

EVIDENCE-BASED NEBRASKA

FAMILY SUPPORT EVALUATION FY 2017-2021

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Executive Summary

Family Support programs are prevention-focused efforts that seek to improve upon family function and communication through referrals and interactions with youth and families in Nebraska. Youth and families are referred for various reasons and community-based programs respond to these youth and family needs in a variety of ways, depending upon their individual needs and involve organizations throughout the community as needed.

Through interviews with Family Support staff and directors, we learned that programs take different approaches to providing services to youth and families that are individualized to address emergent issues. Youth and families are commonly referred to the program due to behavioral concerns at home and school, poor school attendance behavior, mental health issues, and substance use. Referrals often come from probation and/or diversion, police department missing youth reports, and from schools or by word of mouth. Caseloads vary by program and most report having contact with one to four youth/families, two to three times a week. Most programs, 71%, use a risk assessment or screening tool to help assess youth and family needs to facilitate case planning. Further, program staff discussed challenges related to parent and youth participation (e.g., program engagement) and household constraints (e.g., transportation, supervision) as barriers to service delivery.

Twelve out of 29 programs had sufficient cases to examine outcomes (at least 80% of their cases were discharged). Of these, there were high rates of youth successfully completing the program (or a neutral discharge, such as transferring schools). Nine of these 12 programs had sufficient data to examine either family function, family communication, or both (at least 80% of the data were complete and the sample size was greater than one), Family Support appears to be most successful for improving family function from intake to discharge (three programs improved scores), with slightly less success at improving family communication scores from intake to discharge (two programs improved scores).

When examining future system involvement for the twelve programs we found that few youth has new status offense court filings, law violations, and detainment in a secure or staff secure facility following discharge from programming. Overall, 1.5% (n = 9) of youth had a new status offense court filing within one year after leaving a program, ranging from 0% - 8.3%. Slightly more, 5.4% (n = 33) had a new law violation within one year from program discharge, with a range of 0% - 25%. An overall total of 32 youth from this sample were detained in a facility following discharge from a program (5.2%), ranging from 0% - 40%.

Nebraska's Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program

Recognizing that unnecessary formal involvement in the juvenile justice system may be contrary to the best interests and well-being of juveniles, the state of Nebraska established the Nebraska Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program (CBA) Fund to support local programs and services for juveniles (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-2404.02). The purpose of the Community-based Aid Program is to assist counties with developing intervention programs and services "designed to serve juveniles and deter involvement in the formal juvenile justice system" (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-2404.02(2) (b)). This fund encourages the provision of appropriate preventive and/or diversionary programs for juveniles, as well as better coordination of the juvenile services system. The statute specifically outlines funding particular activities, including "programs for local planning and service coordination; screening, assessment, and evaluation; diversion; alternatives to detention; family support services; treatment services; truancy prevention and intervention programs; pilot projects approved by the commission; payment of transportation costs to and from placements, evaluations, or services; personnel when the personnel are aligned with evidence-based treatment principles, programs, or practices; contracting with other state agencies or private organizations that provide evidence based treatment or programs' preexisting programs that are aligned with evidence-based practices or best practices; and other services that will positively impact juveniles and families in the juvenile justice system." (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-2404.02(3)(b)).

Programs funded through CBA, including Family Support, are statutorily required to report data to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Nebraska Crime Commission) (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-2404.02(4)(a)). This requirement is fulfilled when programs enter youth information into the Juvenile Case Management System (JCMS). The JCMS is a secure, web-based tool that allows programs to meet their reporting requirements while measuring whether programs are meeting the goals they set out to achieve. More importantly, as a statewide system, programs are held to a uniform standard of reporting by utilizing common definitions. An overarching objective of the JCMS is for programs to utilize consistent definitions for key data elements.

Family Support Programs

Family Support programs are community-based services that focus on promoting the well-being of children and families and help to improve family relationships and stability (MacKinnon-Lewis et al., 2002). These prevention-focused programs work toward a common goal of helping youth and families before they are part of the juvenile justice system. Services may be targeted at youth and/or parents and take place within the family home or at locations in the community. Family Support programs facilitate communication and work to resolve communication issues for youth and/or their families. As research supports a comprehensive approach to improving school attendance, including youth and their families, educators, and community partners (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002), program services also work to reduce excessive absenteeism. Additionally, Family Support programs help connect families with resources in the community. Finally, they offer many other services that can be individualized to address youth and/or family needs. Family-focused intervention strategies are effective at reducing juvenile delinquency (Lispey et al., 2010). Currently, in Nebraska these programs are grouped into one of four sub-types: Parenting Class, Advocacy, Social Workers, and Family Support.

Parenting Classes

Parenting classes give parents the opportunity to learn parenting skills through sessions focusing on improving communication with children. Working toward the goal of reducing adverse childhood outcomes, parents that attend these sessions learn how to engage in skill building, problem solving, and work on modeling appropriate behaviors.

Advocacy

Advocacy programs guide youth and/or families through the juvenile justice system, paying attention to explaining the process and importance of each hearing, outcome, or decision. Advocates work to inform youth and families about the juvenile justice system in a variety of ways, meeting with youth and families in advance of court appearances allows the advocate the opportunity to explain the purpose of the hearing and discuss potential consequences for not appearing. Further, advocates can also accompany youth and families to the proceedings and meetings with service providers.

Social Workers

Social Workers employ research directed therapeutics to improve youth's well-being. These involve engaging with youth to promote growth in the areas of problem solving and coping and connecting youth with resources to promote improved interactions between the youth and their environment.

Family Support

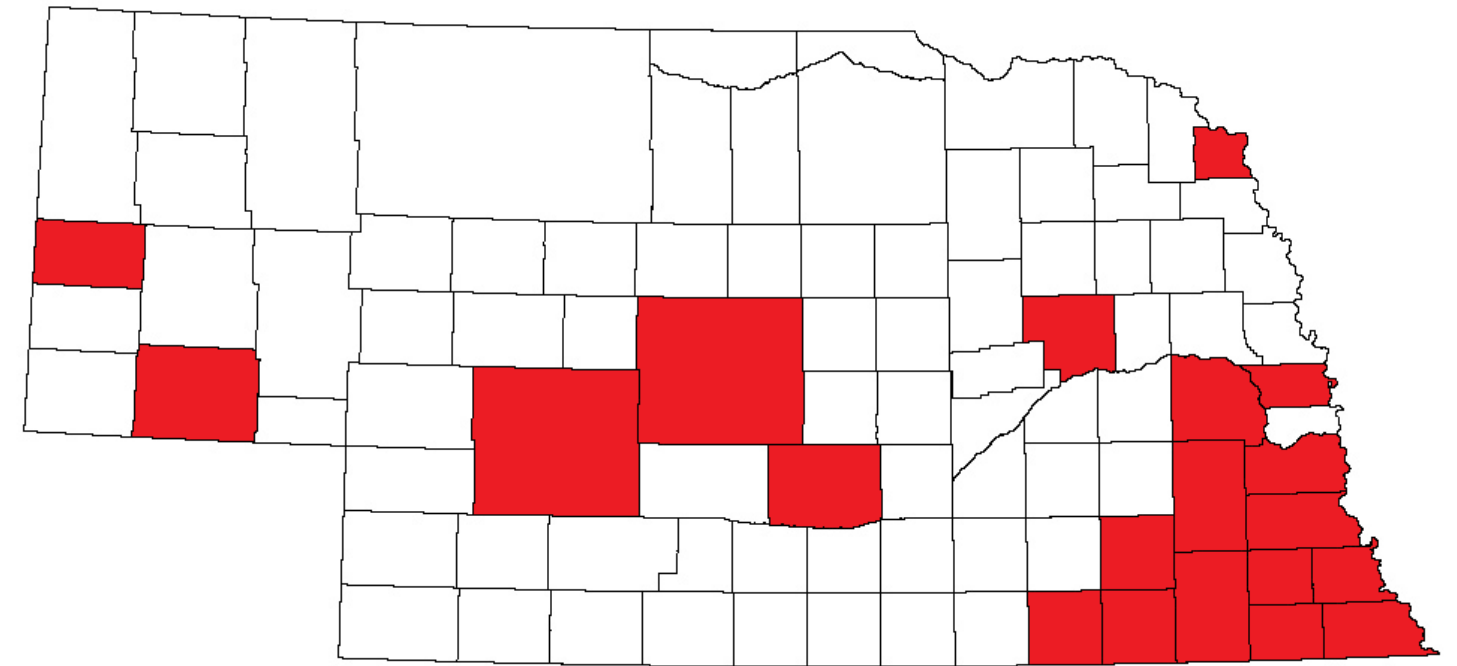
The Family Support sub-type includes community-based programs that help youth and families with a variety of needs that may not fit into one of the other three categories. The assistance they provide assists families with communication issues, targets improvements in school attendance, connects families with resources in the community, and many other services that can be individualized to meet the youth and/or family's needs.

Community-based Aid (CBA) funded Family Support programs are in many Nebraska communities, with most youth being served in Nebraska's largest counties (i.e., Lancaster, Douglas, and Buffalo Counties). Given the variety of needs and services these programs provide, programs differ regarding what each target. Some work directly with specialized populations, such as those providing support to refugee communities, like the Sudanese Advocates. Other programs direct resources and services to working with youth from probation referrals for alternatives to detention. Family Support programs are vital to achieving the goal of providing services to youth in Nebraska and their ability to specialize in individualizing services helps to support this goal. Individualized programming and services for juveniles helps make the programs relevant for youth, encourages participation, and helps youth and their families gain the skills and resources necessary to avoid future system involvement.

