

Saunders County

Comprehensive Youth Services Plan

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2030

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Section I: Executive Summary

The community planning team has identified several key areas of concern for local youth, including juvenile mental health, substance use, family dynamics, access to services, recreational opportunities, and juvenile delinquency. This plan will prioritize initiatives aimed at strengthening the family unit, improving mental health and substance use prevention, expanding early intervention services, and increasing recreational programming for youth.

In Section III: Youth Crime Analysis and Needs, there is a detailed description of the needs identified through data collection for our county's youth. Below are the priorities the community team identified to address juvenile delinquency in Saunders County. The focus is on family dynamics and the importance caregivers have on prevention, intervention, and a youth's long-term success.

Priorities identified include:

Priority 1: Reduce youth truancy, absenteeism, and delinquency by strengthening family values and providing early access to support services.

Priority 2: Expand youth substance use and mental health services to address and reduce substance use and mental health concerns among young people.

Priority 3: Enhance recreational programming to provide more opportunities for youth engagement and development.

Priority 4: Strengthen family support services to help parents develop effective parenting skills, increase access to parenting education, and connect families with available community resources.

Section II: Introduction

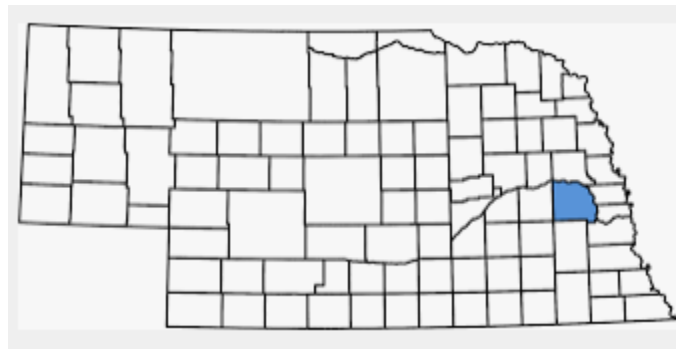
Community Description:

Saunders County has approximately 21,578 people per the US Census Bureau. It is located directly west of Douglas County (Omaha area) and north of Lancaster County (Lincoln area). Due to the county's location, there is a large commuter population which brings its own unique challenges. Its county seat is Wahoo. There are major highways that run through the county, including U.S. Highway 77, U.S. Highway 6 and Nebraska Highways 92, 79, and 66. There are several recreational areas, such as Lake Wanhoo and Eugene T. Mahoney State Park.

The juvenile population ages 10 to 17 is estimated to be at 2,317 with 20.7% of children ages 12-17 living below 185% poverty level. About 13% of children under age 18 (estimates are between 2014-2018) are living in poverty. Approximately 3.4% are Hispanic, 2.3% are multiple races, and 93% are non-Hispanic/white. Of the families in Saunders County, 59.5% are married, 21.9% have never been married, and 18.6% are divorced/separated or widowed (per the U.S. Census Bureau). For those 25 years and older, about 7% are not high school graduates, with 31% having at least a diploma and the remaining have at least some college education. 8% of individuals continue to live at or below the federal poverty level, with 6% living below 150% of the poverty level.

There are several educational opportunities in the county including six public school districts (Ashland-Greenwood, Cedar Bluffs, Raymond Central Elementary schools, Mead, Wahoo, and Yutan Public) and there are three private schools (St. Wenceslaus K-6th, St. John K-6th and Bishop Neumann Middle/High School). There are several continuing education opportunities within a 50-mile radius and Southeast Community College also has a remote learning campus located in Wahoo.

Saunders County residents have access to several resources and opportunities to meet the needs of its residents. These include, but are not limited to, religious organizations, employment opportunities, local clinic/hospital care at Saunders Medical Center, pools, restaurants, grocery stores, volunteer organizations, recreational areas and more.



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Description of Team (how formed, how long meeting, how often meet/met, structure, etc.)
There are two separate teams that contribute to this plan. Each team will be described below with a list of members and their contact information in the next section.

Active Community Team of Saunders County:

Founded in 1978, this organization is dedicated to improving the lives of residents in Saunders County. It has since merged with the former Prevention Coalition to form ACT. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, ACT meets monthly and receives funding from various sources, which supports its mission to offer grant opportunities to smaller groups working to implement programs that benefit the community. ACT also serves as the county's designated community response agency. The organization regularly engages 15 to 20 members from across the county. Additionally, funding is provided through Region V Systems, which administers a federal block grant aimed at substance use prevention.

Juvenile Justice Coalition:

This coalition consists of key stakeholders from the juvenile justice sector, including law enforcement, the county attorney, Saunders County's state senator, youth services, probation, mental health providers, TASC (crisis response), and others. Meeting bi-monthly for the past 12 years, the coalition has increasingly focused on enhancing local practices and communication concerning juvenile justice. In addition, we have partnered with our state senator to stay informed about relevant legislative developments and ensure our work aligns with current policy changes.

Planning for the development of the plan began in January 2024. The meetings consisted of reviewing the needs of the county based on each team member's experiences, the data available, and the collateral information received from partnering organizations. Juvenile-focused data was collected from a variety of sources, including the Nebraska Crime Commission, the Juvenile Justice Institute, local youth services programs, Community Action, Three Rivers, and Region V. This data was then presented to the team to help identify the county's specific needs. This data was used to identify key needs and establish priorities, which formed the foundation for the development of strategies aimed at achieving progress. The planning process unfolded during monthly ACT meetings, supplemented by public surveys shared through social media, email, and other channels. However, only 13 surveys were completed online. While most regular members attended every meeting, the planning process also saw increased participation from individuals who typically do not attend.

List of team members/contributors with contact information (title, address, phone numbers, email)

| JUVENILE JUSTICE COALITION MEMBERS | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Name | Title | Address | Phone | Email |
| Arnold Remington | TASC Program Director | 643 S. 25th, Ste. 11, Lincoln, NE | 402- 474-0419 | aremington@tasc.ws |
| Jennifer Joakim | County Attorney | 387 N. Chestnut, #1 Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-443-8151 | jjoakim@saunderscounty.ne.gov |
| Eric Thomalla | Blue Valley Mental Health | 355 E. 4 th St Wahoo, Ne 68066 | 402-443-4414 | ethomalla@bvbh.net |
| Amanda Bialas | District 5 Probation | 2610 14 th St. Columbus, NE 68601 | 402-563-4910 | Amanda.Bialas@nejudicial.gov |
| Ryan Brady | Ashland Police Chief | 2304 Silver St, #3, Ashland, NE 68003 | 402-944-2222 | Ashlandpd@ashland-ne.com |
| Joseph Baudler | Wahoo Police Chief | 605 N Broadway | 402-443-4155 | baudler@wahoopolice.us |

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| | | Wahoo, Ne 68066 | | |
| Chris Lichtenberg | Saunders County Sheriff | 387 N. Chestnut #3, Wahoo NE 68066 | 402-443-1000 | clichtenberg@saunderscounty.ne.gov |
| Rebekah Shultz | District 5 Probation | 2610 14 th St Columbus, NE 68601 | 402-563-4910 | rebekah.shultz@nejudicial.gov |
| Chilton Leedum | Ceresco Police Department | 217 S. 2 nd Street, Ceresco, NE 68017 | 402-665-2391 | cerescopolice@gmail.com |
| Bruce Bostelman | Senator for Saunders County (District 23) | Nebraska Legislature | | bbostelman@leg.ne.gov |
| Amber Pelan | Saunders County Youth Services / President of Coalition | 387 N. Chestnut, Suite 1 Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-443-8189 | Apelan@co.saunders.ne.us |

| ACTIVE COMMUNITY TEAM, INC (Saunders County) | | | | |
|---|--|--|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Name | Title | Address | Phone | Email |
| Denise Lawver | Wahoo Library Director | 637 N Maple Street, Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-443-3871 | denise@wahoo.ne.us |
| Marc Kaminski | Wahoo Middle School Principal | 2201 N. Locust St, Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-443-3101 | mkaminski@wahoowarriors.org |
| Vernon Golladay | Wahoo High School Principal | 2201 N. Locust St, Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-443-4332 | vgolladay@wahoowarriors.org |
| Mike Weiss | St. Wenceslaus Elementary Principal | 108 N Linden, St., Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-443-3336 | Mike-weiss@cdolinc.net |
| Dustin Deterding | Ashland Greenwood High School Principal (Assistant) | 1842 Furnas Street, Ashland, NE 68003 | 402-944-2114 | Dustin.deterding@agps.org |
| Rajeana Harris | Department of Health and Human Services, Community Support Specialist | | 531-530-7524 | Rajeana.harris@nebraska.gov |
| Duane Hagedorn | Family Services of Lincoln | 501 S 7 th St, Lincoln, NE 68508 | 402-441-7949 | dhagedorn@familyservicelincoln.org |
| Stacie Sabatka | Saunders Medical Center Clinic Director | 1760 County Rd J, Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-443-4191 | ssabatka@smcne.com |
| Jenise Kouma | Community Action | 365 W 1 st Street, Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-277-7330 | jkouma@communityactionatwork.org |
| Cindy Reed | Community Member | Ithaca, NE | 402-718-3065 | midcasasupervisor@gmail.com |
| Kylie Kampschneider | The Bridge | 141 South Union, Fremont, NE 68025 | 402-721-4340 | kyliek@bridgefromviolence.com |
| Kim Sedlacek | Early Development Network | | 402-721-7710 | ksedlacek@esu2.org |
| Amy Meier | Three Rivers Public Health Dept | Fremont, NE 68025 | 402-727-2252 | anne@3rphd.org |
| Kayla Leintz | Region V Systems | 1645 N Street, Lincoln, NE | 402-441-4346 | kleintz@region5systems.net |
| Amber Pelan | Saunders County Youth Services | 387 N. Chestnut, Suite 1 Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-443-8189 | Apelan@co.saunders.ne.us |
| Jacki Trujillo | Community member | Wahoo, NE | 402-720-5645 | jackimtrujillo@gmail.com |
| Brienna Zakovec | Community Navigator, ESU 2 | 2320 N Colorado Ave, Fremont, NE 68025 | 402-919-7804 | brzakovec@esu2.org |
| Joseph Baudler | Wahoo Police Chief | 605 N Broadway Wahoo, Ne 68066 | 402-443-4155 | baudler@wahoopolice.us |
| Michelle Libal | Saunders County Attorney's Office | 387 N. Chestnut, Suite 1, Wahoo, NE 68066 | 402-443-8151 | mlibal@saunderscounty.ne.gov |

Section III: Youth Crime Analysis and Needs

Education and School Services

SCHOOL SUMMARY

There are 6,208 youth in Saunders County (per the 2020 Census). Males accounted for 52.6% of the youth population. See more detailed demographic data below:

| N¹ | AI/AN | Asian/HA | BL | HS | MR/O | W |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| 6,208 | 23 | 26 | 43 | 232 | 197 | 5,687 |
| % | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.7% | 3.7% | 3.2% | 91.6% |

Common challenges facing today's youth include poverty, juvenile delinquency, child abuse and neglect, mental health issues, and substance use. To assess the risks facing youth in our county, it's essential to consider the factors that contribute to their vulnerability. Below, we present data specific to these risk-factors impacting youth in the school setting. Post-pandemic, chronic absenteeism saw a sharp rise, though it has since gradually returned to pre-pandemic levels. When analyzing student absenteeism data from 2021 to 2023, 11th grade students consistently showed the highest rates of chronic absenteeism. This data helps us identify where preventative and intervention efforts should be focused to effectively address the needs of at-risk youth.

