



Juvenile Assessment Center

Evaluation Overview

March 2019

Prepared by Category One Consulting



Presentation Overview

We will be providing an overview of the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) evaluation study. The evaluation study is being implemented in two phases with phase 1 focused on evaluation planning and phase 2 focused on evaluation implementation. We are currently working on phase 2 of the study. Today's presentation has been organized into the four sections listed below.

JAC
Overview

Study
Background

Phase 1
Overview

Phase 2
Overview

JAC Overview

JAC History & Overview

- Started by Douglas County in 2003 to help divert youth from the system.
- In early years, focused mostly on delinquency cases.
- Partnered more closely with the DCAO to serve truancy and parent referrals starting in 2014.
- Has also transitioned to serving higher risk youth and more serious cases.
- Received a total of 2,821 referrals across all referral types in 2018.

THE DOUGLAS COUNTY JUVENILE ASSESSMENT CENTER (JAC)

The Douglas County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) is dedicated to improving the lives of juveniles by helping to strengthen and support children and families who are involved or at risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system. The Juvenile Assessment Center believes each juvenile should be supported based on individual risks and needs.

PURPOSE OF THE JAC

The Douglas County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) provides the cornerstone of evidence-based practices for juvenile justice youth service: screening and assessment.

The JAC serves as the focal point for comprehensive assessment of youth who come to the attention of the Douglas County Attorney's Office (DCAO).

The JAC provides recommendations to the DCAO for the most efficient and effective interventions and supervision levels for each youth.

Recommendations are based on youth and family input and recognized risks and needs.

The JAC utilizes evidence-based principles such as the risk/ need/ responsivity model by making targeted referrals to meet individual youth and family needs, based on validated screening and assessment tools, and referring youth to appropriate community service providers.

The JAC strives to divert all eligible youth from formal processing, while recommending interventions and supports to prevent further law violations and enhance productive growth of young citizens.

TOTAL ASSESSMENT REFERRALS

1222	Delinquency Referrals	5	Specialists
1294	Truancy Referrals*	2	Specialists
193	Dual-involved Referrals	1	Specialist
112	Parent Referrals	1	Specialist
2018 TOTAL			
* 2017-2018 School Year			

VALUE OF THE JAC

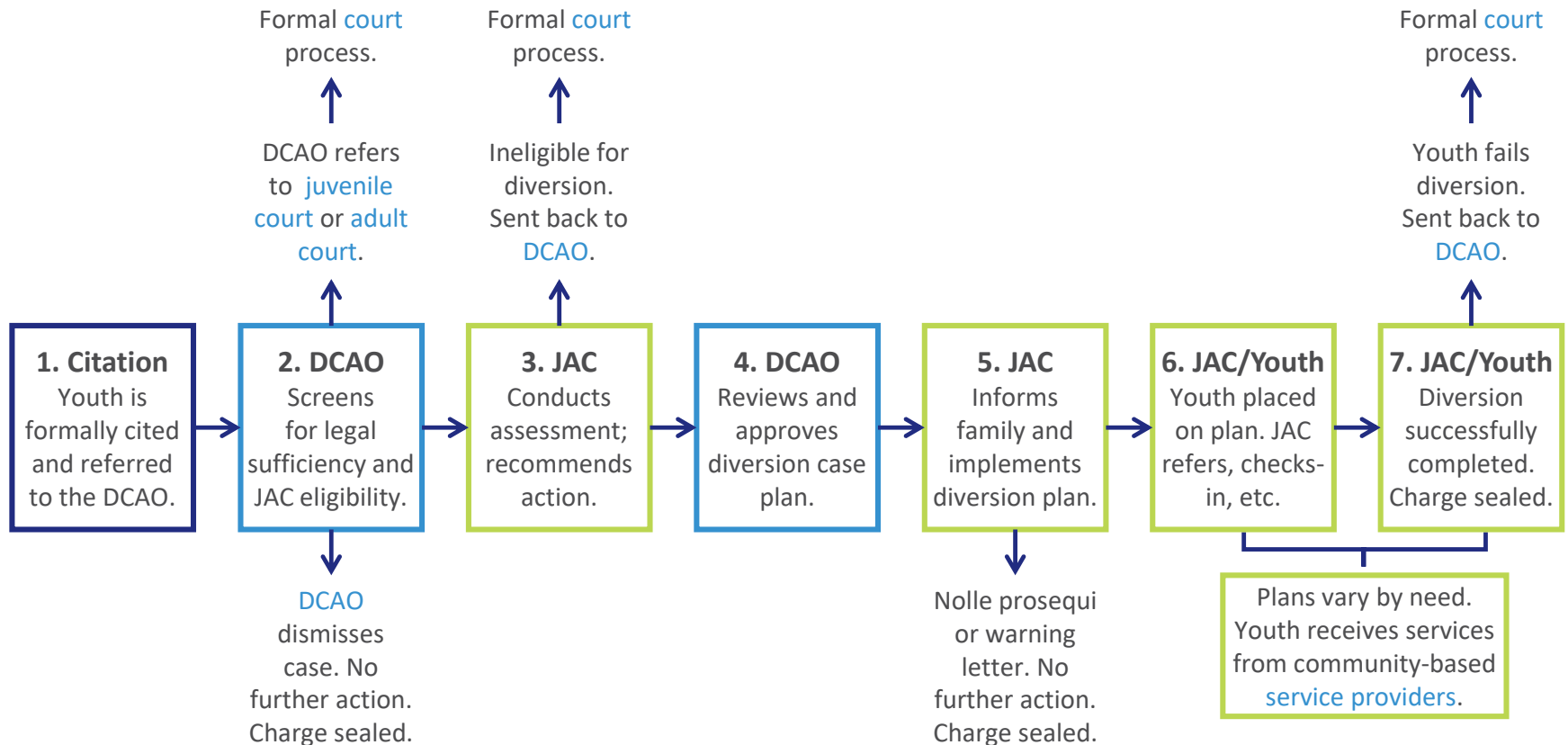
Eligible youth are offered the opportunity to avoid formal court processing, while being held accountable for their actions and provided appropriate supports and interventions.

