08, a non-violent third degree felony. They were served at 23 Redirection Program sites in 41 counties. Providers for each circuit and the number of youth in the outcome evaluation are shown in Table A-1. 'FFT' after the provider's name designates a Functional Family Therapy program, 'MST' a Multisystemic Therapy program, and 'BSFT' a Brief Strategic Family Therapy program.

The comparison group consisted of 4,872 youth who had been committed to a residential program, successfully completed their residential program after an average stay of approximately seven and a half months, and were released from residential commitment between February 1, 2005, and August 31, 2008. Commitment completers were excluded from the comparison group if they were older than the oldest Redirection youth or had a more serious previous delinquency history, more prior adjudications, or more prior commitments. We statistically controlled for any remaining differences between Redirection and comparison group youth on factors correlated with recidivism, such as age, race, gender, number of prior referrals, prior commitments, region of the state, and time out of the program. For the analysis of commitments after program completion, we selected only youth who were younger than age 18 at release. For the analysis of prison sentences after program completion, we selected only youth who were at least 18 years old by the end of the study period.

**Table A-1
1,721 Youth in the Study Population Successfully Completed the Redirection Program at
23 Program Sites**

Circuit	Provider	Successful Completions	Circuit	Provider	Successful Completions
1	White Foundation MST	165	12	Community Solutions, Inc., MST	41
2	Eckerd Youth Alternatives MST	17	13	Vision Quest FFT	118
4	White Foundation MST	38	14	White Foundation MST	8
4	Vision Quest FFT ¹	74	15	Camelot Community Care FFT	47
5	Community Solutions, Inc., FFT	54	17	Camelot Community Care FFT ²	70
6	Vision Quest FFT	104	17	Henderson Mental Health Center ³	79
7	Community Solutions, Inc., FFT	52	17	The Starting Place FFT Circuit	97
8	White Foundation MST	26	18	Community Solutions, Inc., MST	94
9	Community Solutions, Inc., FFT	175	18	Crosswinds Youth Services BSFT	21
10	Community Solutions, Inc., FFT	56	19	Human Services Association MST	46
11	Institute for Child & Family Health FFT	219	20	Lee Mental Health FFT	81
11	Institute for Child & Family Health MST	39			
Total Redirection Successful Completions					1,721

¹Closed December 2008

²Closed April 2008

³Closed July 2008

Methods of analysis. We examined eight outcome measures; the first six involved a combination of juvenile and adult data.

- An arrest for any offense, including a violation of probation
- An arrest for a misdemeanor or a felony, excluding a violation of probation
- An arrests for a felony
- An arrest for a violent felony
- An adjudication or conviction for any offense
- An adjudication or conviction for a felony
- A commitment to a residential program
- A sentence to adult prison

We used survival analysis to conduct our analysis; this technique calculates the probability of an event, such as an arrest after program completion, given the number of days during which the event could happen, such as the number of days after the youth’s release. Using Cox Regression to conduct this survival analysis, we compared the probability of a youth being arrested for various offenses, including felonies, violent felonies, or arrests resulting in adjudications, convictions, commitment, or prison, given the number of days from release until arrest or to the end of the study period.

Control variables. The survival analysis allowed us to control for differences between the treatment and comparison group on factors related to recidivism, including age, gender, race, number of prior referrals, whether the youth had a prior commitment, whether the youth

was from a county that is part of an urbanized area with a population over 500,000, region, and time out of the program.

We also tested variables from the department’s Supervision Risk Classification Instrument that identified risk factors such as drug use or poor school attendance; these variables significantly correlated with recidivism for this population, but did not change the overall results. Since the department began using a new risk classification instrument during the time of the study and some youth had only data from the new instrument, we did not include these variables in the final analysis. For all statistical techniques, we used a 0.05 confidence level, the most commonly accepted standard for statistical significance, in determining statistically significant differences.

Statistical results. Results for measures with statistically significant findings are reported below in Table A-2. The risk of recidivism is calculated in the survival analysis for treatment youth compared to residential commitment youth with a similar initial risk of recidivism. For the Redirection Program, a relative risk of rearrest for a violent felony of 0.524 means that the risk that youth who successfully completed Redirection will be rearrested for a felony after program completion is 52% of the risk for youth who complete residential commitment, controlling for factors related to recidivism. Likewise, a relative risk of a prison sentence of 0.335 means that the risk that a Redirection Program completer will be sentenced to prison for a crime committed after program completion is 34% of the risk for a youth who completes residential commitment. In other words, Redirection Program completers are 48% less likely to be arrested for a violent felony and 66% less likely to be sentenced to prison for an offense after program completion than similar youth who complete residential commitment.