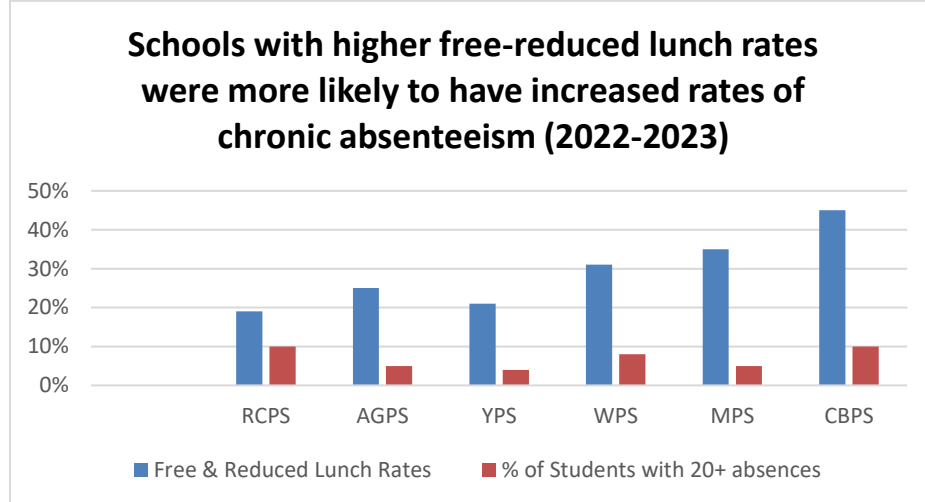
| SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIFIC (2023-2024) | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| School District | Enrolled Students | Free/Reduced Lunch Rate % | Over 20 Days Absent % | Graduate Rate | % of ARRIVE Referrals |
| Ashland-Greenwood Public | 1,099 | 24.57% | 5.12% | 94% | 15% |
| St Wenceslaus Elem, St John Elementary & Bishop Neumann HS | 647 | 13.89% (average of the 3 schools) | Private schools | Private schools | 1.3% |
| Cedar Bluffs Public | 469 | 44.56% | 9.60% | 94% | 10% |
| Mead Public | 283 | 34.98% | 5.41% | 100% | 6.3% |
| Raymond Central Public | 742 | 18.87% | 10.40% | 94% | 20% |
| Wahoo Public | 1,085 | 30.88% | 8.30% | 95% | 26% |

¹ Census data (2022) – Center for Public Affairs Research Nebraska State Data Center, <https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-public-affairs-and-community-services/center-for-public-affairs-research/programs/nebraska-state-data-center.php>

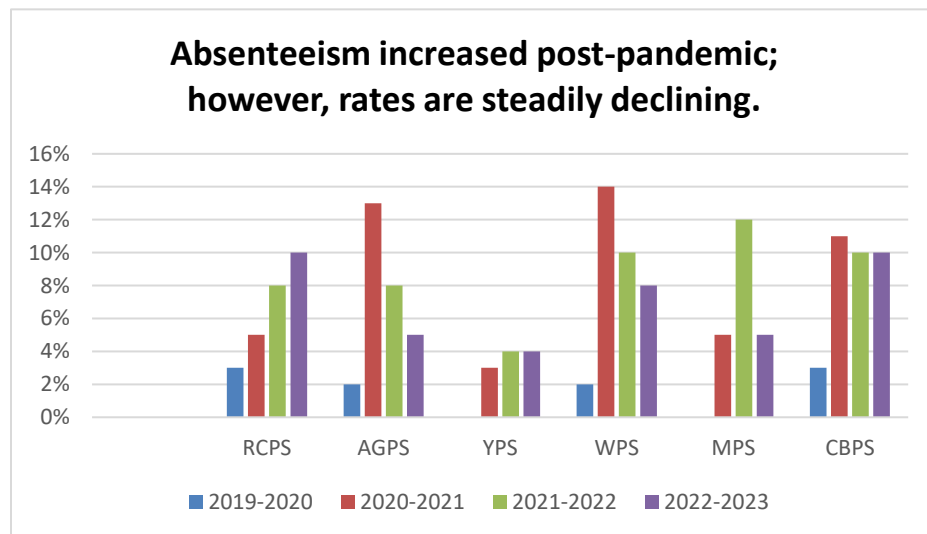
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|--------------|-----|--------|-------|------|-----|
| Yutan Public | 506 | 20.95% | 4.38% | 100% | 20% |
|--------------|-----|--------|-------|------|-----|

Poverty rates for youth under 18 have declined from 13% at the time of our previous community plan to 6.4% in 2020³. Additionally, the percentage of youth living below the federal poverty line has improved over the past five years, now standing at 8.6%. Research shows a strong link between poverty and school absenteeism. Children from low-income families often face barriers such as housing instability, health issues, transportation challenges, and food insecurity, which can lead to higher rates of absenteeism.



Additionally, family stress and limited school resources can reduce engagement and support for consistent attendance. These factors collectively contribute to chronic absenteeism, lower academic performance, and higher dropout rates among students in poverty.



³ Census data (2022) – Center for Public Affairs Research Nebraska State Data Center, <https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-public-affairs-and-community-services/center-for-public-affairs-research/programs/nebraska-state-data-center.php>

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ARRIVE

ARRIVE (Absence Reduction Resources Increasing Valuable Education) is active in all public and parochial schools in Saunders County. This is an early intervention truancy program that is provided to schools who choose to enter an Interlocal Agreement with Saunders County Youth Services. ARRIVE serves as the Attendance Officer through an Interlocal Agreement with the schools and Saunders County. The service provides case management, coordination, service referral, attendance monitoring, direct contact, academic assistance, attendance planning, and more for the students and families referred to the program. Referrals are accepted through self-referral, schools, law enforcement, and the county attorney's office. For the last 3 years (7/1/2020-6/30/2023), 4.8% (16) of 197 discharged cases reopened within the 3 years, 6.8% (9) of cases reopened within 1 year. Of those 16 cases that were reopened, only 2 were parent-refused and didn't participate in services at initial referral. Of the 16 cases that were reopened after successful closure from original referral, 44.4% came back within one year and 25% came back within 3 years. ARRIVE specific data is listed below.

2022-2023 ABSENTEEISM DEMOGRAPHICS⁴

| Absenteeism ³ | N | American Indian/Alaskan Native | Asian/Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander | Black | Hispanic | Multiple Races/ Other | Unspecified/ Missing | White |
|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|--|----------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Enrolled | 4,089 | 8, 0.2% | 23, 0.6% | 39, 1.0% | 170, 4.1% | 89, 2.2% | 0, 0% | 3,760, 91.9% |
| Chronically Absent | 404 | 2, 0.5% | 2, 0.5% | 1, 0.2% | 39, 9.7% | 13, 3.2% | 0, 0% | 347, 85.9% |

ARRIVE Demographics⁵

| Gender | 2023-2024 | 2022-2023 | 2021-2022 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Male | 41 | 32 | 36 |
| Female | 33 | 48 | 39 |
| Sex Assigned at Birth | | | |
| Female | 32 | 30 | 5 |
| Male | 40 | 20 | 3 |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 30 | 67 |

| Age | 2023-2024 | 2022-2023 | 2021-2022 |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Under 10 | 13 | 5 | 15 |
| 10 | - | 3 | 4 |
| 11 | 4 | 7 | 7 |
| 12 | 10 | 6 | 7 |
| 13 | 8 | 11 | 11 |
| 14 | 10 | 18 | 9 |
| 15 | 17 | 11 | 6 |
| 16 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| 17 | 3 | 9 | 7 |
| 18 | 1 | 1 | - |

| Race/Ethnicity | 2023-2024 | 2022-2023 | 2021-2022 |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|

⁴

⁵ Juvenile Case Management System (JCMS) provided by Nebraska Crime Commission, Community-Based Aid.

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| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----|----|----|
| American Indian, Alaska Native | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Asian | - | - | - |
| Black, African American | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Hispanic | - | - | - |
| Other Race | - | 1 | - |
| Unspecified | - | - | 1 |
| White | 67 | 73 | 67 |
| Multiple Races | 2 | 3 | - |
| | | | |
| Hispanic/Latino | 7 | 9 | 4 |
| Not Hispanic/Latino | 67 | 71 | 33 |
| Unspecified | - | - | 38 |

The ARRIVE program was evaluated by the Juvenile Justice Institute at the University of Nebraska-Omaha in the spring of 2024 and was rated as "Effective." The evaluation found that participating youth showed a significant improvement in attendance, with a 6.27% increase and a large effect size. For successfully discharged youth (n=375), future involvement in the youth justice system was tracked, showing promising results. Although the sample size for unsuccessfully discharged youth was small (n=20), the findings indicated a 0% future involvement in status offenses and probation, and a 0.05% rate for law violations and detention.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 2.1% | 1.6% | 0% | 1.9% |
| Status Offense | Law Violation | Probation | Detention |

Juvenile Offenders / Crime Statistics

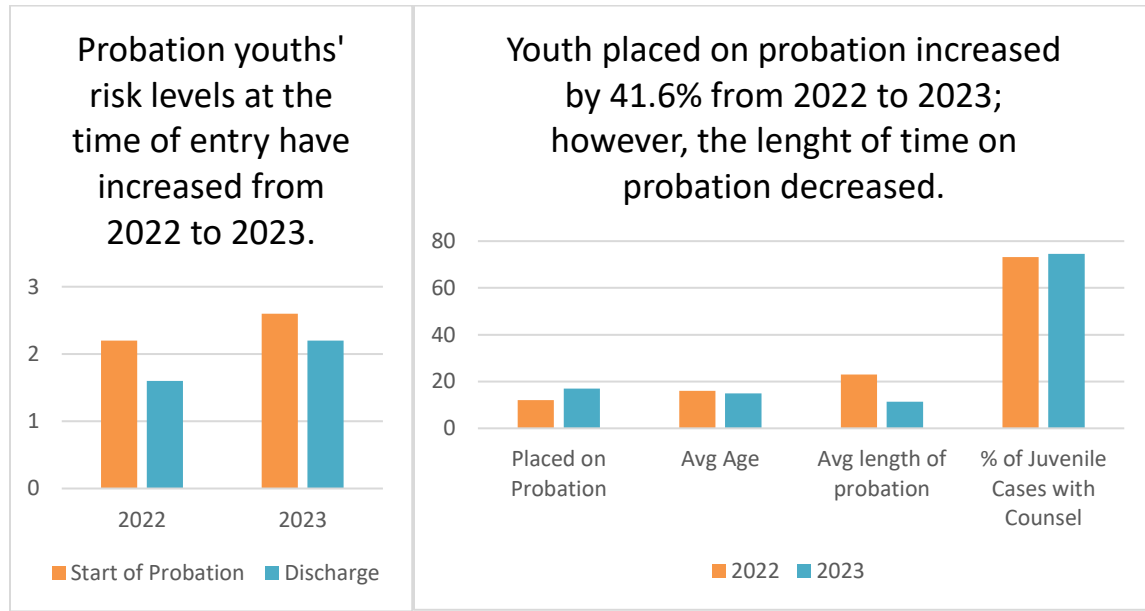
PROBATION

Juvenile offending rates have increased in the last two years. Juvenile criminal court cases, youth on probation, and risk levels for youth have increased. The chart below (with low rated as "1" and high rated as "2") demonstrates probation related data for Saunders County youth from 2022 to 2023.⁷ One 16-year-old male in 2023 was tried as an adult and was adjudicated in Saunders County for a felony charge.⁸

⁷ Juvenile Justice Statistical Report 2022 and 2023. Nebraska Judicial Branch. Accessed 8/23/2024.

⁸ Ibid.

