San Mateo Probation

Fresh Lifelines for Youth Annual Evaluation

Fiscal Year 2017-2018

Contents

Program Description

The mission of Fresh Lifelines for Youth, Inc. (FLY) is to prevent juvenile crime and detentions through legal education, mentoring, and leadership training. FLY's vision is for San Mateo County's most marginalized and underserved youth to gain the life skills and character needed to avoid the criminal justice system and become positive community leaders.

FLY's programs are designed to build the multiple internal and external positive supports and strengths (also known as developmental assets) that are important for optimal adolescent development. Youth involved in the juvenile justice system or those at risk of system involvement often lack the developmental assets they need to thrive.[1] FLY's programs promote safety in the community and prevent juvenile detention by working with at-risk and juvenile justice-involved youth to identify and develop their strengths through the Leadership and Law programs. Strengths development is achieved by providing opportunities for youth to engage and redirect their talents and energy, and to create positive change in their communities through community service. Descriptions of FLY's programs follow:

- *Law Program*: Youth receive a 12-week session on interactive cognitive-behavioral therapy-based legal education curriculum, including weekly two-hour sessions that focus on key experiential components (e.g., role play, juvenile justice system stakeholder visit, field trip, recognition ceremony). The curriculum provides: a) knowledge of legal and social consequences of juvenile crimes, b) a safe space for trying new behaviors and identities, c) a community that supports positive actions and choices, d) training on empathy for juvenile justice systems and their stakeholders, e) an awareness of cognitive dissonance between present realities and future potential, and f) self-efficacy to recognize one's own potential.

- *Leadership Program*: During this 10-month program, youth receive one-one-one coaching, case management, and peer mentoring support to activate positive change. Youth who have completed the Law Program or who are referred by the Probation Department are invited to apply to join the Leadership Program. They then attend an interview and orientation. This intake method mirrors a job interview to help youth build vocational skills. After acceptance into the program, youth attend a three-day retreat in the Santa Cruz Mountains where they learn how to set personal, education, and professional goals, as well as engage in leadership and community activism. FLY case managers regularly meet one-on-one with youth to help them engage with and achieve their goals. Lastly, youth plan and participate in monthly community service activities such as visiting with seniors, working at soup kitchens, and beautifying public spaces.

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[1] *Chew, W. et al. (2010). Developmental assets: profile of youth in a juvenile justice facility. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2009.00467.x*

Programmatic Challenges in Fiscal Year 2017-18

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18 was FLY's second year of testing expanded points-of-entry for programs. Previously, the Leadership Program had one point-of-entry and one cohort each year. Clients would undergo interviews and intake in the summer, the kickoff retreat would take place in early fall, and youth would receive case management and peer leadership training through the following spring. In 2016, FLY began testing a two-cohort model in which clients were able to join the program in either the summer or the winter of each year, with the two cohorts running simultaneously year-round.

However, FLY found this two cohort model to be unsustainable for staff. Providing case management and client services year-round, while also engaging in recruitment and hosting two kick-off retreats threatened staff burnout and interrupted the seasonal rhythm of the program. Therefore, FLY will be reverting to a single cohort of programming in FY 2018-19. Due to funding and recruitment challenges, FLY will also be reducing the number of clients served in the Leadership program from 40 to 26 per year. According to FLY, this has the benefit of enabling staff to recruit and focus upon the highest risk youth as the target population of the Leadership Program.

Evaluation Methods

Organizations funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation (Probation) monitor their programs and report client, service, and outcome data to the department and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect this data are described below:

Clients and Services: Grantee programs collected demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) and service data (e.g., type of services, hours of services, etc.) for individual clients. Program staff entered these data into their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.

Risk Factors: Grantee programs used two assessments to provide a standard measure of risk, life functioning, and areas of need for all clients: the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (**JAIS**) and the Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths (**CANS**) assessment:

- **JAIS**: The JAIS is a risk, strengths, and needs assessment tool designed to assist workers to effectively and efficiently supervise youth, both in institutional settings and in the community. The tool has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of a brief prescreen assessment known as the JAIS Boys Risk or JAIS Girls Risk, administered in addition to the full assessment and reassessment components. Probation has elected to administer the JAIS to provide an initial indicator of recidivism risk. The JAIS Girls Risk consists of eight items and the JAIS Boys Risk consists of ten items, which yield an overall risk level of low, moderate, or high.