Interviews with Family Support Programs

JJI reached out to 17 Family Support programs currently funded for FY 2021/2022 to gather qualitative data via questionnaires (included as Appendix 2) from programs to include in this report. All programs provided responses. Additionally, we received responses from three individuals associated with Boys Town Douglas County, and two individuals with the Child Saving Institute Douglas County. A content analysis of themes provided in the questionnaire were analyzed and are discussed below.

Figure 1. Map of Counties with Family Support Programs funded FY 2021-2022



Project Harmony	1
Boys Town Douglas County	3
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	2
YWCA Lincoln	1
Saunders County Youth Services	1
Better Living Gage County	1
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	1
Better Living Saline County	1
Compass Buffalo County	1
Boys Town Cass County	1
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	1
Boys Town Buffalo County	1
CEDARS – Otoe County	1
Healing Hearts & Families	1
Platte County Juvenile Services	1
The Salvation Army	1
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	1

Family Support program staff interviewed for this report have been employed with family support for an average of 7.5 years (range from 6 months to 15 years). Twelve program staff (71%) interviewed report having either a bachelor’s or master’s degree. Additionally, 11 individuals report completing certificates and/or program specific training (e.g., motivational interviewing, trauma informed care, Love and Logic Parenting, de-escalation training, and crisis intervention). Individuals that responded to questionnaires have a range of responsibilities and roles within the program, ranging from program directors to in-home consultants.

When asked about a typical day, most Family Support program staff report having contact with between one and eight families per week. Caseloads vary by program and range from no current cases to 21 youth/families. Most report having contact with between one to four youth/families, two to three times per week. One program staff member begins their day by making calls to parents with youth that have missing reports, making referrals to programs for families, and does follow-up work according to the family’s case management plan. Another staff member’s typical day involves organization, planning the coordination of programming, and supervising after school programming for up to 12 youth two times per week. One family support program supervisor’s typical day involves overseeing the staff that work directly with youth, in this role they meet with specialists and other supervisors weekly to discuss challenges and consult on other cases. A family support program director, who does not work directly with youth or families, supervises in-home family consultants as they work directly with families on their caseload, generally around six families at a time and they meet with one to three youth per day. Another family support program director discussed how family support consultants with their program work to meet the needs of the youth and family by scheduling meetings and in-home visits when convenient for the family – sometimes in the evening after school and on weekends.

From our interviews with Family Support programs, themes emerged regarding the most common reasons for referrals to service and the ways in which programs individualize services dependent on youth/family needs. Another common theme in the interviews related to challenges and barriers program staff face when providing services to youth and families referred to the program.

Individualizing Services based on Youth and/or Family Needs

Research supports a community-wide, comprehensive, and multi-disciplinary approach to strengthen and support families to reduce juvenile delinquency (Cocozza & Skowrya, 2000; Melton & Paliocca, 1992). To have the greatest effect on preventing juvenile delinquency or intervening when issues arise, youth should be assessed using an evidence-based risk assessment tool, services should be provided in a community setting, be individualized, involve the entire family throughout the planning, and be responsive to youth’s ethnic and cultural values (Costello et al., 1999). Twelve programs (71%) report using at least one risk assessment/screening tool to help assess youth and family needs and help with case planning at program intake. These tools vary by program and include the NYS, MAYSI-2, adverse childhood experiences, a family risk screening, Strengths and Stressors assessment, Protective Factors Survey, Life Skills assessment, a social network map, Danger Assessment, and the Family and Support Tool (FAST), to name a few.¹ Research supports the use of assessments as best practices to identify needs and risk factors to inform case planning decisions and intervention/treatment strategies (Andrews et al., 1990; Andrews & Bonta, 2006). Moving forward, all programs are encouraged to use a validated risk assessment and/or screening tool that best aligns with program goals and the population the program is serving to assist with case planning for youth and families.

Family Support programs receive referrals for a myriad of reasons and from various sources. Seven programs (41%) receive referrals from probation and/or diversion, three (18%) from a local police department on missing youth reports, and seven (41%) receive referrals primarily from schools or by word of mouth. Specific needs of youth and families identified by Family Support programs interviewed for this report include mental health, excessive absenteeism and/or running away, and substance use issues. Programs respond to these youth and family needs in a variety of ways, depending upon their individual needs and involve organizations throughout the community as needed.

A primary reason for referral and contributing factor for other types of referrals is the mental health needs of youth and families. Research suggests that between 65 to 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder (NCMHJJ, 2005; Teplin et al., 2002; Wasserman et al., 2002; Wasserman et al., 2004). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimated that 111 million people in the United States are living in mental health professional shortage areas (Weiner, 2018). This is especially concerning as this limits the chance a youth and/or family will be connected to services that they need. Family Support programs are one mechanism that may improve the likelihood of identifying the need for mental health services and making referrals to providers. One Family Support program discussed the tremendous need for mental health services of the youth and families they serve and how their program can identify mental health needs and connect youth/family with services in the community. Research supports the inclusion of family members and caregivers as part of the treatment process as they play a vital role in identifying needs for service and are an integral part of an effective intervention plan for youth with mental health disorders to reduce future system involvement (Arredondo et al., 2001; Cocozza & Skowrya, 2000). The Family Support program asserts that they often see the greatest change in youth behavior when they can connect the youth and family to counseling resources.

¹ Additional assessment tools reportedly used by currently funded programs include: PHQ9, ASQ, Biopsychosocial, Parenting Children and Adolescents Scale, Suicide Screen, Safe Dating Screen, Drug and Alcohol Screen, and a Youth Resilience Questionnaire.

Referrals for behavioral issues either at home or in school are other primary reasons programs have contact with youth and families. Fourteen (82%) programs report that school-related absences and issues comprise many of the referrals they receive. In an effort to use the least restrictive measures to improve attendance and behavior, Family Support programs engage with youth and families to understand reasons for missing school. These conversations and in-home visits help programs respond to individual needs either through referrals to other community programs and/or organizations, connecting the family with resources to better monitor school attendance, or through goal setting with the youth, and getting them enrolled in after school programs that can provide pro-social activities and supervision. In addition, three Family Support programs reported receiving referrals for youth that have run away from home. Research suggests that family-related issues are contributing factors related to youth runaway behavior. Findings from Fernandes-Alcantara (2016) suggest that the main reason youth cited running away from home was family conflict. Further, over half (58%) of users of the National Runaway Safeline reported family dynamics as the reason for the call (2019). Family Support programs receive referrals for youth with histories of running away from home and work with the family and the youth to identify reasons for the behavior and set a plan for the youth to “get back on track.” For example, this may involve connecting the youth and family to counseling services to address problems at home or through conversations with schools and referrals to excessive absenteeism programs.

Six Family Support programs (35%) also receive referrals for youth facing substance use issues. Research on effective intervention strategies for juvenile substance use suggest that the most promising strategies involve developing life skills and team building, focus on self-reflection, and are provided through in person contact with youth (Springer et al., 2004). One program we interviewed uses a series of engagement strategies for youth referred for services and their family dependent upon their individual needs which work on life skills training and practice, circular refocusing, and relationship building. This work is done through in-home visits by family support consultants to better understand the family dynamics as well as necessary treatment and intervention strategies. They report that engagement with the youth and family together is helpful for successful outcomes. Another program reports that effective intervention strategies for them include positive reinforcement and having the youth write apology letters are helpful in getting youth to understand how their behavior affects others.

Challenges and Barriers Faced by Family Support Programs

Given the variety of services Family Support programs provide, they experience several challenges and barriers to their prevention and intervention efforts. One primary challenge they face is the lack of participation or “buy-in” by the family which was noted by 65% of the programs ($n = 11$) we interviewed. Research has documented the importance of involving the entire family in prevention and intervention efforts designed to keep juveniles out of the system. Programs must be responsive and creative in their efforts to engage both the youth and family members throughout the duration of the youth’s involvement in the program. For example, one program recalls how difficult it is to work with parents that will not participate in the program with the youth or are averse to learning new parenting skills. One Family Support program says, “We know that parents are the long-term change agent in their child’s life, and we are very temporary, so we need them to also make changes in their actions in order for the youth to change their behaviors.”

Beyond engagement with programming and staff, programs also report that parents are sometimes unable to provide adequate support and supervision for youth due to constraints within the household (e.g., single parent household, job). Two programs note the difficulties involved with working with language barriers between providers and families. Families that experience language barriers may have a more difficult time understanding the process of programming, as well as lack the necessary tools to best advocate for themselves and their families. One program noted a recent successful outcome for a youth where program

staff identified the family’s needs and helped connect them with a bilingual therapist for the children. Appreciating the needs of both the youth and the family, the program also helped the parent learn skills to better advocate for the children’s education through communication with the school and by monitoring the children’s progress. Another program provides translation support for youth and families to encourage prosocial behavior and address risk factors for delinquency among the youth population they serve. For another program, “getting services to the family before they are in crisis” poses the biggest challenge. A program based in a more rural area notes challenges they face associated with reliable transportation, available resources, and technology limitations.