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Over the past two years, adjudicated youth in Saunders County faced an increase in charges across all crime categories. This trend reflects a rise in the number and variety of offenses committed by youth during this period.

| <i>Offense Type (Adjudicated):</i> | Traffic Offenses | Status Offenses | Misdemeanor | Felony |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 2022 | - | 1 | 9 | 2 |
| 2023 | - | 6 | 11 | 3 |
| Total: | - | 7 | 20 | 5 |

DIVERSION & TRUANCY

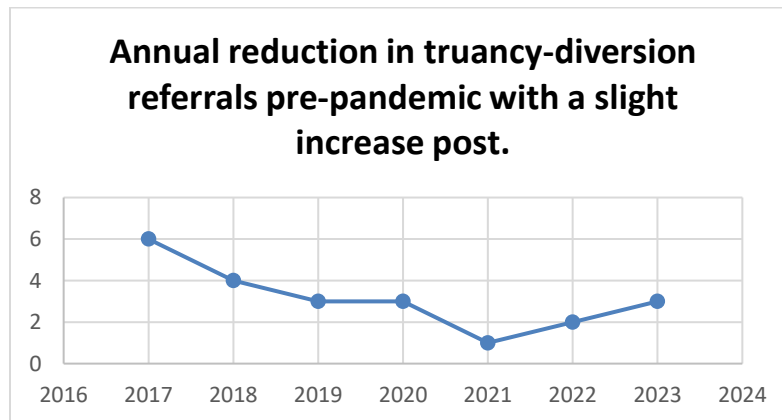
Juvenile citations referred to diversion and filed in juvenile court increased from 2022 to 2023. This increase could be attributed to several factors, including a rise in juvenile involvement in criminal activity or a greater law enforcement presence. Agencies that were previously understaffed are now fully staffed with new, proactive officers, which may have led to more arrests and greater identification of offenses. Uncontrollable (N.R.S. §43-247(3)(b)) or “ungovernable” referrals to diversion and juvenile court drastically increased from 2022 to 2023 as well.

| Juvenile Diversion Referrals (Charge) <small>*A referral may have more than 1 charge, those are NOT listed)</small> | 2022 | 2023 | % Change |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Burglary/Theft/Forgery | 5 | 3 | - 40% |
| Motor Vehicle Theft | 1 | - | -100% |
| Assault | 2 | - | -100% |
| Criminal Mischief | 2 | 5 | +150% |
| Drug Possession/Marijuana | 8 | 3 | -62.5% |

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|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Other Drug Possession/Narcotics or non | - | 1 | +100% |
| MIP-Alcohol | 11 | 12 | +9% |
| Disturbing the Peace | - | 1 | +100% |
| Status (i.e. out of control, truancy, curfew, tobacco) | 4 | 11 | +175% |
| Driving Offense (i.e. unauthorized use of a vehicle, willful reckless) | 3 | 10 | +233% |
| False Reporting | 1 | - | -100% |
| All Other Charges (i.e. Traffic, Trespass) | 2 | 4 | +100% |
| TOTAL OFFENSES | 39 | 50 | +28% |

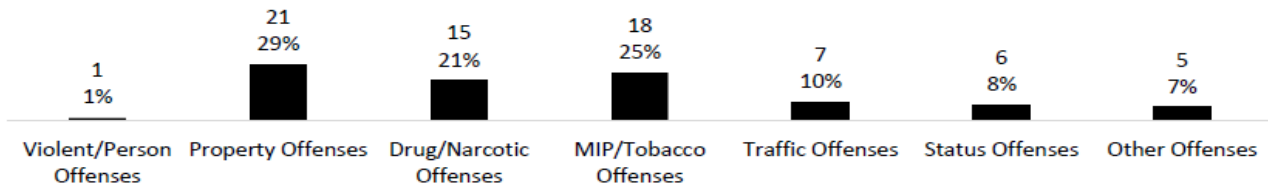
Truancy referrals to diversion have remained consistent from 2022 to 2024. Of those uncontrollable and truancy referrals sent to diversion (8 total), 3 were successfully discharged and 5 were unsuccessful and referred for juvenile court filing. From January 2022 to December 2023 (2-year period), Saunders County filed nine (9) §43-247(3)(b) cases for truancy and uncontrollable, adjudicating on 7 filed cases. Five (5) of those were unsuccessful or refused diversion and four (4) were youth who were not eligible for juvenile pre-trial diversion. From January 2024 to June 2024, only one (3)(b) case has been filed.



The Juvenile Justice Institute, University of Nebraska-Omaha, evaluated the Saunders County Juvenile Pre-Trial Diversion Program in 2024 (data measures from 2020 to 2022). Types of citations received, types of programming, discharge outcomes, recidivism and program effectiveness were evaluated. The program's population served reflected the county's youth population as well. The program was rated "Effective" due to successful measures being met. See the evaluations outcomes below for Saunders County's Juvenile Pre-Trial Diversion program.

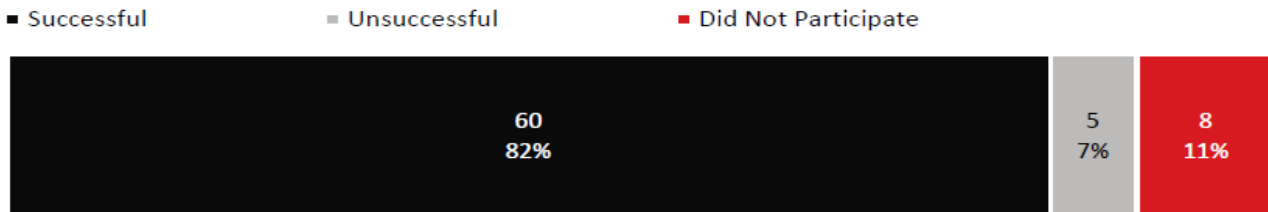
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On average, youths were referred to the program with **one** charge (range of 1-4 charges).

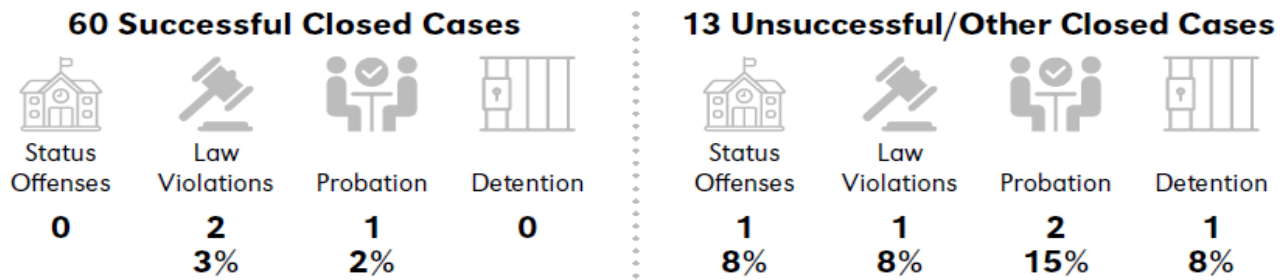


Note: Only the first charge listed for each youth is reported here.

82% of youths successfully completed the program.

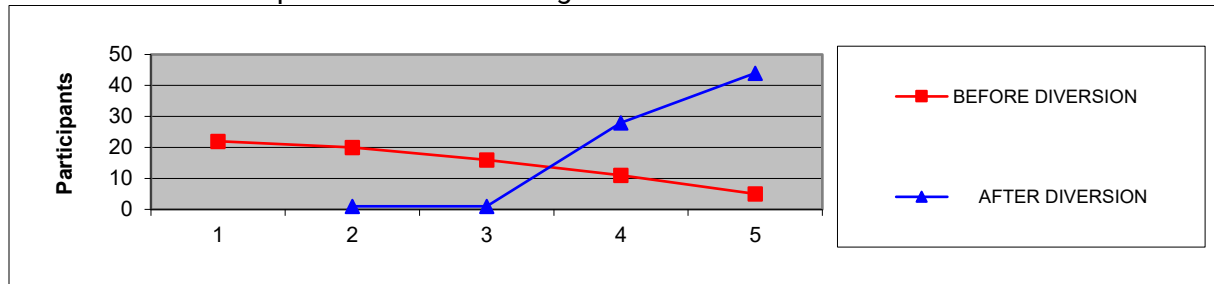


Youths' Future System Involvement



The Juvenile Pre-trial Diversion program requires youth to complete outcome surveys at discharge, and data collected over the last decade shows a positive impact on their decision-making. The program's goal is to help youth understand how their choices affect their future, family, and community. The chart below illustrates that youth are meeting this goal. From 2021 to 2023, 74 youth completed the outcome survey, with all measures showing improvement, particularly in two key areas: changes in behavior and reductions in recidivism.

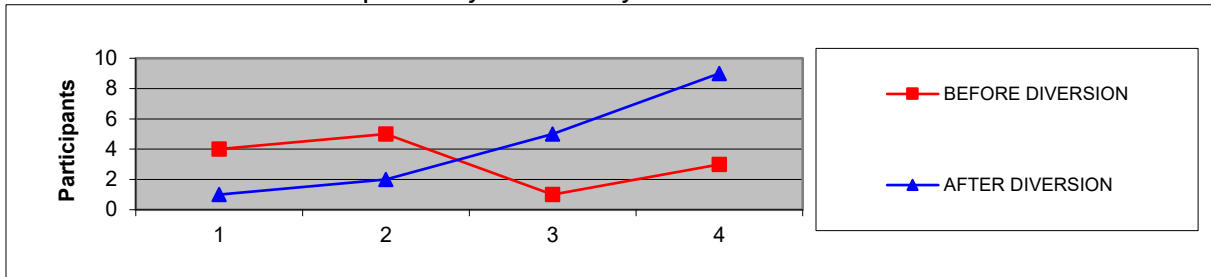
"I think about consequences before making a decision."¹⁰



¹⁰ 2023 Saunders County Pre-Trial Diversion Outcome Survey Results

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"I understand how crime impacts my community."



Crime Statistics from the Nebraska Crime Commission for those arrested under age 18 are listed below. Liquor law violations remain consistent; however, assault crimes saw a steep increase. When evaluating the cases where assaults occurred, mental health was a prevalent factor. This demonstrates the need for continued services and resources directed towards mental health services.

| Arrestee Age | Under 18 | | |
|--|----------|------|--------|
| Summary Arrest Date | 2022 | 2023 | |
| Total | 39 | 47 | 20.51% |
| Rape Total | - | - | - |
| Aggravated Assault Total | - | 10 | 1,000% |
| Burglary Total | - | - | - |
| Larceny-Theft Total | 1 | 4 | 300% |
| Motor Vehicle Theft Total | 2 | - | -100% |
| Other Assaults | 9 | 10 | 11.11% |
| Forgery and Counterfeiting | - | - | - |
| Fraud | - | - | - |
| Stolen Property; Buying, Receiving, Possessing | - | - | - |
| Vandalism | 1 | 4 | 300% |
| Weapons; Carrying, Possessing, etc. | - | - | - |
| Sex Offenses (Except Rape and Prostitution) | 1 | - | -100% |
| Drug Violations - Sale/Manufacturing | - | - | - |
| Drug Violations - Possession | 8 | 2 | -75% |
| Offenses Against Family and Children | 2 | 4 | 100% |
| Driving Under the Influence | - | 1 | 100% |
| Liquor Laws | 10 | 11 | 10% |
| Disorderly Conduct | 1 | 1 | 0% |
| All Other Offenses (Except Traffic) | 4 | 10 | 150% |

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|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Curfew and Loitering Law Violations | - | 1 | - |
| Runaways | - | - | - |