- **CANS:** The CANS is a multi-purpose tool developed for children's services to support decision-making in determining level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes. The CANS consists of multiple items scored on a 4-point scale of 0-3, with a score of 2 or 3 indicating an actionable need. The assessment is grouped into the following stand-alone modules: Risk Behaviors, Strengths, Behavioral/Emotional Needs, and Trauma. Each grantee completes a different set of CANS modules according to the makeup of their client population.

Outcomes: Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funded programs collect data for a number of justice-related outcomes for program participants. Probation has elected to report these outcomes at 180 days post-entry; the reference group reflects the past year's cohort of program participants. In FY 2017-18, FLY collected the following outcome measures:

- Arrests
- Detentions
- Probation violations
- Probation completions
- Court-ordered restitution completion

- Court-ordered community service completion.

FLY also collected six program-specific outcome measures in their Law program to track the goal of improving youth outcomes:

- Youth have access to positive adult role models

- Youth are more likely to make healthier choices

- Youth have more confidence to deal with negative peer pressure

- Youth have hope for their future

- Youth make positive changes

- Youth are less likely to break the law.

Evidence-Based Practices: Probation funded programs are encouraged to follow evidence-based practices. In 2012, ASR conducted an evaluation and concluded that funded programs were using a variety of carefully-crafted practices to respond to the needs of their clients, but that those practices spanned the range of what is considered evidence-based. Although the use of evidence-based practices was not emphasized in San Mateo County's 2016-2020 Local Action Plan, there is an underlying assumption that funded programs are providing services to youth that are aligned with evidence-based models.

In FY 2017-18, ASR requested each funded program provide a catalogue of their practices. ASR then ran the catalogued practices through a number of clearinghouses to determine whether the practices were: [2]

- Evidence-based theory or premise

- Evidence-based model, shown by multiple experimental or quasi-experimental studies to be effective

- Evidence-based practices, or modalities shown to promote positive outcomes

- Evidence-based tools, or instruments that have been validated (concurrent and predictive).

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[2] *For the full list of evidence-based practice clearinghouses used to evaluate programs, please see the JJCPA/JPCF Comprehensive Report for FY 2017-18.*

Evaluation Findings

Fiscal Year 2017-18 Highlights

- The number of clients in the Leadership Program increased by 90% and the Law Program increased by 393% compared to FY 2016-17.

- FLY served clients across the risk spectrum: 45% scored low, 42% scored moderate, and 13% scored high on the JAIS risk assessment.

- The results of the CANS baseline assessment showed youth had high need for supports and resources that promote youth strengths and reduce engagement in delinquent behavior.

- Rates of arrests for a new law violation and detentions declined slightly, while rates of youth violating their probation increased.

Profile of Clients Served

During FY 2017-18, FLY served a total of 434 youth: 394 in the Law Program, and 40 in the Leadership Program.

- Twenty youth (5%) participated in both the Law and Leadership Programs.

- Youth in the Leadership program received an average of 31 hours of service and averaged 7.5 months in the program.

- Those in the Law Program received an average of 12.7 hours of service and averaged 2.8 months in the program.

- The average age of youth differed by program, with youth in the Leadership Program averaging 17.2 years and youth in the Law Program averaging 16.4 years.

- More than half (62%) of FLY participants were male, and 67% identified as Hispanic/Latino.

Table 1. FLY Client Services, All Probation Clients

CLIENT SERVICES	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
All Probation Clients						
Number of clients served				94	90	434
Average number of hours served		Data not collected in prior fiscal years		44.5	22.8	15.2
Average time in the program (months)				6.4	N/A	3.4

Table 2. FLY Client Services, by Program

CLIENT SERVICES	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Leadership Program						
Number of clients served	30	31	30	42	21	40
Average number of hours served	72.3	97.8	98.5	85.9	31.0	31.0
Average time in the program (months)	10.8	10.8	10.0	6.6	N/A	7.5
Law Program						
Number of clients served		Data not collected in prior fiscal years			80	394
Average number of hours served					12.4	12.7
Average time in the program (months)					N/A	2.8