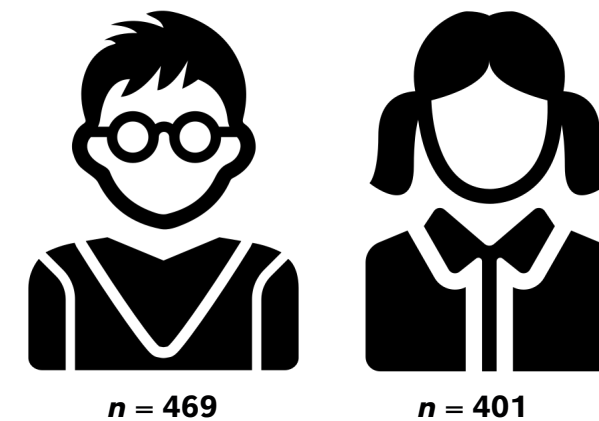
Family Support Cases Entered into the JCMS

For this evaluation, data entered by Family Support programs receiving CBA funding from FY 2017/2018 through FY 2020/2021, were included in the following analyses. In total, 29 total Family Support programs were funded from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2021, 10 from 2017/2018, 15 from 2018/2019, 13 from 2019/2020, and 16 from 2020/2021.

Youth Served

Overall, 873 cases were entered into the Juvenile Case Management System (JCMS) from July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2021. The majority of youth, 82.6%, had one contact with a program ($n = 721$), while 17 (1.9%) had two contacts, and five (0.6%) had three contacts with the same program. The remaining 14.9% ($n = 130$) of cases included no discharge date and we were unable to confirm how many contacts these youth had with a program. Further, three youth were enrolled in two separate programs at different times. For demographic purposes, these three individuals were not repeated in data for age, gender, and race.

For youth served in Family Support programs, 46.1% were female and 53.9% were male, with a mean age² of 13.7 years (range 1-19, $SD = 3.2$) and a mode of 15 years. Table 1 displays the race/ethnicity of youth referred to Family Support programs. Of these, Hispanic represented the highest percentage of youth referred to programs ($n = 315$, 36.2%), followed by Black / African American ($n = 235$, 27%), White ($n = 170$, 19.5%), and Asian ($n = 74$, 8.5%). The remaining cases are comprised of those identifying as Other Race ($n = 23$, 2.6%), Multiple Races ($n = 24$, 2.8%), and Unspecified ($n = 25$, 2.9%). Individual program demographic data for currently funded programs (FY21/22) is included in Appendix 3.



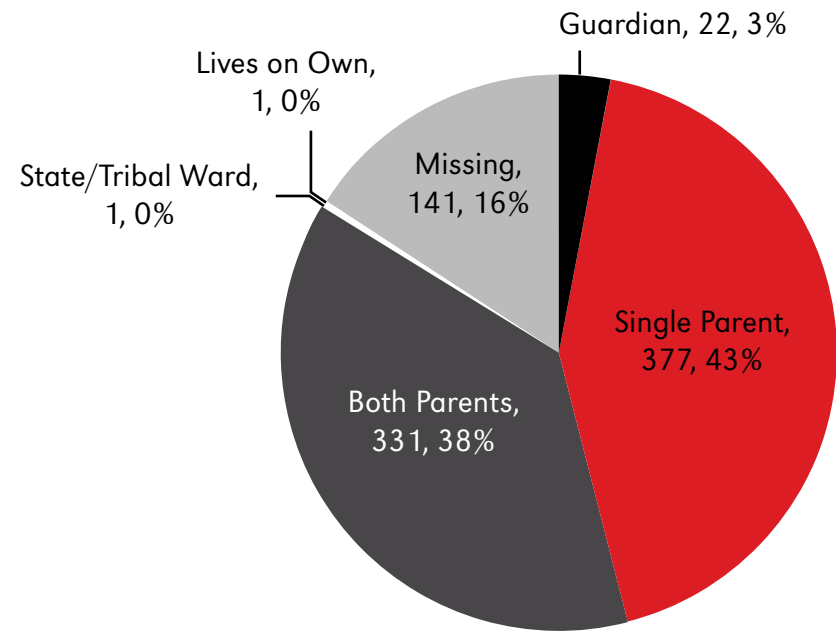
² Age at referral was missing for $n = 7$.

Table 1. Race/Ethnicity of Referrals to Family Support

Race	Frequency	Percent
Native Indian, Alaska Native	4	0.5%
Asian	74	8.5%
Black, African American	235	27%
White	170	19.5%
Hispanic	315	36.2%
Other Race	23	2.6%
Multiple Races	24	2.8%
Unspecified	25	2.9%
Total	870	100%

As Family Support programs work directly with Nebraska families and youth, we examined the breakdown of the legal custody arrangements for cases included in the data. Custody was included for 83.8% of cases ($n = 732$) and was missing for 16.2% of youth ($n = 141$). As shown in Figure 2, most youth are in the legal custody of either a single parent ($n = 377$, 43%) or both parents ($n = 331$, 38%).

Figure 2. Legal Custody



Programs and Referral Source

Table 2 displays the number of youth served in each program and years that the program has been funded, and thus, entered cases into the JCMS. Twenty-nine Family Support programs were funded between FY 2017/2019 to FY 2020/2021. Three programs have been funded for the length of the CBA evaluation period (FY 2017/2018 to FY 2020/2021), while the others have been funded for fewer years. Ten of the programs who were previously funded and entered data, were no longer currently funded as of FY 2020/2021, though one program (Dakota County) is funded for FY 2021/2022. Seventeen programs are currently funded for FY 2021/2022.

Of the 29 Family Support programs funded between these year, three programs are categorized as “Parenting Class,” 20 as “Family Support,” five as “Social Work,” and one as “Advocate.”

Table 2. Funded Family Support Programs by FY

Program	Sub-Type	Youth Served	Percent	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22
Alliance Alternative High School	Parenting Class	10	1.1%	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Center for Psychological Services	Parenting Class	60	6.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Compass Buffalo County	Family Support	15	1.7%			Yes	Yes	Yes
Boys Town Buffalo County	Family Support	4	0.5%			Yes	Yes	Yes
Boys Town Cass County	Family Support	1	0.1%					Yes
Healing Hearts & Families	Social Work	13	1.5%			Yes	Yes	Yes
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	Family Support	4	0.5%		Yes			Yes
Heartland Family Services	Family Support	223	25.5%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Owens Educational Services	Family Support	14	1.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes		
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	Social Work	5	0.6%	Yes	Yes			
Boys Town Douglas County	Family Support	272	31.2%		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Capstone Behavioral Health	Social Work	23	2.6%	Yes	Yes			
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	Family Support	18	2.1%					Yes

Program	Sub-Type	Youth Served	Percent	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22
Community Based Services Douglas County	Family Support	1	0.1%	Yes	Yes			
Thrive Omaha	Family Support	20	2.3%		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Release Ministries	Family Support	11	1.3%		Yes			
Banister's Leadership Academy	Family Support	1	0.1%				Yes	
Project Harmony	Family Support	88	10.1%				Yes	Yes
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	Family Support	1	0.1%			Yes	Yes	Yes
Better Living Gage County	Social Work	3	0.3%				Yes	Yes
The Salvation Army	Family Support	10	1.1%					Yes
YWCA Lincoln		33	3.8%					
Mother-Daughter Circles	Parenting Class			Yes				
CATCH	Social Work						Yes	Yes
CEDARS - Otoe County	Family Support	10	1.1%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Platte County Juvenile Services	Family Support	5	0.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Better Living Saline County	Family Support	1	0.1%		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Heartland Sarpy County	Advocate	1	0.1%		Yes			
Saunders County Youth Services	Family Support	13	1.5%				Yes	Yes
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	Family Support	13	1.5%				Yes	Yes
Total		873	100%	10	15	13	16	17

Table 3 displays the referral source for each case. Overall, the most referrals, 36.7%, came from diversion programs ($n = 320$). This is similar to what we learned during our interviews with the Family Support programs, a majority of programs indicated that referrals come from probation and/or diversion programs. Other primary sources for referrals include missing youth reports, schools, and word of mouth. Otherwise, other and self, make up the next largest referral sources ($n = 210$ and $n = 133$, respectively), along with schools ($n = 85$, combined total of teacher, school administrator, and school counselor referrals).