The 2022 racial and ethnic distribution data indicates a disproportionate number of law enforcement contacts and diversion referrals involving Black and Hispanic/Latino youth. This disparity may be partly due to the relatively small population of these racial groups in the area, meaning that even a single incident can result in a noticeable impact on Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) statistics. Additionally, there has been an increase in youth coming into the area to engage in illegal activities, particularly around large recreational areas and lakeside properties, which host events like underage drinking parties (e.g., large MIP parties in the country).¹¹

| System Point | N | Amer. Indian/ Alaskan Native | Asian/ Pacific Islander | Black | Hispanic/ Latino | Multiple / Other | Unspec/ Missing | White |
|--|-------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------|
| 2020 Census Number of Youth by Race/Ethnicity | 6,208 | 23 | 26 | 43 | 232 | 197 | 0 | 5,687 |
| Percent of Youth by Race/Ethnicity | - | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.7% | 3.7% | 3.2% | 0% | 91.6% |
| Law enforcement contact | 319 | 0% | 0.3% | 2.2% | 4.4% | 0.6% | 3.1% | 89.3% |
| Youth referred to diversion (CY 2022) | 35 | 0% | 0% | 2.9% | 8.5% | 2.9% | 0% | 85.7% |
| Youth enrolled in diversion | 31 | 0% | 0% | 3% | 19% | 6% | 0% | 71% |
| Successful completion diversion | 24 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 21% | 0% | 0% | 79% |
| Unsuccessful discharge diversion | 7 | 0% | 0% | 0% | (1) 14% | 0% | 0% | (6) 86% |
| Filed in Juvenile Court | 13 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 23.1% | 76.9% |
| Filed on in adult court | 0 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Probation intake | 4 | 0% | 0% | 0% | - | 0% | 0% | 100% |

¹¹ Juvenile Justice Institute, UNO. 2024 County Data Sheets. <https://www.jjinebraska.org/2024-county-data-sheets>

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| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Successful probation | 7 | 14.3% | 0% | 0% | -- | 0% | 0% | 85.7% |
| Revocation of probation | 0 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Youth booked into detention | 4 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |

Familial Risk Factors

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

In 2023, there were 275 calls made to the child abuse/neglect hotline for Saunders County. 178 calls did not meet definition and a little over half of the calls were for physical neglect. 97 calls were accepted regarding 231 children. There were 14 removals, and 17 cases filed in Saunders County. See filing records for 2022 and 2023 listed below.¹²

| §N.R.S. 43-247 Juvenile filing ¹³ | 2022 | 2023 |
|--|------|------|
| (1) Infraction & Misdemeanor | 13 | 19 |
| (2) Felony | 8 | 5 |
| (3)(a) Abuse/neglect | 12 | 17 |
| (3)(b) Ungovernable/truant | 3 | 9 |
| (3)(c) Mentally ill and dangerous | 0 | 0 |

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence and crime victims are a key focus in Saunders County, with a dedicated Victim's Advocate/Domestic Violence Coordinator who supports victims of all types of crime. While domestic assaults are often underreported, the Victim's Advocate continues to assist victims who seek help, regardless of whether an official report is made. Domestic violence frequently affects children and families, and the impact can be far-reaching. The chart below outlines reported domestic assaults in Saunders County from 2020 to 2022.¹⁴

| | Aggravated Domestic Assault | | Simple Domestic Assault | |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| | Reported | Cleared by Arrest | Reported | Cleared by Arrest |
| 2020 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 13 |
| 2021 | 2 | 2 | 20 | 19 |
| 2022 | 2 | 2 | 16 | 13 |

¹² Juvenile Justice Institute, UNO. 2024 County Data Sheets. <https://www.jjinebraska.org/2024-county-data-sheets>
Services, NDHHS.

¹³ Saunders County Attorney's Office. Requested 9/11/2024.

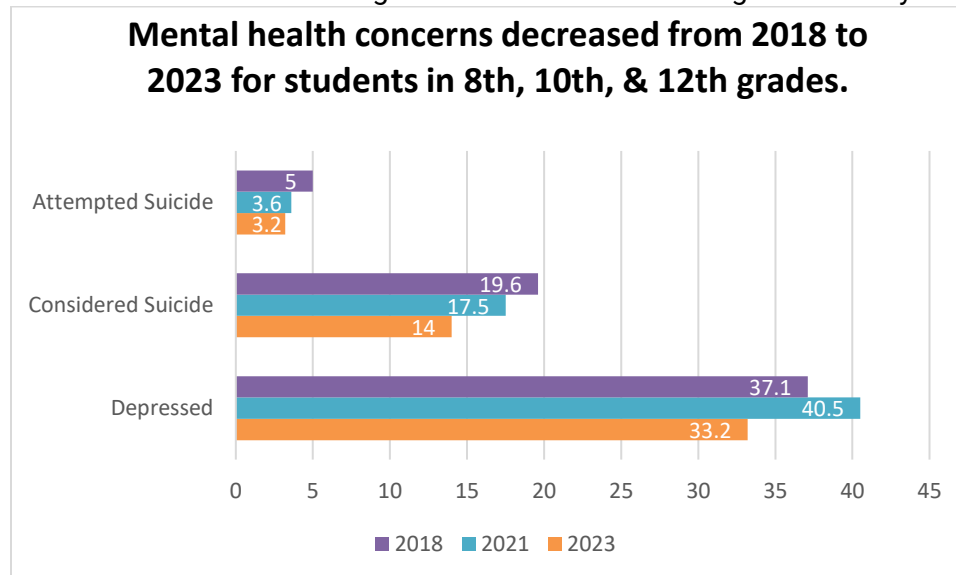
¹⁴ <https://ncc.nebraska.gov/state-reports>

Mental Health and Substance Use

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health remains a priority in our community plan, developed by Three Rivers Health Department. It is also a priority for our behavioral health assessment through the behavioral health region (Region V). Due to this being a constant identified need with our stakeholders, services and efforts have been put towards enhancing, implementing, and ensuring accessibility to mental health services county-wide. Youth have been identified as a high-priority population due to their increased vulnerability to mental health challenges, the potential for improved outcomes in both academic and social settings, and the long-term benefits of addressing mental health concerns early. Early intervention not only helps reduce the impact of mental health issues during adolescence but also supports healthier, more resilient futures for young people.

Saunders County schools did not participate in the 2023 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey at a level needed to collect Saunders County specific youth data. School administrations were contacted and declined participation. However, Three Rivers Public Health Department level data is available for 2023. In the three county area (Washington, Saunders and Dodge Counties), 920 students were surveyed. Overall, lifetime substance use for youth decreased since the post-pandemic spikes for 8th and 10th grade students. There was an increase overall for 12th grade students. Mental health concerns have also been decreasing in a similar fashion for all grades surveyed.¹⁵



Mental health crisis services began in 2016 in Saunders County. TASC with Region V Systems provides emergency assistance to law enforcement with those who are experiencing a mental health crisis. A licensed therapist responds to the scene, either in person or via telehealth, within 2 hours and assist with intervention services. This may include de-escalation assistance, managing mental health symptoms in the community setting, placing the person in Emergency Protective Custody (EPC), and offering referral to appropriate services. The therapist works with the family post-crisis contact for up to

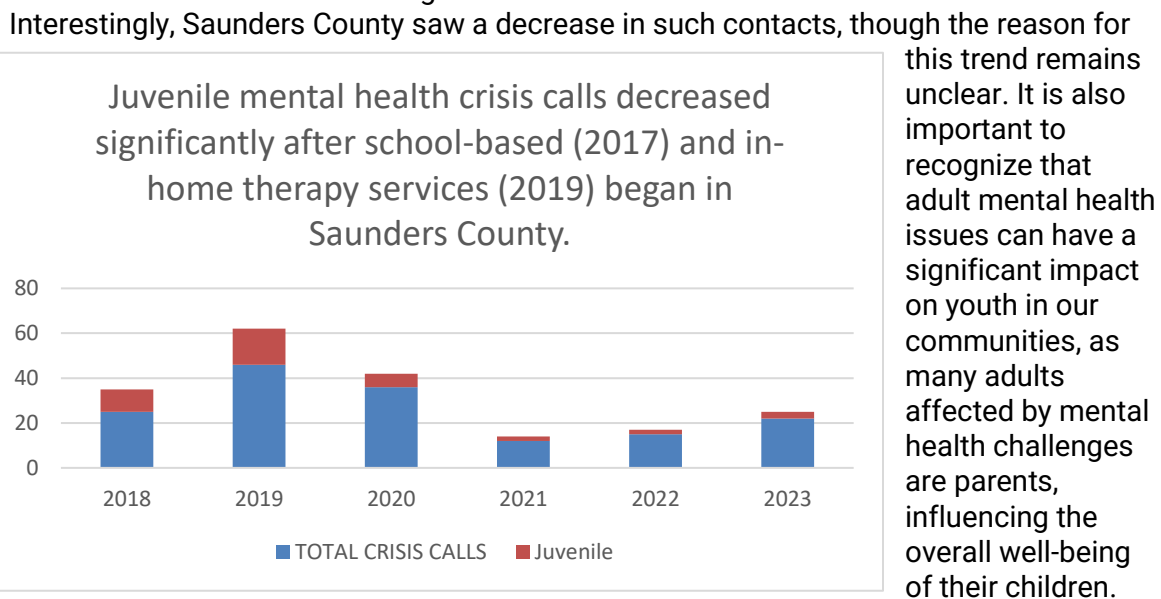
¹⁵ 2023 SHARP/NRPFSS Survey. Three Rivers Health Department. UNL Bureau of Sociological Research.

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72 hours and will assist with service referrals as well. This service is available and utilized for all ages.

There has been a decrease in juvenile crisis calls for Saunders County over the last 5 years, demonstrating mental health service availability has made an impact on our youth population. There were 16 juvenile crisis calls (to TASC) in 2019 compared to 2 crisis calls for juveniles 2022 and 3 juvenile crisis calls in 2023. However, TASC has reported a decrease in use in services by the Saunders County Sheriff's Office in the last year. In 2019, In-home therapy for juveniles was implemented and school-based therapy services expanded.

However, mental health needs appear to be increasing, as reported by Arnold Remington, Director of Region V's Crisis Task Force, who noted a gradual rise in mental health crisis calls across the Region V Behavioral Health service area in 2023.



#988 has also been utilized in the county to access crisis mental health services. Michelle Nunnemaker, System of Care Administrator with the Department of Behavioral Health, provided reports for #988 from July 2022 to June 2023. Region V accounted for 24.71% of calls into #922 (4,646 inbound contacts). Of those calls, Region V had 151 people receive emergency intervention.

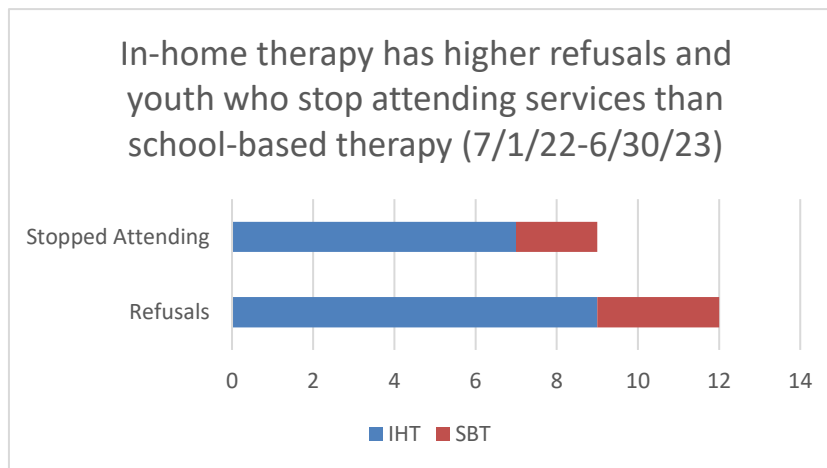
Saunders County also has several therapy programs available to youth. Examples of some of these programs are Blue Valley Behavioral Health, Youth Services In-Home Therapy program, satellite therapy offices, and School-based Behavioral Health (school-based therapists). The utilization of these programs demonstrates the increased need of mental health services for juveniles, children, and families. The Juvenile Justice Institute also evaluated School-based Therapy and In-Home Therapy services for efficacy.

Referrals for School-based therapy (SBT) come in at a 67% higher rate than for in-home therapy (IHT). Most families prefer school-based therapy as it's convenient, does not interfere with work or school schedules, and is consistent. From 7/1/22 to 6/30/23, 84

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school-based referrals were received. Of those received, 96% accept the services. Of those discharged, 72% were successful, 18% moved out of the coverage area, and the remaining 10% either refused services or were referred to a higher level of care.