**Table A-2
Youth Completing the Redirection Program Showed Significant Reductions in All Measures of Recidivism After Program Completion¹**

Measure	Relative Risk of Rearrest ²	Reduced Likelihood of Rearrest Compared to Residential Youth ²	Statistical Significance	Number of Youth
Arrest for any charge ²	0.746	25%	0.000	1,721
Arrest for a misdemeanor or felony ²	0.582	42%	0.000	1,721
Arrest for a felony ²	0.540	46%	0.000	1,721
Arrest for a violent felony ²	0.524	48%	0.000	1,721
Any juvenile adjudication or adult conviction ²	0.774	23%	0.000	1,721
A juvenile adjudication or adult conviction for a felony ²	0.540	46%	0.000	1,721
A juvenile commitment ²	0.649	35%	0.000	1,559
An adult prison sentence ²	0.335	66%	0.002	742

¹ Compared to youth age 19 or under at release who successfully completed residential commitment programs, had no more than one prior commitment, no higher index for the seriousness of previous crimes, and no more prior adjudications than Redirection youth, controlling for age, gender, race, number of prior referrals, prior commitments, time out of the program, region of Florida, and whether the youth was from a county that is part of an urbanized area with a population over 500,000.

² Statistically significant at the 0.05 level of confidence.

Graphs presented in the report (Exhibits 2 – 5) represent the cumulative probability of a violent felony arrest (Exhibit 2), a felony adjudication or conviction (Exhibit 3), a juvenile commitment (Exhibit 4) or an adult prison term (Exhibit 5), estimated by the model at the mean of the covariates. In other words, the exhibit shows probabilities computed for the typical juvenile in the study population. The difference between the probabilities of each measure of recidivism after program completion for residential and Redirection is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix B



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Charlie Crist, Governor

Frank Peterman, Jr., Secretary

April 29, 2009

Gary R. VanLandingham, Director
Office of Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
111 West Madison Street
Room 312, Claude Pepper Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Director VanLandingham:

Thank you for the opportunity to review OPPAGA's draft report entitled Redirection Saves \$36.45 Million and Avoids \$5.2 Million in Recombitment and Prison Costs. The report provided an extensive and thorough review of this program serving as an alternative to Residential Commitment. The Department continues to be encouraged by the results of this program. The promises it made four years ago have been kept, as the report so clearly documents.

The Department requests that OPPAGA reconsider the breadth of the closing paragraph on page 5. "Given these outcomes, the Legislature may wish to consider restoring past funding cuts or limiting future funding cuts to the program. Given the effects of Redirection in reducing recidivism and saving state dollars, the Legislature may wish to consider expanding the program or maintaining current funding during Fiscal Year 2009-10. The program could be expanded by restoring \$1.4 million in funding that was cut in Fiscal Year 2008-09; this would enable the program to serve an additional 184 youth in counties that currently have a Redirection program, and would result in a potential cost savings of \$2.1 million. Maintaining current funding would avoid funding reductions during the current budget shortfall; this would prevent cost increases in other juvenile justice programs that would occur if youth presently served by Redirection were otherwise placed in more expensive residential commitment beds, and would also avoid the future need for residential commitment and prison beds through increased recidivism."

This paragraph suggests the legislature may wish to restore previous reductions from Redirection and limit future funding cuts. The Department is also requesting that consideration of this condition be suggested within the context of the department's total budget.

Last year the Department received the Science Service Award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for the Redirection program. The report further confirms the degree of success achieved by the Department's Redirection Program, and we appreciate the hard work that was invested by your team in completing this complex analysis.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Frank Peterman, Jr.

Frank Peterman
Secretary

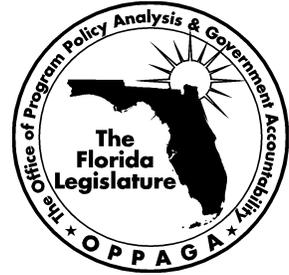
CC: Mary Eubanks, Inspector General
Rod Love, Deputy Secretary
Kelly Layman, Chief of Staff

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The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice is to increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services that strengthen families and turn around the lives of troubled youth.

The Florida Legislature

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability



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Gary R. VanLandingham, Ph.D., OPPAGA Director