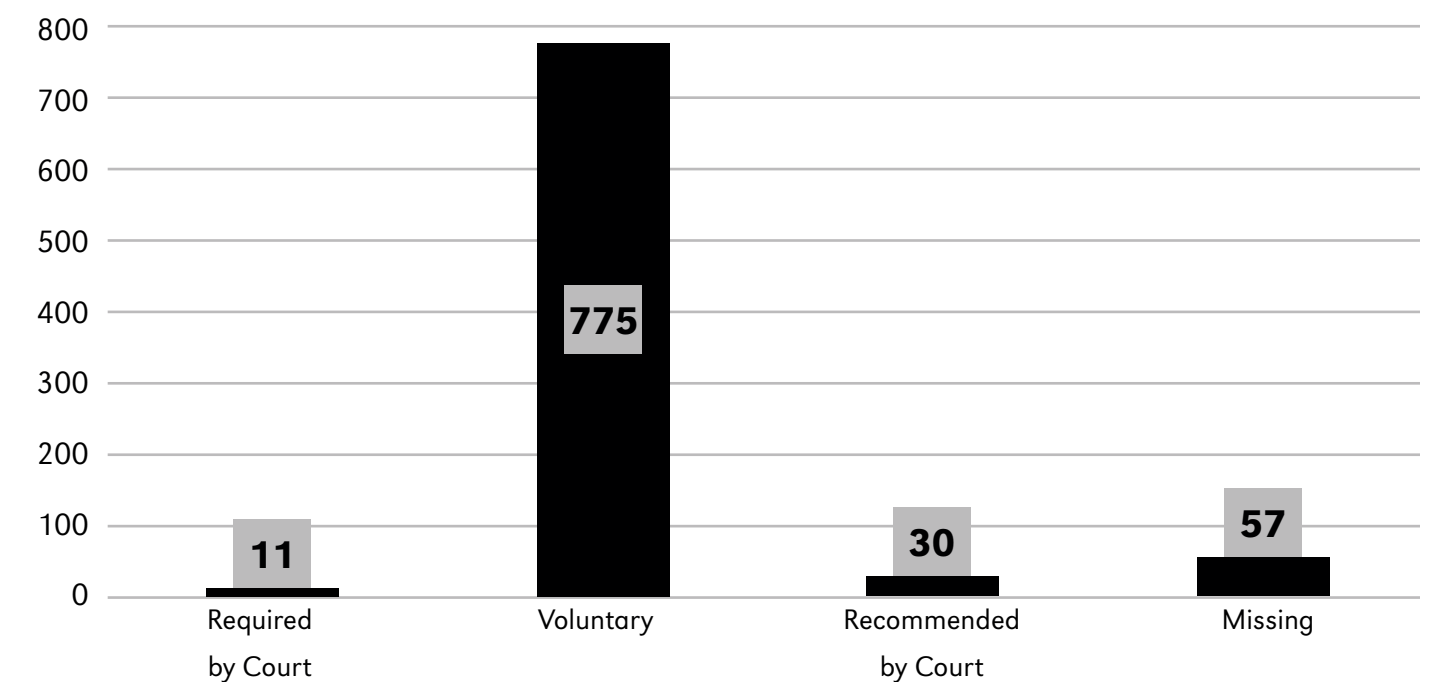
Table 3. Referral Source for Youth Served with Family Support

	Frequency	Percent
Other	210	24.1%
Diversion Programs	320	36.7%
Probation	6	0.7%
Teacher	8	0.9%
School Administrator	55	6.3%
School Counselor	22	2.5%
Self	133	15.2%
None	2	0.2%
Mental Health/Social Worker	66	7.6%
Court	22	2.5%
Missing	29	3.3%
Total	873	100%

Enrollment Reason

Figure 3 displays the most common reasons a youth enrolls with Family Support. These are voluntary (88.8%), recommended by court (3.4%), or required by court (1.3%). While interviewing the Family Support programs, we learned that youth and families are referred to programs for many reasons, most often related to mental health needs, behavioral issues both at home and in school (including running away from home), and substance use concerns. This suggests that most youth and/or families acknowledge the need for services and voluntarily enroll.

Figure 3. Enrollment Reason



Primary Activity Type

Youth and/or families are referred to Family Support programs by a variety of sources and enroll for various reasons. As such, the methods used during programming also vary. Table 4 displays the main methods staff used to engage the youth and/or family or the category of service delivery for the program. For programs reporting primary activity type for youth ($n = 278$), referrals to services were the most common activity or service provided (39.2%), followed by assisting families in parenting skills (21.2%), and assisted in other skills (14.7%).

Table 4. Primary Type of Activity

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Behavioral Contract	8	2.9%
Develop Behavioral Goals	23	8.3%
Developed Meaningful Sanctions/Rewards for Youth with Family	14	5%
Advocacy	9	3.2%
Referral to Services	109	39.2%
Developed Educational Goals	12	4.3%
Developed Employment Goals	1	0.4%
Assisted Families in Parenting Skills	59	21.2%
Assisted in Other Skills	41	14.7%
Family Therapy	2	0.7%
Total	278	100%

Risk Level of Youth Served

Effective interventions for a youthful population include those that are therapeutic, high quality, and serve high risk youth, including youth with prior law violations, prior aggressive behaviors, and/or come from high-risk environments (Lipse et al., 2009). Although not required, programs are asked to enter these three variables into the JCMS for the youth they serve. To assess these variables, however, we require at least 20% of the variables to be completed. As Tables 5a through 5c indicate, many programs have high percentages of missing and “unknown” data for these variables which makes evaluation difficult. Of the data that is available, it appears that the highest risk factor for youth served by Family Support is coming from Aggressive Behavior.

Table 5a. Risk Level of Youth Served: Prior Violations

Program	Yes	No	Unknown	Missing
Alliance Alternative High School	10%	40%	20%	30%
Center for Psychological Services	0%	11.7%	8.3%	80%
Compass Buffalo County	20%	20%	6.7%	53.3%
Boys Town Buffalo County	50%	0%	0%	50%
Boys Town Cass County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Healing Hearts & Families	0%	38.5%	0%	61.5%
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	25%	0%	0%	75%

Program	Yes	No	Unknown	Missing
Heartland Family Services	0%	0%	0%	100%
Owens Educational Services	0%	0%	0%	100%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	40%	0%	0%	60%
Boys Town Douglas County	0.4%	0.7%	14.7%	84.2%
Capstone Behavioral Health	30.4%	43.5%	0%	26.1%
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	5.6%	27.8%	38.9%	27.8%
Community Based Services Douglas County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Thrive Omaha	10%	5%	35%	50%
Release Ministries	27.3%	72.7%	0%	0%
Banister’s Leadership Academy	0%	100%	0%	0%
Project Harmony	26.4%	69.3%	0%	3.4%
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	0%	100%	0%	0%
Better Living Gage County	33.3%	0%	33.3%	33.3%
The Salvation Army	0%	10%	0%	90%
YWCA Lincoln	0%	18.2%	6.1%	75.8%
CEDARS – Otoe County	0%	90%	0%	10%
Platte County Juvenile Services	0%	0%	0%	100%
Better Living Saline County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Heartland Sarpy County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saunders County Youth Services	61.5%	38.5%	0%	0%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	0%	23.1%	38.5%	38.5%

Table 5b. Risk Level of Youth Served: Aggressive Behavior

Program	Yes	No	Unknown	Missing
Alliance Alternative High School	10%	50%	10%	30%
Center for Psychological Services	3.3%	3.3%	11.7%	81.7%
Compass Buffalo County	20%	26.7%	6.7%	46.7%
Boys Town Buffalo County	25%	25%	0%	50%
Boys Town Cass County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Healing Hearts & Families	0%	38.5%	0%	61.5%
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	25%	0%	0%	75%
Heartland Family Services	0%	0%	0%	100%
Owens Educational Services	21.4%	0%	0%	78.6%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	20%	0%	0%	80%
Boys Town Douglas County	3.3%	1.8%	12.5%	82.4%
Capstone Behavioral Health	52.2%	21.7%	0%	26.1%
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	5.6%	27.8%	38.9%	27.8%
Community Based Services Douglas County	100%	0%	0%	0%
Thrive Omaha	30%	10%	10%	50%

Program	Yes	No	Unknown	Missing
Release Ministries	63.6%	36.4%	0%	0%
Banister's Leadership Academy	0%	100%	0%	0%
Project Harmony	6.8%	88.6%	0%	4.5%
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	0%	0%	100%	0%
Better Living Gage County	33.3%	0%	33.3%	33.3%
The Salvation Army	0%	10%	0%	90%
YWCA Lincoln	3%	21.2%	0%	75.8%
CEDARS - Otoe County	20%	70%	0%	10%
Platte County Juvenile Services	0%	20%	0%	80%
Better Living Saline County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Heartland Sarpy County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saunders County Youth Services	38.5%	61.5%	0%	0%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	7.7%	23.1%	30.8%	38.5%

Table 5c. Risk Level of Youth Served: High Risk Environment

Program	Yes	No	Unknown	Missing
Alliance Alternative High School	20%	30%	20%	30%
Center for Psychological Services	10%	5%	6.7%	78.3%
Compass Buffalo County	0%	46.7%	0%	53.3%
Boys Town Buffalo County	0%	50%	0%	50%
Boys Town Cass County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Healing Hearts & Families	15.4%	0%	0%	84.6%
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	0%	50%	25%	25%
Heartland Family Services	0.9%	0.4%	0%	98.7%
Owens Educational Services	42.9%	0%	0%	57.1%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Boys Town Douglas County	0%	0.4%	13.2%	86.4%
Capstone Behavioral Health	43.5%	30.4%	0%	26.1%
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	5.6%	16.7%	50%	27.8%
Community Based Services Douglas County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Thrive Omaha	40%	10%	0%	50%
Release Ministries	63.6%	18.2%	0%	18.2%
Banister's Leadership Academy	0%	0%	0%	100%
Project Harmony	46.6%	47.7%	0%	5.7%
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	0%	0%	0%	100%
Better Living Gage County	0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
The Salvation Army	0%	10%	0%	90%
YWCA Lincoln	6.1%	24.2%	0%	69.7%
CEDARS - Otoe County	70%	20%	0%	10%

Program	Yes	No	Unknown	Missing
Platte County Juvenile Services	0%	0%	0%	100%
Better Living Saline County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Heartland Sarpy County	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saunders County Youth Services	76.9%	23.1%	0%	0%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	30.8%	0%	15.4%	53.8%

Family Support Contacts

Next, we examined the numbers of class hours completed by youth and number of contact hours each program had with youth, as measures of dosage of the program. Several programs have not entered complete data for contacts with youth, while others have provided data for these contacts. Data on the number of class hours completed was entered for 269 cases (30.8% of the total sample), while data on the number of contact hours was entered for 313 cases (35.9% of the total sample). Table 6a displays the number of class hours and Table 6b displays the number of contact hours. In interviewing Family Support, we asked how often they meet with youth. Most report having contact with between one to four youth/families, two to three times per week. Programs not listed in the tables below did not include data on number of class and/or contact hours.