When comparing IHT to SBT, SBT's successful completion rate is 24% higher over the same time period. IHT has a 19% parent/child refusal rate compared to SBT's 7%. And youth who stopped attending saw a significant difference as well, 15% stopped attending IHT services compared to 3% with SBT. This demonstrates the need for SBT in our schools. It's not only leading to better outcomes for the youth served, but it's also enhancing continuity of care. The average length of stay on IHT is 376 days compared to SBT's 418 days. SBT has voiced frequently that a youth's therapeutic progress often reaches its maximum benefit without including parents in a family therapy component.



That is when SBT makes an IHT referral. 15% of parents refuse to participate in the IHT family component. However, those that do participate in family therapy with their youth do achieve successful measures.

It is important to note that mental health services can be provided by resources in Lincoln, Omaha, and/or Fremont. Due to the increased use of Telehealth services, online mental health support has also become increasingly available. Saunders County is situated between three larger metropolitan areas with increased resources. Due to this, resources not readily available within the county are accessible in nearby cities to those with transportation. This demonstrates the need for reliable transportation services and support in Saunders County.

SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use related offenses referred to juvenile pre-trial diversion increased from 2022 to 2023. Marijuana possession decreased; however, Minor in Possession of Alcohol and Minor in Possession of Vape Products drastically increased. Substance use offenses in school have been the primary source of citations for MIP-Vape Products.

County-level specific youth data from the 2021 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Survey was insufficient, so data from the Three Rivers Public Health Department region (including Washington, Dodge, and Saunders Counties) will be used instead. Substance use patterns reported by youth will be tracked by comparing data from 2018 and 2021 to assess overall changes. Substance use is a significant risk factor that affects multiple areas of a youth's well-being and functioning. See NRPFSS substance use and select mental health data below.

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| Percentage Change of Reported Substance Use from 2018 to 2021¹⁶ | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Metric | Definition | 8th | 10th | 12th |
| Lifetime SU | Marijuana | -100% | -13.7% | 19.2% |
| | Alcohol | -61.5% | -19.9% | 19.2% |
| | Elec. Vape | -88.2% | -15.9% | 15.9% |
| Past 30-Day SU | Marijuana | -100% | -39.8% | 32.7% |
| | Alcohol | -88.8% | -31.4% | 19.4% |
| | Elec. Vape | -100% | -26.6% | 47.8 |
| Past 12 Mo. Mental Health | Depressed | -38.8% | -19.8% | -4.9% |
| | Self-Harm | -65.6% | -11.3% | -5.9% |
| | Contemplate Suicide | -37.1% | -12.0% | -17.8% |
| | Attempt Suicide | -8.3% | -33.8% | 44.4% |

Substance use and mental health factors decreased in every area from 2018 to 2021 for 8th and 10th grade students in the Three Rivers Health District. However, 12th grade students showed increases in all selected substance use variables, as well as a rise in attempted suicides, a key mental health indicator. While this data is promising, it is also concerning. It suggests that prevention efforts may be effectively reducing substance use among younger students, but it also highlights a need for more targeted intervention and services for 12th graders, who may be facing increased life stressors or other risk factors.

¹⁶ Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Bureau of Sociological Research, <https://bosr.unl.edu/projects/sharp/nrpfss/health-department-level-data/>

Section IV: Services and Programs by System Point

| SYSTEM POINT: PREVENTION (includes programs that aim to intervene before and after problematic behaviors are identified) | | |
|--|--|--|
| Program/ Agency Name | Eligible age | Risk or need |
| Second Step Curriculum | 5 to 14 (K-8 th) | Mental health disorders, truancy |
| God Teens | 13 to 18 | Drug/alcohol use, emotional health promotion, constructive use of time |
| Transitional age program, family youth investment (family support), professional partners, etc. / Region V Systems | Birth to 24 | Mental health disorders, lack of supervision, abusive parents, low parental warmth, lack of discipline, truancy, deviant peer groups, drug/alcohol use |
| Rental & Utility Assistance / Community Action | Any age and must meet other requirements | Community values youth (if this need is met, it may lower abusive parents, lack of supervision, parental hostility) |
| Clover Kids / UNL-Extension | 6 to 18 | Community values youth, constructive use of time |
| Friends of Faith / Methodist Church in Wahoo | K-5 th Gr | Community values youth, constructive use of time, emotional health |
| Kiwanis sponsored programs | 0 to 18 | Programs funded assist all risk factors |
| Logos / Presbyterian Church | Youth program | Community values youth, constructive use of time, emotional health |
| ROC Teen Center, Ashland | 10 to 18 | Drug/alcohol use, mental health, antisocial, defiance, lack of concern, inappropriate use of time, lack of supervision and discipline, low parental warmth, hostility, parental substance use, family violence, deviant peer group |
| Youth Group / Riverview Community Church | 12 to 18 | Community values youth, constructive use of time, emotional health |
| DARE Keepin' it REAL / Law Enforcement | 11 to 12 | Drug/alcohol use |
| TeamMates mentoring / TeamMates | 8 to 18 | Community values youth, constructive use of time, emotional health, low parental warmth, lack of supervision and discipline |
| Police Club / Law Enforcement & Saunders County Youth Services | 6 to 18 | Community values youth, constructive use of time, strong neighborhood attachment |
| YESS program / American Job Center | 15 to 21 | Constructive use of time, high personal drive, positive adult role models (education and job placement program) |
| GED classes/ Southeast Community College | 16+ years | Truancy, low achievement, low attachment |

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| | | |
|--|----------|--|
| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Youth Program & National Farm work Jobs Program / Proteus | 14 to 24 | Constructive use of time, high personal drive, positive adult role models (it's an education and job placement program for ag and migrant workers) |
| Community Response for children and families / Saunders County Youth Services & Victim's Assistance | 0 to 19 | Drug/alcohol use, mental health, antisocial, defiance, parental substance use, family violence, deviant peer group, poverty |

SYSTEM POINT: DIVERSION SERVICES

(diversion and services available to youth on diversion)

| Program/ Agency Name | Eligible age | Risk or need |
|--|---------------------|--|
| Juvenile Pre-Trial Diversion / Saunders Co Youth Services | 10 to 19 | Drug/alcohol use, antisocial attitudes, defiance of authority, lack of supervision/discipline, truancy, deviant peer group |
| ARRIVE (truancy) / Saunders Co Youth Services | 6 to 18 | Truancy, low achievement, low attachment |
| In-Home Therapy/ Saunders Co Youth Services | 5 to 19 | Anxiety/depression, mental health, antisocial attitudes, sensation seeking, defiance, previous victimization, family factors (lack of supervision and discipline, low parental warmth, parental hostility, abusive parents, parental substance use, family violence) |
| Family Support Services / Saunders Co Youth Services | 11 to 18 | Drug/alcohol use, mental health, antisocial, defiance, lack of concern, inappropriate use of time, lack of supervision and discipline, low parental warmth, hostility, parental substance use, family violence, deviant peer group |
| Alternative to Out of School Suspension / Saunders County Youth Services | 11 to 18 | Inappropriate use of time, lack of supervision and discipline, low achievement |
| Victim Assistance / Saunders Co Sheriff's Office | Any age | Abusive parents, family violence, drug/alcohol use, previous victimization, mental health |
| School-based behavioral health (therapists) / Family Service of Lincoln | 6 to 18 | Drug/alcohol use, mental health, antisocial, defiance, lack of concern, inappropriate use of time, lack of supervision and discipline, low parental warmth, hostility, parental substance use, family violence, deviant peer group |

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| | | |
|--|---------|--|
| Juvenile Crisis Response (TASC) / Region V Systems | 6 to 18 | Mental health, anxiety/depression, family violence |
|--|---------|--|

SYSTEM POINT: ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION FOR PRE-ADJUDICATED YOUTH ONLY
(include any programs that allow youth to remain in the community after any contact with law enforcement)

| Program/ Agency Name | Eligible age | Risk or need |
|--|--------------|--|
| Saunders County Attorney's Office (works with families 1:1 until Adjudication) | 6 to 19 | Drug/alcohol use, lack of supervision, inappropriate use of time, defiance of authority |

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| KNOWN GAPS IN SERVICES (include any programs that allow youth to remain in the community after any contact with law enforcement) | | |
|--|---|---|
| Program/ Agency Name | Risk or need | Current Barriers |
| Pre-Adjudication Tracker Services / County Attorney's Office | Drug/alcohol use, lack of supervision, inappropriate use of time, defiance of authority | Out of county support. The court/probation will utilize providers to do tracker services from Lincoln, Fremont, and/or Omaha. The goal is to provide alternatives to detention. |
| Pre-Adjudication Electronic Monitoring / County Attorney's Office | Lack of supervision, inappropriate use of time, defiance of authority | Out of county support. The court/probation will utilize providers to do tracker services from Lincoln, Fremont, and/or Omaha. The goal is to provide alternatives to detention. |
| After School Programming | Lack of supervision, inappropriate use of time, drug/alcohol use | There are limited after school programming available for older youth who do not participate in school extra-curriculars. The libraries have attempted to facilitate programming but there has been low attendance. Youth and parents don't appear to utilize attempts. |
| Transportation Services | Regular attendance, engagement in school | SMC is currently developing a workgroup and applying for a planning grant to create a public transportation service in partnership with community response. Planning stages began in 2024. Rural public transportation has many challenges as transportation agencies such as Uber and Lyft are not available. Community Response can assist with vehicle repair if the cost of repair is within reason and the family is eligible. |
| Youth Recreational Space (free/reduced cost) | Inappropriate use of time, lack of supervision | The Civic Center in Wahoo has provided reduced fee passes. Lincoln, Omaha and Fremont also have facilities that provide scholarships and passes. Most out of county recreational facilities will not provide scholarships to those who reside outside of town/county. |

Section V: Priorities and Strategies

| Priority 1: Reduce youth truancy, absenteeism, and delinquency by strengthening family values and providing early access to support services. | | |
|--|---|--|
| Program/Activity | Goals | Outcomes |
| ARRIVE | Presence at open houses to expand information and knowledge of the program. | Decrease absenteeism. Increase graduation rates. Increase early intervention. |
| Juvenile pre-trial diversion | Prevent youth from entering further justice system involvement. | Decrease youth entering the juvenile justice system. |
| LB 79-209 modified with LB 1329 §15 | Provide schools with mental health resources to address reasons for absenteeism. | Decrease absenteeism due to mental health. Increase school support for students who have mental health related issues. |
| Family support/professional partners/MST | Youth Services will continue to receive grant funding to provide family support services. Continue to make referrals to FYI and other agencies from Lincoln and Omaha who provide support services to Saunders County. | Increase parenting skills and education. Decrease calls to law enforcement for "uncontrollable" child. |
| School social worker/navigation within the schools | 2-1-1 and Community Response will assist with resource connection. ESU 2 hired navigators to assist in finding resources. Youth Services and the County Attorney's office will continue to be utilized as a form of support and a referral resource. Community partners will advocate for schools to hire their own social worker. | Increase ease of access to resources by providing one direct entity to contact. Increase financial and educational supports for children and families. |
| Out of school suspension/expulsion program | Youth Services will continue to provide this service to aid youth in completing school outcomes and having supervision. | Increase rate at which OSS and expelled students pass and complete classes. Decrease juvenile delinquency occurring during school hours due to lack of supervision. |

