

## YAP helps to keep youth out of secure facilities and living in their communities

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Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP) seeks to provide community-based alternatives for high-risk youth and reduce the juvenile justice system's over-reliance on expensive and ineffective out-of-home placements. A mission of YAP is to keep youth in their homes so that advocates can utilize family and community resources to support youth clients.

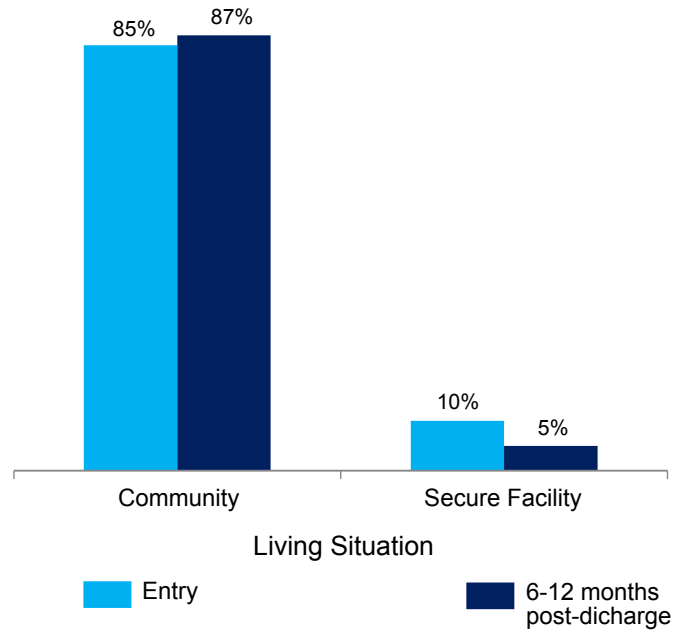
Living at home is important because it facilitates community engagement, which is essential for the health, well-being, and overall development of youth. Although it is not always possible to keep adjudicated youth in their homes, living at home is especially helpful to at-risk and system-involved youth who can benefit from social networks in their communities and maintain an attachment to conventional social norms in their home environments.

The Research and Evaluation Center at John Jay College examined a sample of 1,851 YAP cases between the ages of 14 and 17. Although post-discharge data is not available for all youth who have left YAP, comparisons indicate that youth who provided post-discharge data were similar to youth who did not provide post-discharge data in terms of relevant demographic characteristics and risk factors.

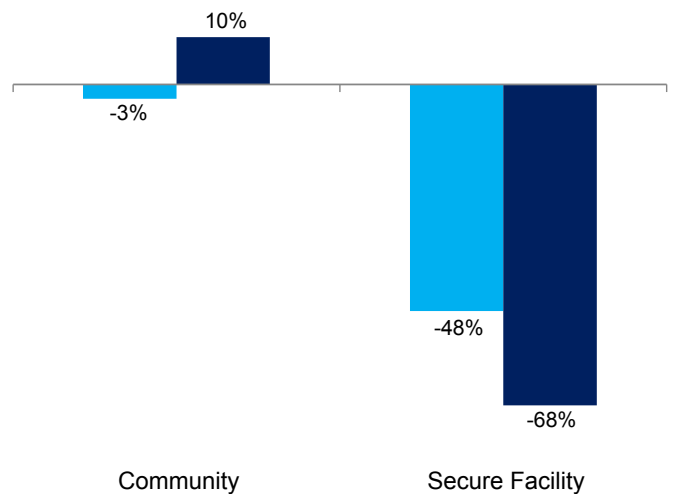
Analyses indicate that enrollment in YAP was associated with an increase in the number of youth living in their community and a decrease in the number of youth in secure confinement. Nearly 85 percent of the sample was living in the community when they entered YAP while 10 percent had been placed in a secure facility prior to their entry. Between six and 12 months after their discharge from YAP, more than 87 percent of the sample was living in the community and less than five percent was in secure placement.

There is a positive association between the length of time that youth spend in YAP and their living situation following discharge. The longer amount of time that youth are enrolled and participating in YAP, the more likely they are to live in their communities. For youth who were enrolled in YAP for more than 120 days, there was a 10 percent increase in the number living in the community between entry and six to 12 months post-discharge. There was also a 68 percent decrease in secure placements, compared to a 48 percent decrease in secure placements for youth who spent 120 days or less in YAP.

**Community living increased and secure placements decreased up to one year after client discharge from YAP**



**Longer enrollment in YAP increased community living and decreased secure placements from entry to post-discharge**



**Percent Change in Living Situation: Entry to Post-Discharge**

Legend: 120 days or less in YAP (light blue), More than 120 days in YAP (dark blue)

YAP appears to have the greatest impact on high-risk youth in terms of their living situation. Analyses of youth with one or more out-of-home placements prior to entering into YAP indicated that the number of youth living in the community six to 12 months following discharge nearly doubled compared to those living in the community at entry. Additionally, the number of youth in secure placement decreased by more than 80 percent during this time. The graph to the right breaks down the change in living situation between entry and post-discharge by the number of times that you were placed out-of-home prior to their YAP enrollment.

Youth with a prior disposition also appear to benefit from YAP services in regards to their living situation. Analyses of youth with a prior status offense, misdemeanor, or felony disposition indicated that the number of youth placed in a secure facility declined nearly 60 percent between entry and six to 12 months following discharge. Community living increased 29 percent for youth with a prior disposition for a status offense and increased 13 percent for youth with a prior felony disposition between their entry into YAP and six to 12 months following their discharge. Secure placements declined for youth with a prior disposition for a status offense (83% decline), misdemeanor offense (62% decline) and felony offense (49%) between entry and post-discharge.

There are a variety of out-of-home placement options for youth who have been adjudicated for an offense. Placements range from those that provide moderate supervision (group homes, non-secure detention facilities), to those that provide specialized treatment (in-patient substance abuse, mental health facility, residential facility), to secure facilities that supervise youth while they are confined (secure detention, incarceration). The more secure the facility, the more expensive it is to place a youth in it. Keeping youth out of secure confinement, whenever it is safe and practical to do so, conserves funds that can be used for less costly and more rehabilitative placements.

YAP advocates work to support youth and to help ensure that they are able to live in their homes and communities. The results of these analyses indicate that YAP does well at supporting youth to live in their communities, and this finding is even more apparent for those clients with prior out-of-home placements and/or a status offense, misdemeanor, or felony disposition.

**Data Sources:**

This analysis relies on self-reported data from internal databases maintained by Youth Advocate Programs, Inc., including client outcome surveys and YAP's system for monitoring service delivery.