These fields became required on July 18, 2018, but are yet to be reliably entered; therefore, we did not further examine these variables. It is important for programs to continue to improve data entry efforts as they are important for understanding how dosage and specific interventions are influencing outcomes.

Table 6a. Number of Class Hours

Program	No Class Hours Entered	Cases with Class Hours	M	SD	Min	Max
Alliance Alternative High School	40%	6	7.7	0.8	6	8
Center for Psychological Services	0%	60	8.1	1	8	16
Boys Town Douglas County	33.1%	182	10.8	8.8	0	72
YWCA Lincoln	36.4%	21	22.4	7.6	2	48
Total		269	10.9	8.4	0	72

Table 6b. Number of Contact Hours

Program	No Class Hours Entered	Cases with Class Hours	M	SD	Min	Max
Compass Buffalo County	6.7%	14	19.2	19.5	2.75	79.5
Boys Town Buffalo County	25%	3	16.8	15.4	7	34.5
Boys Town Cass County	0%	1	2	-	2	2
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	75%	1	26	-	26	26
Heartland Family Services	98.7%	3	22.6	20.9	0	41.24

Program	No Class Hours Entered	Cases with Class Hours	M	SD	Min	Max
Owens Educational Services	0%	14	6.9	4.1	2	15.5
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	80%	1	13.5	-	13.5	13.5
Boys Town Douglas County	61.8%	104	38.6	28	1.8	167.8
Capstone Behavioral Health	52.2%	11	10.7	11.2	1	37
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	0%	18	0.7	1.5	0	6
Thrive Omaha	85%	3	11.2	17.9	0.7	31.2
Release Ministries	0%	11	18.9	13.4	1	43.5
Project Harmony	0%	88	0.6	1.0	0	5
Better Living Gage County	0%	3	12.2	8	3	17.8
YWCA Lincoln	69.7%	10	8.5	5.7	1	15
CEDARS - Otoe County	10%	9	24	8.5	11	37
Platte County Juvenile Services	20%	4	7.9	2.6	5	11
Better Living Saline County	0%	1	59.3	-	59.3	59.3
Saunders County Youth Services	7.7%	12	11.8	7.6	1.3	23
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	84.6%	2	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.8
Total		313	17.7	23.8	0	167.8

Discharge Outcomes

Before examining outcome measures for each of the programs, we first examined how many cases were never discharged/possibly still active, discharged but no reason given (as evidenced by whether they had a discharge date, but no reason indicated), and discharged with a reason. Overall, of the total 873 cases entered in the JCMS, 83% are closed.

To reliably evaluate a program's outcomes, at least 80% of the program cases should be closed with a discharge reason. Table 7 displays the discharge data, and the highlighted rows include the programs that have at least 80% of their cases closed. It is also important to note that some programs had 10 or fewer cases reported, so these results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample sizes. Note, programs with only one case were dropped from future analyses.

The remaining programs either have too many cases that they failed to close or have too many active cases to proceed with evaluation at this time. We continue to include the data for these programs so trends can be examined, and so programs may see how missing data affects outcomes.

Table 7. Discharge Data Entered and Cases Available for Outcome Analysis

Program	Never Discharged or Possibly Active	No Discharge Reason Entered	Discharge Reason Known	Total	Percent Cases Closed
Alliance Alternative High School	0	0	10	10	100%
Center for Psychological Services	0	0	60	60	100%
Compass Buffalo County	4	2	9	15	60%
Boys Town Buffalo County	0	0	4	4	100%
Boys Town Cass County	0	0	1	1	100%
Healing Hearts & Families	13	0	0	13	0%
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	0	0	4	4	100%
Heartland Family Services	14	7	202	223	90.6%
Owens Educational Services	0	0	14	14	100%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	0	0	5	5	100%
Boys Town Douglas County	7	1	264	272	97.1%
Capstone Behavioral Health	7	0	16	23	69.6%
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	3	1	14	18	77.8%
Community Based Services Douglas County	0	0	1	1	100%
Thrive Omaha	9	3	8	20	40%
Release Ministries	1	0	10	11	90.9%
Banister's Leadership Academy	1	0	0	1	0%
Project Harmony	35	1	52	88	59.1%
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	0	0	1	1	100%
Better Living Gage County	2	0	1	3	33.3%
The Salvation Army	10	0	0	10	0%
YWCA Lincoln	17	5	11	33	33.3%
CEDARS - Otoe County	0	0	10	10	100%
Platte County Juvenile Services	4	0	1	5	20%
Better Living Saline County	1	0	0	1	0%
Heartland Sarpy County	0	0	1	1	100%
Saunders County Youth Services	0	0	13	13	100%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	1	0	12	13	92.3%
Total	129	20	724	873	83%

Tables 8a and 8b display the discharge reasons for each case. Table 8a displays the successful and neutral discharged cases and 8b displays the unsuccessful reason. Successful and neutral discharge reasons include completed program requirements, other (moved away, death, etc.), family plans to follow through, and parent or youth refused. Unsuccessful discharge was captured in the data as stopped attending. In general, of the programs that can be evaluated (highlighted in gray), these programs are demonstrating several successful outcomes. Similarly, these programs have demonstrated fewer unsuccessful outcomes. Dashes in cells reflect missing data where percent successful/neutral and unsuccessful could not be calculated. Reasons for unsuccessful outcomes for Family support programs are related to cases in which the youth and/or family stopped attending programming and may be related a variety of reasons such as the family moving or issues with ongoing youth and/or family engagement. In our interviews with Family Support programs, many reported challenges and barriers to successful programming related to lack of parental engagement.

Table 8a. Discharge Reasons: Successful and Neutral

Program	Completed Program Requirements	Other - Neutral	Family Plans to Follow Through	Parent/ Youth Refused	Percent Successful/ Neutral
Alliance Alternative High School	90%	10%	0%	0%	100%
Center for Psychological Services	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Compass Buffalo County	13.3%	20%	13.3%	13.3%	
Boys Town Buffalo County	50%	25%	0%	25%	100%
Boys Town Cass County	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Healing Hearts & Families	-	-	-	-	
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	50%	0%	0%	25%	75%
Heartland Family Services	54.3%	24.2%	7.2%	4.5%	90.1%
Owens Educational Services	57.1%	28.6%	0%	0%	85.7%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	60%	20%	0%	20%	100%
Boys Town Douglas County	83.5%	0.7%	0%	1.1%	85.3%
Capstone Behavioral Health	13%	17.4%	4.3%	26.1%	
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	11.1%	22.2%	0%	44.4%	
Community Based Services Douglas County	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Thrive Omaha	30%	5%	5%	0%	
Release Ministries	45.5%	9.1%	0%	18.2%	72.3%
Banister's Leadership Academy	-	-	-	-	
Project Harmony	0%	17%	0%	39.8%	

Program	Completed Program Requirements	Other - Neutral	Family Plans to Follow Through	Parent/ Youth Refused	Percent Successful/ Neutral
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Better Living Gage County	0%	33.3%	0%	0%	
The Salvation Army	-	-	-	-	
YWCA Lincoln	27.3%	0%	0%	0%	
CEDARS - Otoe County	80%	20%	0%	0%	100%
Platte County Juvenile Services	40%	0%	0%	0%	
Better Living Saline County	-	-	-	-	
Heartland Sarpy County	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saunders County Youth Services	30.8%	23.1%	15.4%	30.8%	100%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	0%	15.4%	0%	53.8%	69.2%
Total	54.6%	11.3%	2.5%	9.1%	77.7%

Table 8b. Discharge Reason: Unsuccessful

Program	Stopped Attending / Percent Unsuccessful
Alliance Alternative High School	0%
Center for Psychological Services	0%
Compass Buffalo County	0%
Boys Town Buffalo County	0%
Boys Town Cass County	0%
Healing Hearts & Families	-
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	25%
Heartland Family Services	0.4%
Owens Educational Services	14.3%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	0%
Boys Town Douglas County	12.1%
Capstone Behavioral Health	8.7%
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	5.6%
Community Based Services Douglas County	0%
Thrive Omaha	10%
Release Ministries	18.2%
Banister's Leadership Academy	-
Project Harmony	3.4%

Program	Stopped Attending / Percent Unsuccessful
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	0%
Better Living Gage County	0%
The Salvation Army	-
YWCA Lincoln	6.1%
CEDARS – Otoe County	0%
Platte County Juvenile Services	0%
Better Living Saline County	-
Heartland Sarpy County	0%
Saunders County Youth Services	0%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	23.1%
Total	6%

Family Function and Communication Related Outcome Measures

The main goals of Family Support programs are to improve family function and family communication. As such, programs are asked to enter data for each case at intake and at discharge from the program to measure improvement from intake to discharge. For reliability purposes, we need at least 80% of program data to be entered at both intake and discharge. Analyses were run to assess which programs reported less than 20% missing data across both variables. Please note, programs were not required to enter these variables until July 1, 2018³.