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| Increase resources and supports for family's before adjudication to decrease the need for out of home placements | The county attorney's office and probation will provide in-home support pending adjudication for juvenile offenses. Continue to utilize tracker services and/or electronic monitoring per probation and the court's discretion to prevent detention. | Decrease in youth being placed in out of home settings and/or placed in detention. |
|---|--|--|
| Priority 2: Expand youth substance use and mental health services to address and reduce substance use and mental health concerns among young people. | | |
| Program/Activity | Goals/Strategies | Outcomes |
| School-based therapy (Family Service & ESU2) | Provide mental health support to youth to address issues of absenteeism, substance use, mental health, and other risk factors. Youth Services will continue to assist by applying for grant funding to aid in the school's costs to provide this service. | Decrease student absenteeism, substance use, and mental health occurrences in the school setting. Decrease citations related to school related violations (i.e. MIP-tobacco/vape, truancy, etc.). |
| In-home therapy | Youth Services will continue to apply for grant funding to provide in-home family therapy to youth and families who are at higher risk of future system involvement | Decrease juvenile delinquency issues directly related to mental health issues. Increase family engagement and the health of the family to decrease law enforcement calls to the home. |
| TASC – juvenile crisis response (mental health)/ YAP – Blue Valley-with SCIP (WPS), SMC therapy services, NE Mental Health satellite office | Continue to increase mental health support and resources in the county. Maintain the support for satellite offices by promotion and referring for services. Educate schools on SCIP and the resources available. | Decrease juvenile suicide attempts. Increase services available to support mental health. Increase school achievement, attendance, and positive outcomes. |
| Youth mental health groups/Peer mediation Elem/MS small groups SEM classes | Expand peer led support groups in schools (i.e., Hope Squads, Peer Mediation, Girls on the Run, etc.). Increase access to group focused mental health support (i.e., WRAP classes). | Increase peer supported programs. Increase the feeling of students' school attachment and peer support. Decrease attendance concerns related to bullying and other peer related issues. |
| 3 rd Millennium Classrooms | Youth Services and Region V Prevention will offer 3 rd Millennium curriculum to schools as an action & prevention measure for those who commit vape offenses. | Increase cessation efforts provided in the school setting to students addicted to vaping. Decrease vaping citations and offenses at school and in the community. |

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| | Provide cessation resources to youth as an alternative to an out of school suspension. | |
|--|--|--|
| DARE, TeamMates, Region V Substance Use Prevention Campaigns | Continue offering DARE programming in schools, support mentoring initiatives like TeamMates, and promote ongoing efforts to disseminate information and educate the community on substance use prevention and mental health awareness. | Increase awareness regarding the dangers of drugs. Decrease instances of substance use amongst youth. Increase protective factors by fostering positive adult relationships, enhancing decision-making skills, and teaching youth how to effectively handle peer pressure. |
| Priority 3: Enhance recreational programming to provide more opportunities for youth engagement and decision-making skill development. | | |
| Program/Activity | Goals | Outcomes |
| Fight for our Future - Police Chief's boxing club - Wahoo | To keep kids off drugs by developing their grit, perseverance, self-worth, and self-esteem while positively interacting with police. Provides 1-hour of supervised time in the evening during the summer | Decrease unsupervised time for youth who struggle with decision making. Increase structured activities for high-risk youth. Help youth develop a positive sense of identity and resilience in the face of challenges. Positively enhance youths' view, respect, and relationships with local law enforcement. |
| ROC- Ashland / GOTR (WPS) | To provide a supervised space for young people two days a week. Instruction and a meal are provided | Decrease unsupervised time for youth who struggle with decision making. Increase structured activities for high-risk youth. Enhance self-worth, self-esteem, and other key skills that are critical for strengthening protective factors. |
| Priority 4: Strengthen family support services to help parents develop effective parenting skills, increase access to parenting education, and connect families with available community resources. | | |
| Program/Activity | Goals | Outcomes |

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| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Family support services available for youth ages 11-18 years | Provide parenting education and support to parents who struggle parenting difficult youth. Provide support and education to youth who lack skills to make good decisions. | Decrease law enforcement calls and citations for uncontrollable children. Increase parenting skills and knowledge to enhance a parent's ability to raise his/her child. Decrease juvenile citations and delinquency through enhancing decision-making skills in youth. |
| Family coaching program | Provide coaching support to families who need resources for financial assistance, parenting education, employment needs, and more. Assist families in achieving financial literacy and independence. | Increase family capacity and independence to support the decrease of poverty, child welfare involvement, and other system involvement. |
| Increase resource/information sharing avenues | To provide community resource cards to the public. Provide educational materials to make employers aware of community resources, such as utilizing the Chamber for information sharing, utilizing events to share information, and keeping the county resource manual up to date. Partner with 2-1-1 to provide central navigation for families to more easily locate resources in Saunders County Information dissemination regarding family policy through schools/social media/online platforms. This is in partnership with the schools to enhance parent/child relationships. Provide free trainings on trauma, resiliency, parenting, protective factors, and more to the public. | Increase public awareness of resources available to them. Decrease calls to the child abuse/neglect hotline related to poverty (i.e., shut off notices, lack of housing, lack of utilities, etc.). Increase access to parenting educational materials to enhance parenting practices. Increase familial protective factors. |
| Family Youth Investment/Professional Partners (youth with mental health diagnosis) | Provide in-home support and service referral for families who have a youth ages 3 to 21 years old with a diagnosable mental health issue. Programs are also available for families who have a parent with a substance use or mental health issue (diagnosable). | Increase family capacity and support for youth with diagnosable mental health issues. Decrease future systemic involvement for youth who have diagnosable mental health issues. Decrease out of home placements, child welfare calls, and other future system |

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| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | | involvement for youth with diagnosable mental health issues. |
| Nebraska Children's Home Society (birth-3yr)- looking at increasing to (birth-8yrs); Community Action | Increase early education and head start opportunities. Increase education for young parents and families. | Increase parenting capacity and education to promote raising healthy children and families. |
| School social worker/navigation within the schools | Continue to track LBs for funding/support for this position in schools. ESU2 provides navigation for many schools. Youth Services, ARRIVE, and the County Attorney's Office ARRIVE can provide navigation as well. | Seek funding opportunities to employ social workers in the schools. Enhance early intervention and prevention resources to decrease future system involvement. |

Appendices

Appendix A: Approval Letter/minutes from Governing Board

Appendix B: Completed Community Needs Assessment (CNA)

Appendix C: Juvenile Justice Program Evaluations

Appendix A

MOTION

Motion by Reece, seconded by Hrdlicka to approve and accept the Saunders County Comprehensive Juvenile Services Community Plan for 2025-2030. Voting yes were Reece, Hrdlicka, Zaugg, Sukstorf, Albrecht and Smaus. Voting no were none. Motion carried.

Dated this 12th day of November, 2024.

ATTEST:



Saunders County Clerk



/s/ John Smaus

Vice-Chairman

Saunders County Board of Supervisors

Saunders County



JUVENILE JUSTICE INSTITUTE

| Census Data ¹ | N | American Indian/Alaska Native | Asian/Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander | Black | Hispanic | Multiple Races/ Other | Unspecified/ Missing | White |
|---|-------|-------------------------------|--|-------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| 2020 Census Number of Youth by Race/Ethnicity | 6,208 | 23 | 26 | 43 | 232 | 197 | 0 | 5,687 |
| Percent of Youth by Race/Ethnicity | - | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.7% | 3.7% | 3.2% | 0% | 91.6% |

| Census Data | N | Male | Female |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| 2020 Census Number of Youth by Gender | 6,208 | 3,264 | 2,944 |
| Percent of Youth by Gender | - | 52.6% | 47.4% |

| Measurement | | |
|---|---|-------|
| Poverty/Socioeconomic Status² | Percent of Children < 18 Years Old in Poverty | 6.4% |
| | Percent of Children 5-17 Years Old Below Poverty Line | 8.6% |
| | Percent of Children 5-17 Years Old Above Poverty Line | 91.4% |
| Educational Attainment | Percent Age 25+ with a Bachelor's Degree | 29.1% |
| | County Rank | 15 |
| | Percent Age 25+ with a High School Degree | 29.4% |
| | County Rank | 52 |

| Absenteeism ³ | N | American Indian/Alaskan Native | Asian/Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander | Black | Hispanic | Multiple Races/ Other | Unspecified/ Missing | White |
|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|--|----------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Enrolled | 4,089 | 8, 0.2% | 23, 0.6% | 39, 1.0% | 170, 4.1% | 89, 2.2% | 0, 0% | 3,760, 91.9% |
| Chronically Absent | 404 | 2, 0.5% | 2, 0.5% | 1, 0.2% | 39, 9.7% | 13, 3.2% | 0, 0% | 347, 85.9% |

¹ Census data (2022) came from the Center for Public Affairs Research Nebraska State Data Center, <https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-public-affairs-and-community-service/center-for-public-affairs-research/programs/nebraska-state-data-center.php>.

² Socioeconomic and Educational Attainment data (2021) came from the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2021.S1701?q=Pover-ty&g=040XX00US31>.

³ Absenteeism data (2022-2023) came from the Nebraska Department of Education 2022/23 Student Absence Counts by District, <https://www.education.ne.gov/dataservices/data-reports/>.

Racial and Ethnic Distribution of System Points

| System Point | N | American Indian/ Alaskan Native | Asian/ Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander | Black | Hispanic | Non-Hispanic | Multiple Races/ Other | Unspecified/ Missing | White |
|---|-------|------------------------------------|---|---------|----------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| 2020 Census Number of Youth by Race/Ethnicity | 6,208 | 23 | 26 | 43 | 232 | - | 197 | 0 | 5,687 |
| Percent of Youth by Race/Ethnicity | - | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.7% | 3.7% | - | 3.2% | 0% | 91.6% |
| Law Enforcement Contact/ Cited | 319 | 0, 0% | 1, 0.3% | 7, 2.2% | 14, 4.4% | - | 2, 0.6% | 10, 3.1% | 285, 89.3% |
| Youth Referred to Diversion (CY 2022) | 35 | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | 1, 2.9% | 3, 8.5% | - | 1, 2.9% | 0, 0% | 30, 85.7% |
| Filed in Juvenile Court | 13 | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | - | 0, 0% | 3, 23.1% | 10, 76.9% |
| Filed in Adult Court | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Adult Transfer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Youth Placed on Probation ⁴ | 12 | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | - | - | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | 12, 100% |
| <i>Hispanic/non-Hispanic</i> | | | | | 0, 0% | 12, 100% | | | |
| Satisfactory Release | 7 | 1, 14.3% | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | - | - | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | 6, 85.7% |
| <i>Hispanic/non-Hispanic</i> | | | | | 1, 14.3% | 6, 85.7% | | | |
| Motions to Revoke | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Hispanic/non-Hispanic</i> | | | | | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Probation Revoked | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Hispanic/non-Hispanic</i> | | | | | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Youth Booked into Detention | 4 | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | - | 0, 0% | 0, 0% | 4, 100% |

Sources: Court and probation data (2022) came from the Nebraska Judicial Branch Juvenile Justice Annual Statistic Report, https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/108/PDF/Agencies/Supreme_Court/567_20230718-094145.pdf; Law enforcement citations, diversion, and detention booking data (2022) came from the Nebraska Crime Commission Juvenile Court Reports, <https://ncc.nebraska.gov/data-and-reports>.⁵

⁴ Race and ethnicity (Hispanic or non-Hispanic) for probation placement, satisfactory release, and revocations were reported separately. Comparisons to the census percentages cannot be made.

⁵ All data received from the crime commission may include youth processed through the system more than once; may not be individual youth.