Mental and behavioral health needs of youth are recognized and addressed through individualized plans and referrals to community-based services.

The Juvenile Justice System saves approximately \$1.3 million in court-related costs each year as a result of youth being diverted through the JAC.

JAC Process

The juvenile justice system is complex and variable. This is a simplified illustration that starts with a **citation**, focuses on the **JAC process**, and references **other entities** when interdependencies arise.



JAC Approach



Dedicated to improving the lives of youth by helping **strengthen and support youth and families** involved or at risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system.



Strives to **divert all eligible youth from formal processing** while recommending interventions to prevent further law violations and enhance productive growth of youth.



Focuses on **intervening early, effectively, and often** to disrupt progression into the system and provide interventions that promote healthy development.



Emphasizes the crucial component of **youth and family input** throughout the entire process to build understanding, trust, and engagement.



Supports youth based on **individual risks and needs**, which diminishes the likelihood of re-offense and provides youth the opportunity for growth and rehabilitation.



Utilizes **evidence-based principles** by using objective assessments, making targeted referrals, and referring youth to evidence-based services in the community.

Study Background

Study Origination



There is a strong vested interest in Douglas County having a juvenile justice system that is effective, efficient, and equitable.



The JAC is one component of the Douglas County juvenile justice system. It is focused on providing early intervention to divert youth from formal court system involvement.



There has been support and questions regarding the JAC's process, approach, and impact in recent years.



The Director of the JAC requested that a formal evaluation be conducted by an unbiased third-party evaluation firm in order to answer these questions.



Category One Consulting (C1C) was selected to conduct this evaluation. C1C elected to use an inclusive and evidence-based approach to ensure system buy-in and alignment.

Study Process

Phase 1

- Evaluation Planning
- 12-month process
- Inclusive and collaborative
- Process complete

Often expedited by conducting planning in the background

Phase 2

- Evaluation Implementation
- 15-month process
- Comprehensive metrics
- Process in progress

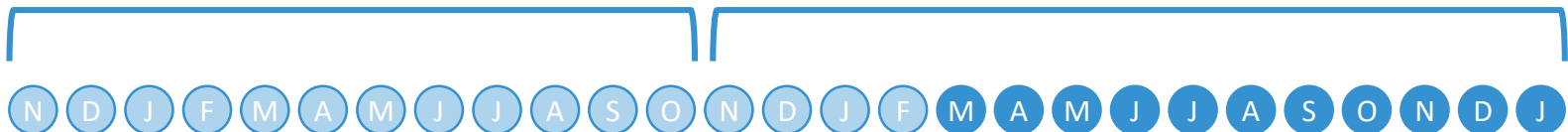
Often expedited by using archival or single-source data collection

Phase 1

November 2017 – October 2018

Phase 2

November 2018 – January 2020



Process Importance



Facilitate a shared understanding of the JAC

This comprehensive and inclusive process helps stakeholders have a shared understanding of the JAC including why it exists, how it operates, and what its goals are.