Of the programs reporting more than 80% of intake and discharge data, six⁴ programs had sufficient data to examine family function and three⁵ programs had sufficient data to examine family communication. Programs meeting the 80% data reporting threshold for outcome measures are highlighted in Tables 9a, 9b, 10a, and 10b.

As displayed in Tables 9a and 9b, we observe improvement in family function scores from intake to discharge. Family function assesses the level of ability of the family system to meet the needs of all members. For programs reporting no more than 20% missing data, analyses indicate that programs demonstrated an overall decrease in students who reported “very poor” or “poor” in family function (indicated in green in Table 9b). For cases from Saunders County Youth Services there is a slightly higher percentage of students who reported “very poor” family function from intake to discharge (indicated in red in Table 9b), which is likely related to a small sample size. Improvements in scores for “average,” “good,” and “very good” are indicated in green, decreasing scores are in red. Two programs did report more missing data at discharge which may account for decreases in some scores. Wilcoxon nonparametric statistical tests for ordinal data indicated that:

³ Crosstabs of the data excluding cases prior to July 1, 2018, had a minimal effect on reducing the missing data and did not allow for additional programs beyond what is already reported to be included in the analyses.

⁴ Eight programs total reported >80% of their data for intake and discharge for family function, but 2 of these programs (i.e., Boys Town Cass County and Community Based Services Douglas County) only had 1 case each, so these programs were dropped from the analyses.

⁵ Four programs total reported >80% of their data for intake and discharge for family communication, but 1 of these programs (i.e., Boys Town Cass County) only had 1 case, so this program was dropped from the analyses.

- There was a significant improvement in family function from intake to discharge for cases from **Center for Psychological Services** (Wilcoxon $z = 6.10$, $p < .001$, $n = 54$), cases from **YWCA Lincoln** (Wilcoxon $z = 3.80$, $p < .001$, $n = 29$), and cases from **CEDARS – Otoe County** (Wilcoxon $z = 2.64$, $p < .008$, $n = 10$). For **Center for Psychological Services**⁶, 41 scores improved, none declined, and 13 remained the same. Families referred to this program were enrolled in parenting classes, specifically Circle of Security. Note, while data for demographic and risk factors for youth were included in the JCMS, measures for family function before and after completing programming represent parent scores. These findings suggest many parent scores for family function significantly improved with programming. For cases from **YWCA Lincoln**, 21 students scores improved, 6 declined, and 2 remained the same. This is important considering this program focuses on addressing behavioral issues through building relationships and giving youth autonomy in decision making. Family function scores from **CEDARS – Otoe County** from intake to discharge suggest 8 students scores improved, none declined, and 2 remained the same. This is important considering this program primarily uses quick engagement strategies to help with skill building to address attendance and parental issues.
- There was not a significant improvement in family function from intake to discharge for cases from **Boys Town Buffalo County** (Wilcoxon $z = 1.63$, $p = .102$, $n = 4$), **Release Ministries** (Wilcoxon $z = -.966$, $p = .334$, $n = 10$), and **Saunders County Youth Services** (Wilcoxon $z = .962$, $p = .336$, $n = 13$). For **Boys Town Buffalo County**, 3 student scores improved, none decline, and 1 student remained the same. Student scores for **Release Ministries** suggest that 2 student scores improved, 3 declined, and 5 remained the same. Scores for **Saunders County Youth Services** reflect that 3 students scores improved, 2 declined, and 8 remained the same.

Table 9a. Family Function Related Outcome Measures: Family Function at Intake

Program	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Missing
Alliance Alternative High School	0%	20%	40%	10%	0%	30%
Center for Psychological Services	0%	16.7%	51.7%	20%	1.7%	10%
Compass Buffalo County	0%	46.7%	20%	6.7%	0%	26.7%
Boys Town Buffalo County	0%	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Boys Town Cass County	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Healing Hearts & Families	0%	0%	15.4%	0%	0%	84.6%
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	0%	25%	50%	0%	0%	25%
Heartland Family Services	0.9%	0.9%	5.8%	13%	4.9%	74.4%
Owens Educational Services	7.1%	14.3%	21.4%	7.1%	0%	50%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	0%	40%	20%	0%	0%	40%
Boys Town Douglas County	6.3%	18.4%	40.8%	6.3%	0%	28.3%
Capstone Behavioral Health	21.7%	39.1%	13%	0%	0%	26.1%

⁶ As this program is no longer currently funded, they were not included in the program questionnaire for this report. However, JJI reached out to the program director for a brief phone interview as analyses showed this program had significant effects on outcome measures included in this evaluation.

Program	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Missing
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	0%	0%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	66.7%
Community Based Services Douglas County	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Thrive Omaha	5%	0%	40%	0%	0%	55%
Release Ministries	9.1%	36.4%	36.4%	9.1%	9.1%	0%
Banister's Leadership Academy	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Project Harmony	0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	0%	96.6%
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Better Living Gage County	0%	66.7%	33.3%	0%	0%	0%
The Salvation Army	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
YWCA Lincoln	0%	54.5%	18.2%	6.1%	18.2%	3%
CEDARS - Otoe County	0%	50%	40%	10%	0%	0%
Platte County Juvenile Services	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Better Living Saline County	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Heartland Sarpy County	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saunders County Youth Services	0%	92.3%	7.7%	0%	0%	0%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	7.7%	15.4%	38.5%	7.7%	0%	30.8%
Total	3.3%	15.2%	23.6%	9%	2.4%	46.4%

Table 9b. Family Function Related Outcome Measures: Family Function at Discharge

Program	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Missing
Program	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Missing
Alliance Alternative High School	20%	20%	40%	20%	0%	0%
Center for Psychological Services	0%	0%	21.7%	63.3%	15%	0%
Compass Buffalo County	0%	13.3%	20%	13.3%	6.7%	46.7%
Boys Town Buffalo County	0%	25%	0%	75%	0%	0%
Boys Town Cass County	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Healing Hearts & Families	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Heartland Family Services	0.4%	0.9%	3.6%	12.1%	6.3%	76.7%

Program	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Missing
Owens Educational Services	0%	0%	42.9%	7.1%	0%	50%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	0%	20%	20%	60%	0%	0%
Boys Town Douglas County	0.4%	4.8%	22.1%	36.4%	4.8%	30.9%
Capstone Behavioral Health	0%	34.8%	13%	17.4%	4.3%	30.4%
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	5.6%	0%	5.6%	0%	16.7%	72.2%
Community Based Services Douglas County	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Thrive Omaha	0%	10%	20%	0%	5%	65%
Release Ministries	9.1%	27.3%	45.5%	9.1%	0%	9.1%
Banister's Leadership Academy	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Project Harmony	1.1%	8%	45.5%	5.7%	0%	39.8%
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Better Living Gage County	0%	33.3%	0%	0%	0%	66.7%
The Salvation Army	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
YWCA Lincoln	0%	3%	3%	84.8%	0%	9.1%
CEDARS - Otoe County	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%	0%
Platte County Juvenile Services	0%	0%	20%	20%	0%	60%
Better Living Saline County	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Heartland Sarpy County	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saunders County Youth Services	15.4%	53.8%	15.4%	7.7%	7.7%	0%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	7.7%	15.4%	30.8%	7.7%	0%	38.5%
Total	1.4%	6.3%	18.6%	25.5%	5%	43.2%

Similar to patterns observed in family function scores from intake to discharge, we observe improvement in family communication scores from intake to discharge, as displayed in Tables 10a and 10b. Family communication assesses the level of ability for the family to understand and meet the needs of all family members through verbal and non-verbal information exchange. Programs demonstrated an overall decrease in students who reported "very poor" or "poor" in family communication (indicated in green in Table 10b). We also observed improvements in scores for "average," "good," and "very good" (indicated in green on Table 10b), with decreasing scores in red. Wilcoxon nonparametric statistical tests for ordinal data indicated that:

- There was a significant improvement in family communication from intake to discharge for **Center for Psychological Services** cases (Wilcoxon $z = 5.89$, $p < .001$, $n=54$) and for cases from **CEDARS - Otoe County** (Wilcoxon $z = 2.81$, $p = .005$, $n = 9$). For **Center for Psychological Services** cases, 39 scores improved, none declined, and 15 remained the same. Families referred to this program were enrolled in parenting classes, specifically Circle of Security. Note, while data for demographic and risk factors for youth were included in the JCMS, measures for family communication before and after completing programming represent parent scores. These findings suggest that most parents significantly improved

family communication after programming. For cases from **CEDARS – Otoe County**, 9 students scores improved, none declined, and none remained the same. This is important considering this program focuses on life skills and family routine development.

- There was not a significant improvement in family communication from intake to discharge for **Saunders County Youth Services** cases (Wilcoxon $z = 1.72$, $p = .086$, $n=13$); specifically, 5 student scores improved, 2 declined, and 6 remained the same.