Risk and Protective Factors

County: Saunders (2018)

Number of Youth with Surveys: 317

Risk Factors

| Schools | | Prevalence Rates | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (1) Grades were A’s and B’s | Average Difference: ⁶ -6.7% | 8th | 74.3% | 81.5% |
| | | 10th | 76.2% | 78.4% |
| | | 12th | 73.0% | 83.8% |
| Peer-Individual | | Prevalence Rates | | |
| (3) % Current use | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (a) Smoke cigarettes | Average Difference: +9.5% | 8th | 2.2% | 1.2% |
| | | 10th | 10.1% | 1.8% |
| | | 12th | 23.0% | 3.8% |
| (b) Drink alcohol | Average Difference: +5.4% | 8th | 8.6% | 9.2% |
| | | 10th | 18.2% | 18.2% |
| | | 12th | 48.6% | 31.9% |
| (c) Smoke marijuana | Average Difference: +5.7% | 8th | 4.3% | 2.2% |
| | | 10th | 8.1% | 7.6% |
| | | 12th | 27.0% | 12.5% |
| (4) % Perceive as Wrong | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (a) Smoking cigarettes | Average Difference: -3.1% | 8th | 95.0% | 94.4% |
| | | 10th | 87.9% | 88.9% |
| | | 12th | 71.6% | 80.5% |
| (b) Using smokeless tobacco | Average Difference: -4.3% | 8th | 95.0% | 94.2% |
| | | 10th | 84.5% | 87.2% |
| | | 12th | 66.2% | 77.3% |

⁶ We examined the statewide average and compared it to the county average. The average difference value reflects whether the county is higher (+) or lower (-) than the state average.

| Peer-Individual | | Prevalence Rates | | |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| (4) % Perceive as Wrong | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (c) Drinking alcohol at least once or twice a month | Average Difference: -4.8% | 8th | 81.4% | 85.8% |
| | | 10th | 70.4% | 69.3% |
| | | 12th | 42.5% | 53.5% |
| (d) Smoking marijuana | Average Difference: -5.3% | 8th | 92.1% | 93.1% |
| | | 10th | 83.7% | 77.6% |
| | | 12th | 43.2% | 64.3% |
| (e) Misusing prescription drugs | Average Difference: +2.1% | 8th | 96.4% | 94.4% |
| | | 10th | 98.0% | 92.1% |
| | | 12th | 90.4% | 91.9% |
| (f) Using other illegal drugs | Average Difference: -0.8% | 8th | 97.9% | 98.6% |
| | | 10th | 97.0% | 96.4% |
| | | 12th | 93.2% | 95.4% |
| (5-6) % Perceive as Great Risk | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (a) Smoking 1 or more packs of cigarettes daily | Average Difference: +6.2% | 8th | 60.7% | 58.2% |
| | | 10th | 75.8% | 59.9% |
| | | 12th | 59.5% | 59.4% |
| (b) Taking 1 or 2 drinks of alcohol nearly every day (Taken from Peer Views) | Average Difference: -47.5% | 8th | 24.3% | 85.4% |
| | | 10th | 28.3% | 68.6% |
| | | 12th | 15.1% | 56.2% |
| (c) Having 5+ drinks of alcohol 1 or 2 times a week | Average Difference: -1.4% | 8th | 35.7% | 37.3% |
| | | 10th | 40.4% | 33.7% |
| | | 12th | 20.3% | 29.6% |
| (d) Smoking marijuana 1 or 2 times a week | Average Difference: -9.4% | 8th | 40.3% | 46.8% |
| | | 10th | 30.6% | 33.4% |
| | | 12th | 4.1% | 23.1% |
| (e) Misusing prescription drugs | Average Difference: +1.8% | 8th | 56.4% | 56.3% |
| | | 10th | 66.3% | 60.1% |
| | | 12th | 60.8% | 61.6% |

| Peer-Individual | | Prevalence Rates | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (7) % Involved in a Gang | Average Difference: +1.0% | 8th | 4.3% | 2.6% |
| | | 10th | 4.0% | 3.5% |
| | | 12th | 4.1% | 3.4% |

| Bullying | | Prevalence Rates | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| (8) % Bullied within Past 12 Months | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (a) Physically | Average Difference: +3.0% | 8th | 33.6% | 27.5% |
| | | 10th | 16.2% | 15.3% |
| | | 12th | 12.2% | 10.3% |
| (b) Verbally | Average Difference: +9.2% | 8th | 63.6% | 51.3% |
| | | 10th | 50.5% | 42.3% |
| | | 12th | 44.6% | 37.4% |
| (c) Socially | Average Difference: 11.4% | 8th | 57.9% | 43.4% |
| | | 10th | 51.5% | 39.1% |
| | | 12th | 45.2% | 37.8% |
| (d) Electronically | Average Difference: +8.1% | 8th | 32.4% | 22.5% |
| | | 10th | 29.6% | 21.4% |
| | | 12th | 25.0% | 18.9% |

| Family | | Prevalence Rates | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| (9) % Parents would think wrong | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (a) Smoking cigarettes | Average Difference: -1.2% | 8th | 97.9% | 98.1% |
| | | 10th | 98.0% | 97.1% |
| | | 12th | 91.9% | 96.2% |
| (b) Using smokeless tobacco | Average Difference: -2.3% | 8th | 98.6% | 98.0% |
| | | 10th | 98.0% | 96.7% |
| | | 12th | 86.3% | 95.1% |

| Family | | Prevalence Rates | | |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| (9) % Parents would think wrong | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (c) Having 1 or 2 drinks of alcohol nearly every day | Average Difference: -1.1% | 8th | 92.8% | 94.1% |
| | | 10th | 93.9% | 90.2% |
| | | 12th | 78.4% | 84.1% |
| (d) Smoking marijuana | Average Difference: -2.9% | 8th | 94.3% | 96.9% |
| | | 10th | 92.9% | 91.9% |
| | | 12th | 81.1% | 88.3% |
| (e) Misusing prescription drugs | Average Difference: +0.8% | 8th | 97.9% | 97.8% |
| | | 10th | 100% | 97.6% |
| | | 12th | 97.3% | 97.5% |
| (10) % Agree or Strongly Agree | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (a) Clear substance use rules | Average Difference: N/A | 8th | - | 66.8% |
| | | 10th | - | 68.7% |
| | | 12th | - | 71.3% |
| (11) % Sort of Easy or Easy to Obtain | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (a) Beer, wine, hard liquor | Average Difference: +10.9% | 8th | 37.4% | 31.6% |
| | | 10th | 61.2% | 47.8% |
| | | 12th | 71.6% | 58.1% |
| (b) Marijuana | Average Difference: +17.4% | 8th | 14.4% | 9.5% |
| | | 10th | 39.8% | 25.9% |
| | | 12th | 70.3% | 37.0% |
| (c) Prescription drugs for non-medical use | Average Difference: +10.4% | 8th | 24.5% | 16.9% |
| | | 10th | 27.6% | 19.7% |
| | | 12th | 36.5% | 20.7% |

Protective Factors

| School | | Prevalence Rates | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| (12) % Agree or Strongly Agree | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (a) Feel safe | Average Difference: +0.2% | 8th | 90.7% | 88.6% |
| | | 10th | 88.1% | 86.7% |
| | | 12th | 86.5% | 89.4% |
| (b) Adult in school who listens | Average Difference: -3.2% | 8th | 85.0% | 85.8% |
| | | 10th | 85.1% | 83.7% |
| | | 12th | 78.4% | 88.7% |





| Family | | Prevalence Rates | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| (13) % Agree or Strongly Agree | | Grade | Saunders 2018 | Nebraska 2021 |
| (a) Adult at home who listens | Average Difference: +2.3% | 8th | 90.0% | 85.2% |
| | | 10th | 88.9% | 83.4% |
| | | 12th | 79.7% | 83.2% |
| (b) Help for personal problems | Average Difference: -0.2% | 8th | 87.1% | 85.2% |
| | | 10th | 89.9% | 83.4% |
| | | 12th | 74.3% | 83.2% |

Source: Risk and protective factor data came from the Bureau of Sociological Research, <https://bosr.unl.edu/projects/sharp/nrpfss/county-level-data/>, Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey Results.

System Improvement: Investing in the Juvenile Justice System Saunders County

System Improvement programs do not work directly with youth, but rather support the programs, agencies and initiatives that do the direct work. This includes, but is not limited to, grant writers, coordinators, evaluators, training/quality improvement programs, and data collection. System Improvement also included backbone support organizations, which are organizations or agencies that serve as the backbone for the entire initiative, coordinating participating organizations and agencies, facilitating technology and communications support, logistical and administrative details, and data collection and reporting.

Saunders County received funding and reported the following activities into the Nebraska Juvenile Case Management System between July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Administrative Support | Saunders County did not report any activity in this category. |  |
| Training/Quality Improvement | Saunders County reported one activity in this category. |  |
| Evaluation | Saunders County did not report any activity in this category. |  |
| Data | Saunders County did not report any activity in this category. | |
| Community Engagement | Saunders County did not report any activity in this category. | |
| Grant Writing | Saunders County did not report any activity in this category. |  |
| Support | Saunders County did not report any activity in this category. | |

Trainings

| Title | FY | Description | Attendance | Hours |
|--------------------------------|-------|---|------------|-------|
| Peer Mediation – Middle School | 20-21 | Training was completed on 3/30/2020. The topic of this webinar was Peer Mediation Training. | 27 | 10 |