Risk Indicators

In FY 2017-18, FLY served clients across the risk spectrum. Of 193 participants assessed with the JAIS, the majority scored either low or moderate on the criminogenic risk level. Thirteen percent (13%) of youth scored high on the JAIS.
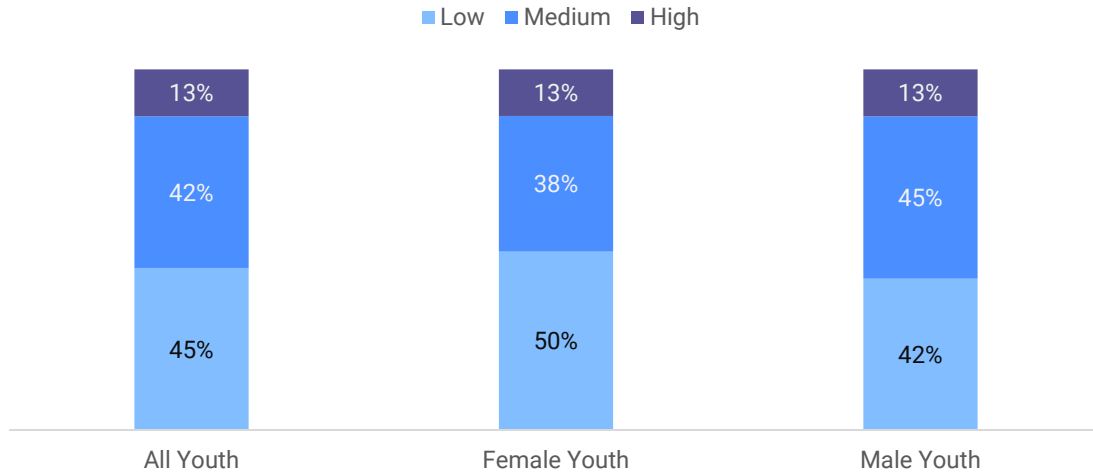
Table 3. JAIS Risk Levels

JAIS RISK LEVEL	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Low	55%	53%	45%
Moderate	34%	40%	42%
High	11%	6%	13%

n=193

When disaggregated by sex, a higher proportion of female youth scored low on the criminogenic risk scale.

*Figure 1. Criminogenic Risk Level by Sex*

All Youth n=231; Female Youth n=88; Male Youth n=143

Functioning and Service Needs

Data were gathered on five CANS modules at baseline with 99% of the youth receiving services during FY 2017-18. As seen in Figure 2 below, 4% of respondents had actionable needs on three or more items at baseline, a reduction from 13% in FY 2016-17. The percentage of youth with three or more actionable needs at baseline dropped significantly since FY 2015-16, which was the first year organizations implemented the CANS assessment.

Figure 2. Clients with Three or More Actionable Needs on the CANS
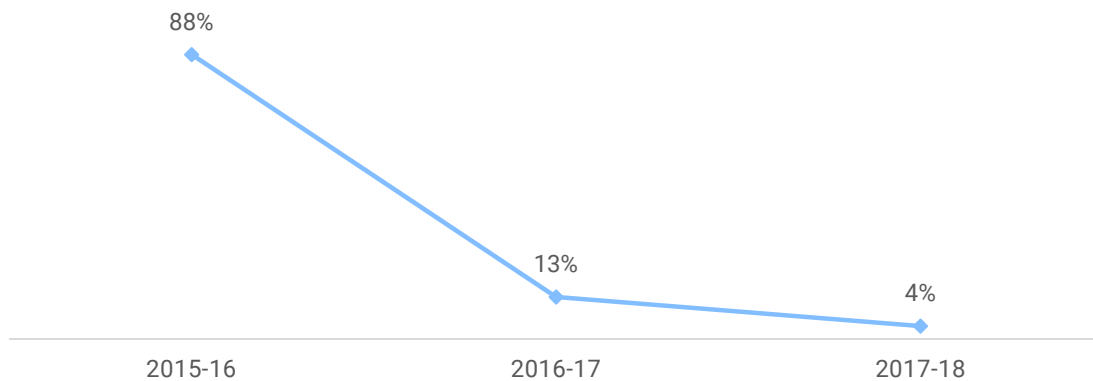
n=389

Figure 3 presents the percentage of clients with at least one actionable need who were administered a baseline assessment. Nearly all youth (97%) had actionable needs on the Youth Strengths domain, meaning youth lack important internal (e.g., resilience, optimism), social (e.g., family strengths/support, relationship permanence), and community (e.g., community connection, educational setting) resources and supports. The results also indicate that 75% of respondents had actionable needs in the areas of Substance Use, 71% had actionable needs on the Juvenile Justice domain, and 59% had actionable needs in the area of Youth Behavioral/Emotional Needs at their baseline assessment.