Table 10a. Family Function Related Outcome Measures: Family Communication at Intake

Program	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Missing
Alliance Alternative High School	10%	10%	20%	30%	0%	30%
Center for Psychological Services	1.7%	15%	50%	23.3%	0%	10%
Compass Buffalo County	6.7%	40%	20%	6.7%	0%	26.7%
Boys Town Buffalo County	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Boys Town Cass County	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Healing Hearts & Families	0%	7.7%	7.7%	0%	0%	84.6%
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	0%	25%	50%	0%	0%	25%
Heartland Family Services	0%	0%	1.3%	3.1%	0%	95.5%
Owens Educational Services	7.1%	14.3%	21.4%	7.1%	0%	50%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	0%	60%	0%	0%	0%	40%
Boys Town Douglas County	3.7%	25%	38.2%	2.6%	1.8%	28.7%
Capstone Behavioral Health	39.1%	30.4%	4.3%	0%	0%	26.1%
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	0%	11.1%	0%	5.6%	16.7%	66.7%
Community Based Services Douglas County	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Thrive Omaha	5%	0%	25%	5%	0%	65%
Release Ministries	9.1%	36.4%	27.3%	0%	18.2%	18.2%
Banister’s Leadership Academy	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Project Harmony	0%	1.1%	2.3%	0%	0%	96.6%
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Better Living Gage County	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
The Salvation Army	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
YWCA Lincoln	0%	21.2%	3%	12.1%	18.2%	45.5%
CEDARS – Otoe County	0%	40%	50%	0%	0%	10%
Platte County Juvenile Services	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Better Living Saline County	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Program	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Missing
Heartland Sarpy County	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saunders County Youth Services	0%	69.2%	30.8%	0%	0%	0%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	15.4%	7.7%	38.5%	7.7%	0%	30.8%
Total	3.2%	14.9%	20.2%	5.7%	1.8%	54.2%

Table 10b. Family Function Related Outcome Measures: Family Communication at Discharge

Program	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Missing
Alliance Alternative High School	20%	20%	40%	20%	0%	0%
Center for Psychological Services	0%	0%	21.7%	63.3%	15%	0%
Compass Buffalo County	0%	13.3%	20%	13.3%	6.7%	46.7%
Boys Town Buffalo County	0%	25%	0%	75%	0%	0%
Boys Town Cass County	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Healing Hearts & Families	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Heartland Family Services	0.4%	0.9%	3.6%	12.1%	6.3%	76.7%
Owens Educational Services	0%	0%	42.9%	7.1%	0%	50%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	0%	20%	20%	60%	0%	0%
Boys Town Douglas County	1.1%	4.8%	22.1%	36.4%	4.8%	30.5%
Capstone Behavioral Health	0%	34.8%	13%	17.4%	4.3%	30.4%
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	5.6%	0%	5.6%	0%	16.7%	72.2%
Community Based Services Douglas County	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Thrive Omaha	0%	10%	20%	0%	5%	65%
Release Ministries	9.1%	27.3%	45.5%	9.1%	0%	9.1%
Banister’s Leadership Academy	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Project Harmony	1.1%	8%	45.5%	5.7%	0%	39.8%
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Better Living Gage County	0%	33.3%	0%	0%	0%	66.7%
The Salvation Army	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
YWCA Lincoln	0%	3%	3%	84.8%	0%	9.1%

Program	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Missing
CEDARS - Otoe County	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%	0%
Platte County Juvenile Services	0%	0%	20%	20%	0%	60%
Better Living Saline County	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Heartland Sarpy County	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saunders County Youth Services	7.7%	30.8%	30.8%	23.1%	7.7%	0%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	7.7%	15.4%	30.8%	7.7%	0%	38.5%
Total	1.0%	6.4%	17.6%	24.9%	5.3%	44.8%

Future System Involvement

To examine future system involvement (FSI) and detention following program participation, the Juvenile Justice Institute received an extract of court filing data from the Nebraska Crime Commission's (NCC) Justice Data Transformation System (JDTS). The JDTS extract is a deidentified masked dataset that matched court data to the JCMS using first name, last name, middle name (if available in both datasets), and date of birth. These fields need not be identical; instead, the matching process uses a probabilistic process and the level of "matchingness" is based on how well the variables match each other. If interested in the matching levels, documentation on this probabilistic process is available from the NCC. Please note, referral date was used to code for the date a youth was "filed on" as this is the variable provided by the NCC and, according to the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation, is typically the same as the filed on date.

Data was provided to the JJI for all matched cases - any time a juvenile's name appeared in the court data and matched a juvenile who was referred to a Family Support program. Next, the JJI filtered out any court filings that were dismissed (dismissed-unfounded and dismissed-warned), cases in which the offense did not meet the EB-Nebraska definition of FSI (see Appendix 1), court filings that occurred prior to discharge from the Family Support program, and court filings that occurred greater than one-year post-discharge. If a juvenile had more than one offense that met these criteria, we included the first offense following discharge from the program as the measure of FSI. Offenses were categorized according to whether they were status offenses or law violations.

If a juvenile had more than one offense that met these criteria, we included the first offense following discharge from the program as the measure of FSI. Offenses were categorized according to whether they were status offenses or law violations.

In addition to FSI, we also examined the percent of youth from each program that were sent to either a secure or staff secure juvenile facility after participating in a Community-based Aid funded program. Youth were considered to be detained if they were sent to a detention facility at all following release from the program. Please note, if a youth had more than one entry into a detention facility post-release, only the facility placement from the first incident post-release was coded.

Overall percentage of youth per facility with a new status offense, new law violation, and detained post-release are included in Table 11 below. Table 12 includes a breakdown of Nebraska facilities where youth were placed.

Table 11. Discharge Data Entered and Cases Available for Outcome Analysis

Program	Number of Cases	Cases Closed (%)	Status Offense (%)	Law Violation (%)	Detained (%)
Alliance Alternative High School	10	100%	0%	10%	0%
Center for Psychological Services	60	100%	1.7%	0%	0%
Compass Buffalo County	15	60%	-	-	-
Boys Town Buffalo County	4	100%	0%	25%	0%
Boys Town Cass County	1	100%	-	-	-
Healing Hearts & Families	13	0%	-	-	-
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	4	100%	0%	0%	0%
Heartland Family Services	223	90.6%	1%	11.5%	10.5%
Owens Educational Services	14	100%	7.1%	7.1%	0%
KVC Nebraska Douglas County	5	100%	0%	20%	40%
Boys Town Douglas County	272	97.1%	1.5%	0.8%	1.9%
Capstone Behavioral Health	23	69.6%	-	-	-
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	18	77.8%	-	-	-
Community Based Services Douglas County	1	100%	-	-	-
Thrive Omaha	20	40%	-	-	-
Release Ministries	11	90.9%	0%	0%	0%
Banister's Leadership Academy	1	0%	-	-	-
Project Harmony	88	59.1%	-	-	-
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	1	100%	-	-	-
Better Living Gage County	3	33.3%	-	-	-
The Salvation Army	10	0%	-	-	-
YWCA Lincoln	33	33.3%	-	-	-
CEDARS - Otoe County	10	100%	0%	0%	10%
Platte County Juvenile Services	5	20%	-	-	-
Better Living Saline County	1	0%	-	-	-
Heartland Sarpy County	1	100%	-	-	-
Saunders County Youth Services	13	100%	0%	7.7%	0%
Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center	13	92.3%	8.3%	16.7%	16.6%
Total	873	85.1%			

Table 11 displays the FSI for the programs that had at least 80% of their cases closed at the time of evaluation. This resulted in 16 programs having adequate data to assess FSI. Additionally, four programs were dropped from the analyses as they only had one case included in the dataset leaving 12 total programs for these analyses (n = 639), highlighted in Table 11. Of these, 24 cases were excluded due to missing discharge date leaving a final sample of 615 youth. Each of the remaining 12 programs had between 0% and 8.3% of youth with a status offense court filing. Law violation rates were more variable across programs—with a range of 0% to 25%. Youth detained in a secure or staff secure facility for this sample varied from 0% to 40%. An overall total of 32 youth from this sample were detained in a facility following discharge from a program (5.2%, see Table 12).

Six programs serving small sample sizes of youth reported overall low percentages of youth with new status offense court filings, law violations, and detentions. Youth served in Dakota County Community Monitoring Services (n = 4) and Release Ministries (n = 11) had no new FSI or detentions. Alliance Alternative High School (n = 10) had no new status offense court filings or detentions, and one new law violation (10%). Only one youth served by CEDARS – Otoe County (n = 10) had a new detention following program discharge. Youth served in the Saunders County Youth Services program had no new status offense court filings or detentions, and one youth with a new law violation (7.7%). Finally, Owens Educational Services (n = 14) program reported no new detentions among program youth and one new status offense court filing and one new law violation among participants.

The Boys Town Buffalo County (25%, n = 4) program and the KVC Nebraska Douglas County (20%, n = 5) program had the highest FSI for law violations, which are reflective of the small sample sizes of youth in the programs. Further, KVC Nebraska Douglas County also reported the highest new detainment percentage for youth at 40% (n = 2). This program also reported one of the higher percentages of youth in the program with prior law violations at 40% (Table 5a), which suggests that although the program is small, they may be serving a higher risk population.

The program with the next highest FSI was Scotts Bluff County Juvenile Advancement Center (n = 13), with 16.7% having FSI law violations. This program also reported the highest percentage of new status offense court filings (8.3%). Additionally, 16.6% had new detentions following program discharge. While these figures are likely due to small sample size, this program receives primarily other family support referrals (69.2%), 7.7% had aggressive behavior (Table 5b), and 30.8% lived in a high-risk environment (Table 5c).