Align JAC stakeholders

The process helps create alignment across stakeholders by allowing them to have input in the evaluation planning process, which sets the stage for understanding findings.



Support future evaluation

The process supports evaluation implementation by documenting the JAC's process and outcomes, which helps ensure the evaluation is focused on the right set of metrics.



Guide JAC actions

This purposeful and comprehensive process helps reinforce the JAC's mission in order to inform all future decisions and actions.

Phase 1 Overview

Evaluation Planning

Phase 1 Purpose

To use an evidence-based, inclusive, and collaborative approach to build the foundation for evaluation implementation in phase 2. This approach allowed for a group of stakeholders from across the juvenile justice system to collaboratively determine and gain alignment on the items listed below. It also allowed us to obtain some initial evaluation findings.

JAC
Purpose

JAC
Process

JAC
Outcomes

Evaluation
Process

Phase 1 Process



Reviewed **data and documents** from the JAC to understand past and current state.



Reviewed **literature** on juvenile justice systems and evidence-based practices.



Conducted **observations** of JAC processes and appointments across specialists.



Conducted confidential **interviews** with stakeholders, youth, and guardians.



Facilitated monthly **stakeholder sessions** to build understanding and alignment.

Voices Included

- Defense & County Attorneys
- Funding Entities
- JAC Youth & Guardians
- JAC Staff Members
- Juvenile Court Staff
- Law Enforcement Staff
- Policy Makers
- Probation Staff
- School District Staff
- Service Providers

Phase 1 Alignment Areas

JAC Purpose



The JAC is focused on identifying and addressing the individual needs of youth and their families to help divert youth from formal system involvement. Youth are referred to the JAC for a variety of reasons, each of which has its own causes and consequences making the JAC purpose multi-faceted.

JAC Process



The JAC assesses youth, drafts safety contracts, sends warning letters, creates diversion plans, makes recommendations, sends referrals, etc. in alignment with six core guiding principles (evidence-based, equal treatment, youth voice, holistic approach, individualized plans, timely service).

JAC Outcomes



The JAC strives to achieve short-term (understanding, engagement, trust, etc.), intermediate (needs addressed, empowerment, etc.), long-term (home/school success, decision making, recidivism, etc.), and system-wide (community crime, system strain, etc.) outcomes.

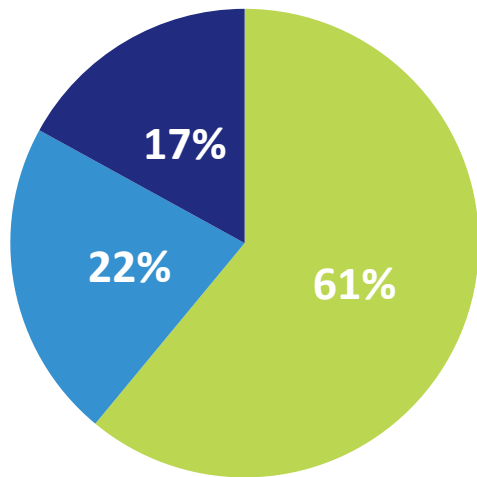
Evaluation Process



The evaluation process will address 10 core evaluation questions using a combination of existing and new data sources to examine the implementation of the JAC process, the achievement of JAC outcomes, and the overarching alignment with the JAC purpose.

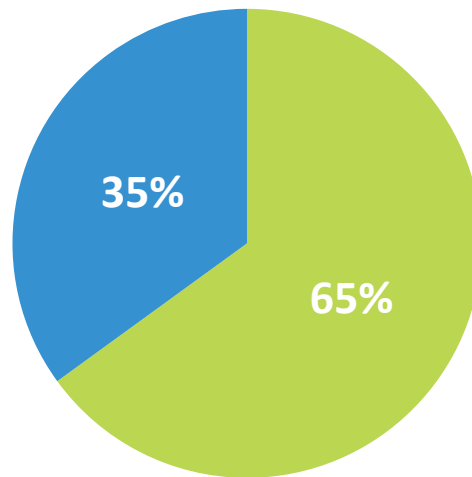
Initial Findings (Youth & Guardian)

61% said the JAC was **helpful** to them in their situations.