Figure 3. Clients with at least One Moderate or Significant Need by CANS Module at Baseline
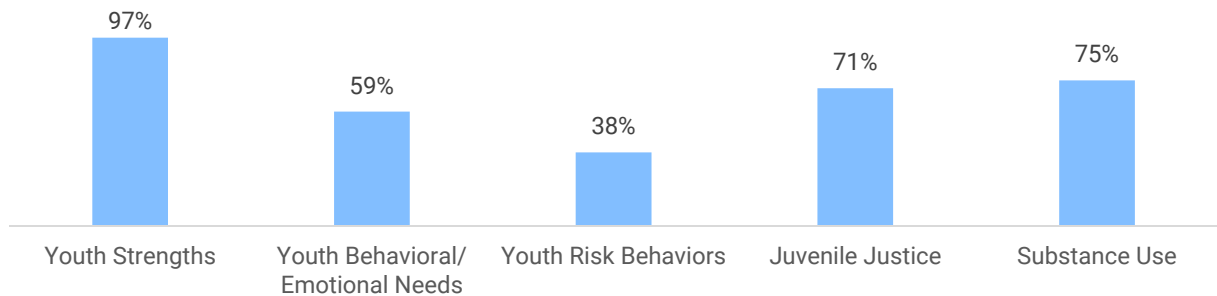

Youth Strengths n=389; Youth Behavioral/Emotional Needs n=27; Youth Risk Behaviors n=24; Juvenile Justice n=371; Substance Use n=12.

Figure 4 shows the percent of clients with actionable needs at both baseline and discharge. Only data from clients with matching baseline and discharge assessments were included in the analysis to reflect the change in the number of youth with actionable needs over time. Only modules with matching baseline and discharge data appear in the figure below.

The results show decreases in the percent of youth with actionable needs from baseline to discharge across four CANS modules: Youth Strengths decreased by 13%, Juvenile Justice decreased by 10%, Youth Behavioral/Emotional Needs decreased by 9%, and Youth Risk Behaviors decreased by 3%. Clients appear to be benefitting from supports and resources that promote the development of internal and social assets, juvenile justice outcomes, and behavioral and emotional health, while also reducing risk behaviors.

Figure 4. Clients with at least One Moderate or Significant Need by CANS Module at Baseline and Discharge
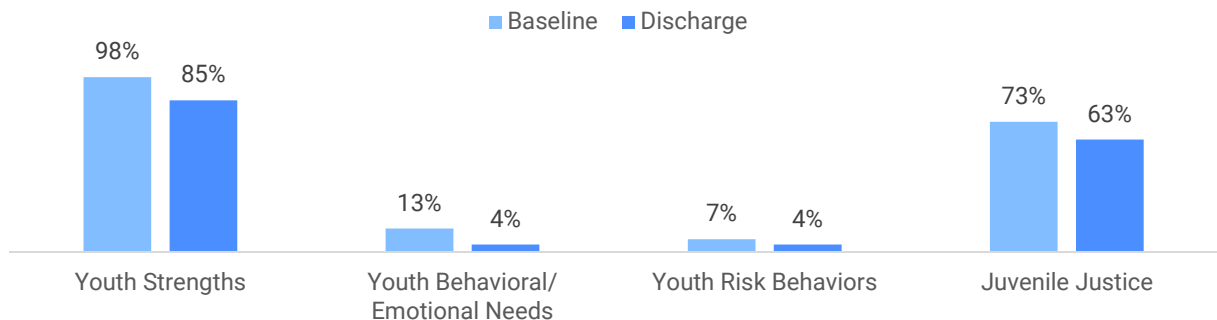
n=128

While a total of 389 baseline assessments were provided, only 33% of FLY youth had matching baseline and discharge assessments. In order to understand how to more effectively address the needs of all youth served by FLY, attention should be paid to ensuring that baseline and discharge CANS assessments are provided for every youth.

Justice Outcomes

The table below presents justice-related outcomes for twenty-three youth whose six month post-entry evaluation milestone occurred in FY 2017-18. The results show that rates of arrests for a new law violation and detentions remained steady in FY 2017-18, while the rate of youth violating their probation increased from 8% to 20%.[3]

Table 4. Justice Outcomes

JUSTICE OUTCOMES	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Arrests for a new law violation	17%	16%	20%	2%	18%	17%
Detentions	27%	42%	40%	7%	35%	30%
Probation violations	35%	36%	50%	29%	8%	20%
Completed court-ordered probation	12%	14%	50%	14%	42%	7%
Completed court-ordered restitution	0%	33%	N/A	N/A	N/A	0%
Completed court-ordered community service	33%	29%	100%	N/A	N/A	33%

Arrests for a new law violation n=23; Detentions n=23; Probation violations n=15; Completed court-ordered probation n=15; Completed court-ordered restitution n=4; Completed court-ordered community service n=3

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[3] *While the results show that there was a decrease in the number of youth completing court-ordered community service, the population required to complete community service was low, which can result in unstable numbers year-over-year. In FY 2017-18, only one youth was required to complete court-ordered restitution, but had not completed it by their six-month post entry evaluation.*

Program Specific Outcomes

FLY's Law Program achieved measurable impact. At the end of the program, FLY staff administered a Likert-scale survey to evaluate success. Year after year, 80% or more of San Mateo County youth in FLY's Law Program reported the following outcomes, which are believed to be the result of cultivating important developmental assets.