With respect to Center for Psychological Services, the FSI for status offense court filings was 1.7%. In examining their referral source, 76.7% came from a mental health/social worker. Little is known about the youth’s overall risk level given the high percentage of missing data on prior violations, aggressive behavior, and high-risk environment. During our interview with this program, they indicated that families referred to the program were enrolled in Circle of Security parenting classes. Both family function and family communication scores significantly improved among program participants during the program (see Tables 9b and 10b). Given that the program focused on parenting classes, the youth among these families may be at lower risk.

Youth from the Heartland Family Services (n = 223) program had very low FSI for status offense court filings at 1%. FSI for law violations were higher at 11.5%. Just over 10% of youth from the program were sent to a detention facility following discharge from the program. When examining their referral source, nearly all youth, 98.7%, came from diversion programs. Their level of risk is unknown as there was little to no data entered for prior law violations, aggressive behavior, or high-risk environment. Over half of program participants completed program requirements with 90.1% of those with successful completion. As this program was no longer funded, we did not interview any staff about the program other than what is in the JCMS.

Finally, youth from the Boys Town Douglas County (n = 272) had very low rates of FSI including 1.5% for new status offense court filings, 0.8% new law violations, and 1.9% of youth sent to a detention facility following discharge from the program. Boys Town Douglas County youth are an average of 12.8 years old, ranging from 1 – 18, 71% are Hispanic, 12.5% White, 11.4% Black/African American, and 5.1% other (Appendix 3). Just over half of youth are male, 56.5%. This program primarily receives referrals from self (44.1%), school administrator (14.3%), and diversion programs (12.5%). While youth level of risk is unknown as most of the data on prior law violations, aggressive behavior, and high-risk environment is missing, we know from our interviews with program staff that many youth that come into the program to address needs related to truancy, mental health concerns, and contact with the criminal justice system, often through more severe charges. Regarding program completion, 83.5% completed program requirements with 85.3% of those with successful completion. Further, the program reported class hours for 182 youth with an average of 10.8, ranging from 0 – 72, this was the second highest average for class hours for programs that reported data (Table 6a). Regarding contact hours, Boys Town Douglas County reported contact hours for 104 youth, with an average of 38.6 hours, ranging from 1.8 – 167.8, the second highest contact hour average for programs reporting data (Table 6b). From our interviews with Boys Town staff, we found that they assess youth upon entry to the program to help with case planning using a variety of tools including the Family and Support Tool (FAST), Strengths and Stressors, Family Risk Screen, Parenting Child and Adolescent Scale, and a Social Network Map. In addition to assessing youth, they meet with youth and families in school and within the community. They teach Common Sense Parenting skills to parents they work with and work to set goals with the youth and connect families to resources and support in the community. Their low rates of FSI and future detainment given the challenges the youth present upon entering the program suggest that this program is successfully reducing youth contact with the criminal justice system.

Table 12. Facility

Facility Name	Number of Cases
Buffalo County Sheriff	1
Douglas County Corrections	2
Douglas County Youth Center	17
Lancaster County Youth Detention Home	2
Lancaster County Corrections	1
Madison County Sheriff	1
Sarpy County Sheriff	1
Northeast Nebraska Juvenile Services	2
Washington County Sheriff Office	1
Sarpy County Care Facility	3
Missing	1
No New Detentions	583
Total	615

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Appendix 1

Definition of Future System Involvement

To accurately assess post-program law violations across Community-based Aid (CBA) funded programs, the Juvenile Justice Institute and other researchers shall utilize the following uniform definition of future law violations for juveniles who participated in a CBA-funded program.

I. Court Filings

(A) This definition shall apply to both juveniles, and individuals who have aged out of the juvenile justice system:

1. Future System Involvement shall mean that within 1 year following discharge from a CBA-funded program the juvenile has:

(a) been filed on, which has not been dismissed or dropped, for an act that would constitute a felony under the laws of this state, and who, beginning on July 1, 2017, was eleven years of age or older at the time the act was committed.

(b) been filed on, which has not been dismissed or dropped, for an act that would constitute a misdemeanor or an infraction under the laws of this state, or a violation of a city or village ordinance, and who, beginning on July 1, 2017, was eleven years of age or older at the time the act was committed.

(i) Future system involvement shall include minor in possession under Neb. Rev. Statute 53-180.02 and is coded as a law violation.

(ii) Future system involvement shall not include less serious misdemeanors or infractions that do not impact community safety, including animal(s) at large, failure to return library materials, and littering.

(iii) Future system involvement shall not include failure to appear.

(c) been filed on, which has not been dismissed or dropped, for an act that would constitute a status offense to include truancy under Neb. Rev. Statute 43-247(3)(b) (3) or Neb. Rev. Statute 79-201 (“compulsory attendance”), uncontrollable juvenile under Rev. Statute 43-247(3)(b)(2), curfew violations under city or village ordinance, or Tobacco use by a Minor under Neb. Rev. Statute 28-1418.

(i) Although status offenses are included in the definition of future system involvement, status offenses shall be reported separately from law violations.

(d) been filed on, which has not been dismissed or dropped, for an act that would constitute a serious traffic offense to include driving under the influence under Neb. Rev. Statute 60-6, 196 or similar city/village ordinance, leaving the scene of an accident under Neb. Rev. Statute 60-696(A), reckless driving under Neb. Rev. Statute 60-6, 214(A), engaging in speed contest/racing under Neb. Rev. Statute 60-6, 195 (a) or (b) or related city/village ordinance.

(i) Future system involvement shall not include less serious traffic violations that do not impact community safety, including careless driving, failure to yield,

failing to stop, speeding, violating learner's permit, driving on suspended license, no valid insurance, no helmet, following too close, failure to display plates.

2. Future law violation shall not include the following:

- (a) been filed on and that has not been dismissed or dropped, for an act that would constitute a Games and Parks violation as found in Neb. Rev. Statute Chapter 37
- (b) been filed on for being mentally ill and dangerous, under Neb. Rev. Statute 43-247(3)(c) or harmful to self or others under 43-247(3)(b)(2)

Appendix 2

Family Support Questionnaire

Name of program:

Your Name/Title:

Date:

1. What is your training and background in? Do you have any special certifications or credentials? Have long have you been employed in this role?
2. Who are you employed by?
3. Is there an individual on your team dedicated to entering data into the JCMS or how is this handled?
4. Where is your office (e.g., city/county building, private office)? How long have you worked in a family support program?
5. Tell me what a typical day looks like for you from the beginning of the day until the end of the day. How many youth do you see in a day? And how often? What is your case load?
6. Please explain how cases are referred to you?
7. Please tell us the most common reasons youth are referred to you?
8. Do you do an assessment on the youth?
 - a. If yes, what assessment(s) do you complete and how do you use the assessment?
9. What are the interventions you use with youth? Please be specific and tell us about all of the interventions and the reasons for that intervention.
10. Do interventions differ by youth of different risk levels?
11. In your opinion, what are some of the most effective interventions?
12. What are some of the biggest challenges/barriers you face when working in family support?
13. Do you have a particular case that you can discuss that exemplifies success for family support?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add about your family support program?

Appendix 3

Currently Funded Programs Demographic Variables										
Program		Age		Race						Gender
Name	Cases	Age (M)	Age (Range)	White (%)	Hispanic (%)	Black/African American (%)	Asian (%)	American Indian/Alaska Native (%)	Other ⁷ (%)	Male (%)
Boys Town Douglas County	272	12.8 ⁸	1 – 18	12.5	71	11.4	0	0	5.1	56.6
Child Saving Institute Douglas County	18	14.7	13 – 17	27.8	33.3	16.7	0	0	22.2	44.4
Project Harmony	88	15.1	10 – 18	1.1	96.6	0	1.1	0	1.1	38.6
YWCA Lincoln	31	13.2	9 – 18	3	12.1	12.1	0	0	72.7	0
Saunders County Youth Services	13	14.9	12 – 17	92.3	0	0	0	0	7.7	69.2
Better Living Gage County	3	14.7	13 – 17	100	0	0	0	0	0	66.7
Dakota County Community Monitoring Services	4	14.8	14 – 16	25	75	0	0	0	0	100
Better Living Saline County	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Compass Buffalo County	15	14.3	10 – 17	80	20	0	0	0	0	46.7
Boys Town Cass County	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gage County MAPS Community Coalition	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Boys Town Buffalo County	4	14.8	12 – 17	50	0	0	0	0	50	50
CEDARS – Otoe County	10	15.1	13 – 17	100	0	0	0	0	0	30

⁷ Other category includes: Multiple Races, Other, and Unspecified.

⁸ Age missing for n = 2

Currently Funded Programs Demographic Variables										
Program		Age		Race						Gender
Name	Cases	Age (M)	Age (Range)	White (%)	Hispanic (%)	Black/African American (%)	Asian (%)	American Indian/Alaska Native (%)	Other ⁷ (%)	Male (%)
Healing Hearts & Families	13	14.5	7 – 17	30.8	69.2	0	0	0	0	7.7
Platte County Juvenile Services	5	15.4	10 – 19	100	0	0	0	0	0	60
The Salvation Army	10	8.9	2 – 14	0	0	100	0	0	0	70
Scotts Bluff Juvenile Advancement Center	13	13.8	11 – 18	7.7	0	0	0	15.4	76.9	30.8



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