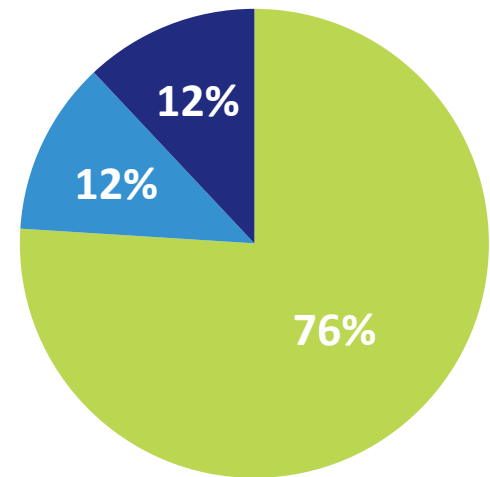
■ Helpful ■ Mixed ■ Not Helpful

65% said they had a **positive** experience with the JAC.



■ Positive ■ Mixed ■ Negative

76% said they were **better off** because of the JAC.



■ Better Off ■ Same ■ Worse Off

Initial Findings (Youth & Guardian)

Liked Most	Liked Least
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ JAC Staff Support & Concern▪ Avoid Court & Permanent Record▪ Was an Eye-Opening Experience▪ Assessment Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wanted More Contact

Would Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Nothing▪ Inform Community▪ Additional Contact▪ More Chances▪ Timelier Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be Stricter▪ Explain Process More▪ Update Facility
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Initial Findings (Stakeholders)

Areas Working Well	Areas for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ JAC Staff Competence▪ JAC Staff Passion▪ Trust & Credibility▪ Evidence-Based Assessments▪ Diverting Youth from Court▪ Community Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Limited Sustainable Funding▪ Awareness & Accessibility▪ Case Loads & Case Management▪ Time to Service▪ Gaps in Community Services▪ Referral & Data Transparency



Phase 2 Overview

Evaluation Implementation



Evaluation Questions

Implementation Questions	
Pathway Frequency	How do youth move through the JAC process and pathway?
Activity Fidelity	Are JAC activities being implemented as intended and with fidelity?
Guiding Principle Fidelity	Are JAC activities being implemented in a manner that aligns with guiding principles (e.g., are activities evidence-based, are all youth being treated equally)?
Group Differences	Do JAC, family, and youth characteristics impact implementation fidelity (e.g., race, gender, age, JAC specialist, case type)?
Impact Questions	
Short-Term Outcomes	Is the JAC achieving its intended short-term outcomes?
Intermediate Outcomes	Is the JAC achieving its intended intermediate outcomes?
Long-Term Outcomes	Is the JAC achieving its intended long-term outcomes?
Group Differences	Do JAC, family, and youth characteristics impact outcome achievement (e.g., race, gender, age, JAC specialist, case type)?
Exploratory Questions	
Resource Sufficiency	Does the JAC have adequate resources to effectively serve youth and families?
Referral Process	How does the JAC decide which services youth should be referred to in the community?

Evaluation Process

← Historical Data

- Historical data will be used to look back in time to answer some questions.
- Data for youth who were JAC-assessed from 2013-2018 will be examined.
- Allows us to examine intermediate and long-term outcomes in our timeframe.
- Also allows us to assess a larger sample of participants in an efficient manner.
- Data will be gathered from the JAC and potentially other sources (e.g., county, school districts, and service providers).

Collected Data →

- New data will be collected via surveys to answer questions focused on metrics not currently available.
- Custom surveys will be administered to youth and guardians who discharge between 02.01.19 and 06.30.19.
- Allows us to incorporate youth and guardian voices in the evaluation via a confidential process.
- Provides the JAC with the tools needed to gather youth/guardian feedback independently in the future.

Next Steps

- **Data Collection**
January 2019 to September 2019
- **Data Analysis**
September 2019 to November 2019
- **Findings Documentation**
November 2019 to December 2019
- **Findings Delivery**
January 2020



Thank You!

Questions?

Contact Category One Consulting

www.category1consulting.com