LAW PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2017-18 TARGET	FY 2017-18 RESULTS
Youth report that the program gave them access to positive adult role models.	100%	98%
Youth report that after the program, they are more likely to make healthier choices.	91%	97%
Youth report the program has given them more confidence to deal with negative peer pressure.	100%	98%
Youth report they now have hope for their future.	N/A	94%
Youth report they want to make positive changes after being in FLY.	N/A	94%
Youth report they are less likely to break the law after being in FLY.	N/A	88%

Evidence-Based Practices

In FY 2017-18, FLY funded programs were asked to provide the practices and curricula they employed in their programs. ASR then evaluated the catalogued programs to determine whether they were evidence-based or promising practices by running them through a number of evidence-based practice clearinghouses. The table below details the practices and curricula that FLY utilized in their programs.

PRACTICE	IMPLEMENTATION	RATING
Law Related Education	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy-based legal education curriculum includes weekly two-hour sessions and key experiential components such as role plays, debates, and mock city council hearings to capture youth interest, educate them about the law, and build life skills. The curriculum covers relevant topics such as police encounters, accomplice liability, three strikes, theft, vandalism, drugs, gangs, and police arrests. The curriculum also teaches critical life skills like anger management, problem solving, conflict resolution, and resisting negative peer pressure. Lessons are delivered once a week to groups of approximately 15-25 youth in the Law Program at community school-based sites, as well as locked facilitates.	Incorporates the evidence-based practice of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, but Law Related Education is not a nationally recognized evidence-based or promising practice
Carey Guides	Carey Guides are handbooks that help FLY staff use evidence-based practices with youth. These guides specifically address youths' criminogenic needs and common case management issues. These guides are used by FLY staff during regular 1:1 case management sessions designed around service plan creation for youth in both the Leadership and Re-entry Programs.	Carey Guides is not a nationally recognized evidence-based or promising practice
Brief Intervention ToolS (BITS)	The Brief Intervention ToolS (BITS) address key skill deficits with our youth in short, structured interventions. The tools are used as a supplement to the Carey Guides during 1:1 case management sessions for youth in both the Leadership and Re-entry Programs.	Evidence-based practice according to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention[4] and Promising Practices Network[5]

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[4] *https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/Program*
[5] *http://www.promisingpractices.net/program.asp?programid=145*

Client Story

Each year, staff at funded programs provide a client story to help illustrate the effect of services on their clients. The following is the client story provided by FLY for FY 2017-18.

Name of client	S.M.
Age and gender	17, male
Reason for referral	S.M. took the Law Related Education classes at Thornton High School. He completed all 12 weeks and was eligible for the Leadership Training Program (LTP). S.M. completed an interest form and was interviewed for the LTP. S.M. was accepted to LTP and he attended the 3 day retreat in January 2018.
Client's behavior, affect, and appearance when they first started in the program	At the retreat S.M. was not interested in interacting with other youth from the county law sites. S.M. was also being defiant with staff members and was not participating in certain activities. S.M. was also not engaged in school and for that reason he was put on independent studies.
Activity engagement and consistency	In the month of September, FLY and TheaterWorks collaborated and offered FLY youth two theater classes where youth practiced acting and writing skills. At the end of the workshops, actors from TheaterWorks acted out personal stories that the youth wrote down in journals. S.M. actively participated in all three workshops and after his participation wanted to be more involved with FLY activities.
Client's behavior, affect, and appearance toward the end of the program	S.M. has been more involved in the Leadership Training Program. S.M. was a guest Peer Leader in the Summer Retreat that took place in July. S.M. did an excellent job in leading activities and being a great example to new peer leaders. S.M. is currently on track to graduating in December.
What the client learned as a result of the program	"I learned that a lot of people come from different backgrounds and we all go through our own different struggles, so we should never judge people."
What the client is doing differently in their life now as a result of the program	"I learned to be more mature in the choices I make."
The value of the program in the client's words	"The communication: I really appreciate that FLY staff keeps it real all the time. It's about community engagement and how the FLY staff are just always there and always looking out for the kids."