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JUVENILE JUSTICE INSTITUTE

Saunders County In-Home Therapy

Saunders County | July 2020-June 2022 | Mental Health

95

Youths Referred

91

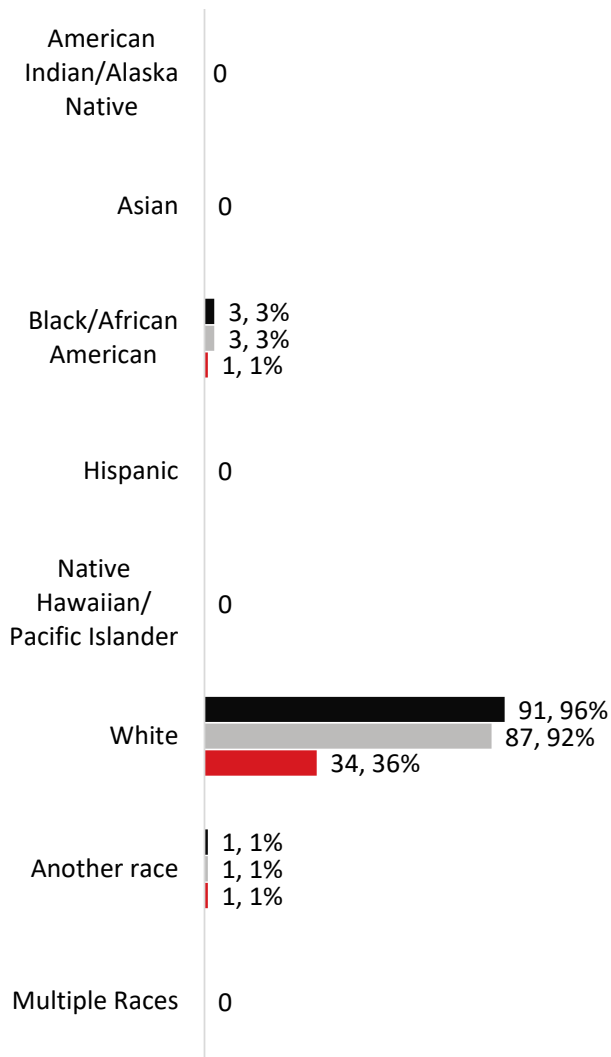
Enrolled

36

Successful

Program Involvement by Race and Ethnicity

■ Referred ■ Enrolled ■ Successful



Gender and Age of Youths Referred



34% (32)
Male



66% (63)
Female



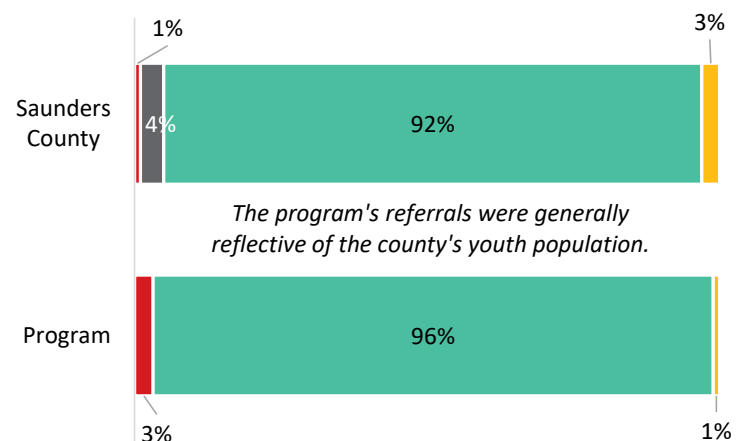
0
Nonbinary



Average Age – **13**
Age Range – **5-18**

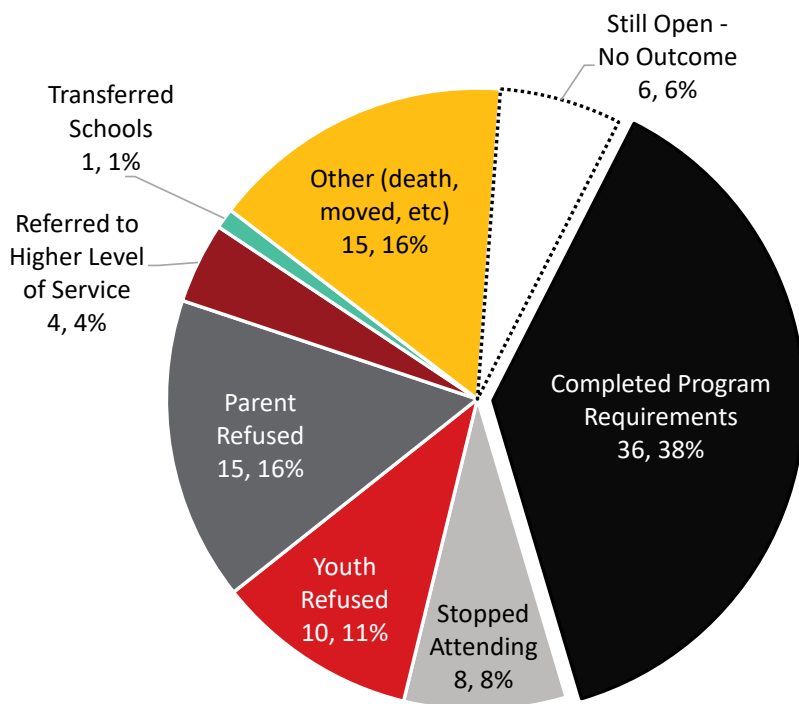
Program Population Compared to Saunders County's Youth Population

■ American Indian/Alaska Native ■ Asian
■ Black/African American ■ Hispanic
■ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ■ White
■ Another Race/Multiple



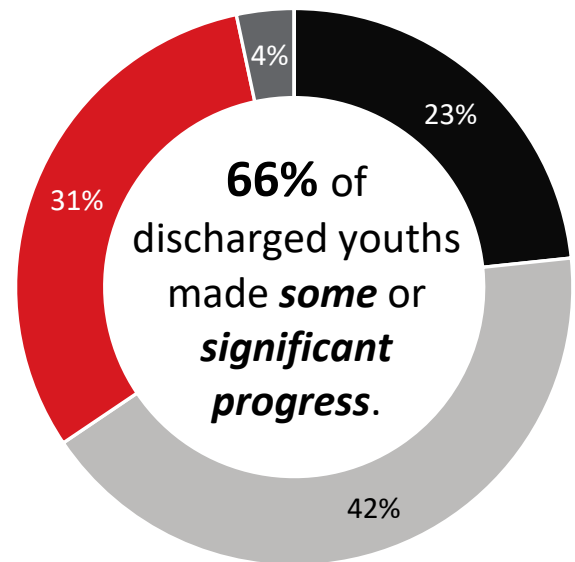
Discharge Reasons

38% of youths referred to the program were enrolled and successfully completed the program. Cases not successfully discharged were typically because the youth or parent refused, the youth stopped attending, or for other reasons.



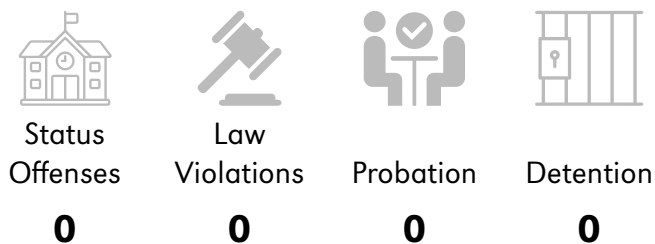
Progress at Discharge

- Significant Progress - 21
- Some Progress - 38
- No Progress - 28
- Some Regression - 3
- Significant Regression - 0

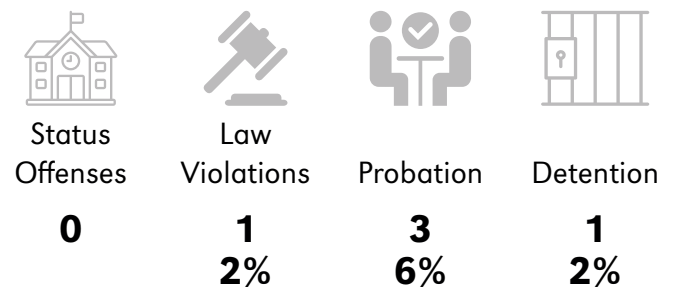


Youths' Future System Involvement (for 89 closed cases)¹

36 Successful Closed Cases



53 Unsuccessful/Other Closed Cases



¹ Six cases were not included in FSI calculations because they remain open (i.e., no discharge date).

2024 Program Evaluation²

  Needs Attention   Promising   Working Well  Cannot be Assessed

| Criteria the Program Met | Process/Outcome |
|---|--|
| Has over 80% of data on process and outcome measures entered. | Meets Data Standards |
| Program’s population is reflective of county’s population. | <div>Program Population</div> <div>✓+</div> |
| Closes fewer than 40% of cases successfully. | <div>Successful Cases</div> <div>⊘</div> |
| Between 40% and 80% of youths enrolled made “some” or “significant progress” by discharge. | <div>Progress at Discharge</div> <div>✓</div> |
| Fewer successfully closed cases had FSI than unsuccessful/other closed cases in all FSI categories. | <div>Future System Involvement</div> <div>✓+</div> |

Overall Program Rating



² For full evaluation criteria, see Mental Health Programs Evaluation Matrix on the [Evidence-based Nebraska Website](#).

Evaluation Summary

Saunders County In-Home Therapy program is rated as ***promising to effective***. The youths referred to the program were generally reflective of the Saunders County youth population. Just under 40% of youths referred (36 or 38%) successfully completed program requirements. The other closed cases were discharged because the youth or parent refused (25 or 28%), the youth stopped attending (eight or 8%), or for other reasons (e.g., referred to higher level services, transferred schools, moved, etc.). However, six cases (6%) remain open with no discharge reason or outcome provided. For the youths who were discharged, around two thirds of youths (59 or 66%) made some or significant progress. The remaining discharged youths either made no progress by discharge (28 or 31%) or experienced some regression (three or 4%). Finally, the program was very effective in preventing Future System Involvement (FSI; i.e., status offense or law violation court filings, probation, or detention) for the youths who successfully completed the program, compared to those whose cases were not successfully closed. None of the successful youths had any court filings, probation involvement, or admissions to detention after being discharged from the program.

Recommendations

Saunders County In-Home Therapy program should examine why a fairly large number of cases were discharged because the youth or parent refused (25 or 28%), the youth stopped attending (eight or 8%), or for other reasons (e.g., referred to higher level services, transferred schools, moved, etc.). Conducting a brief survey while the youth is attending may be informative for improving services and increasing the number of youths who successfully complete the program requirements. Additionally, the program should examine why some youths made no progress by discharge (28 or 31%) or experienced some regression (three or 4%). If there are commonalities amongst youths who fail to make progress, the results may help the program better serve those youths and families. All youths who successfully completed the program made some or significant progress by discharge. This, coupled with the reduced FSI for youths successfully completing the program, indicate the program could have a greater impact by serving more youths and increasing successful case closures.

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Saunders County Youth Services | Family Support Services

Saunders County | July 2020-June 2022 | Family Support

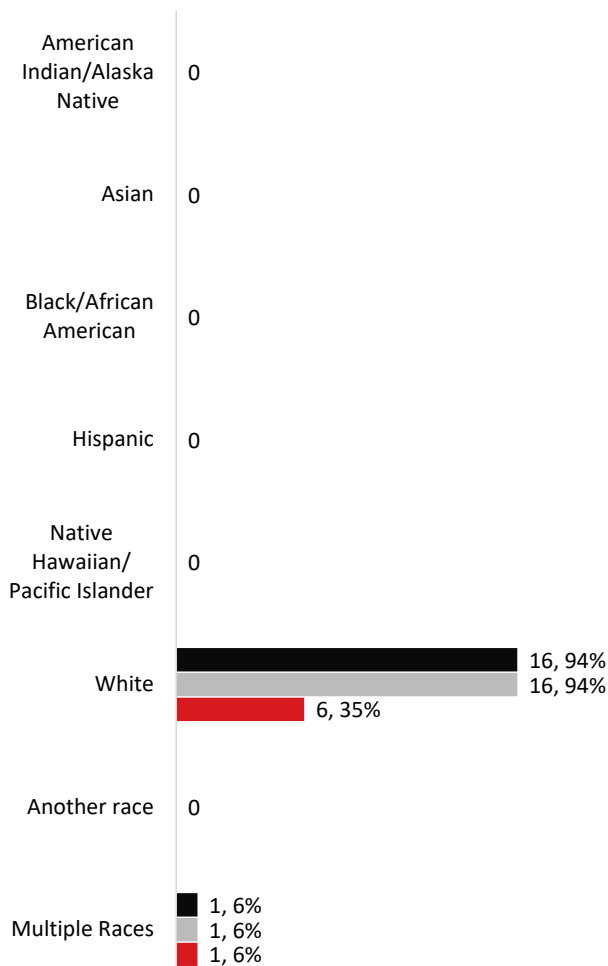
17
Youths Referred

17
Enrolled

7
Successful

Program Involvement by Race and Ethnicity

■ Referred ■ Enrolled ■ Successful



Gender and Age of Youths Referred



59% (10)
Male



41% (7)
Female



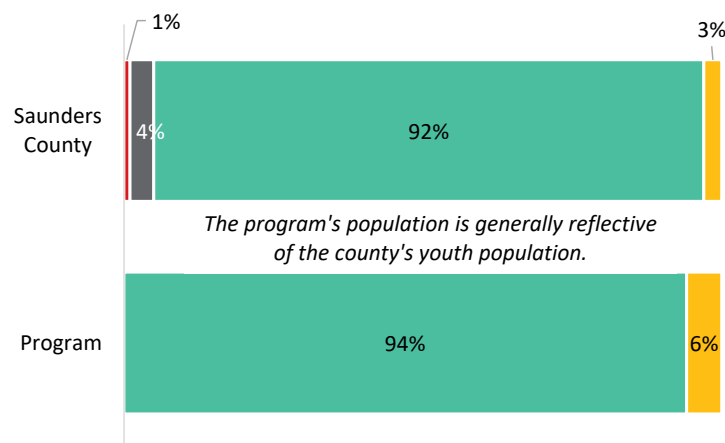
0
Nonbinary



Average Age – **15**
Age Range – **9-17**

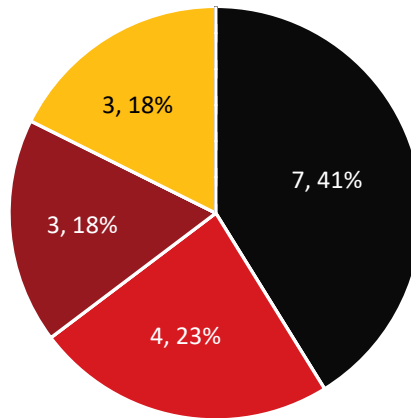
Program Population Compared to Saunders County's Youth Population

■ American Indian/Alaska Native ■ Asian
■ Black/African American ■ Hispanic
■ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ■ White
■ Another Race/Multiple



Case Outcomes

- Completed Program Requirements
- Stopped Attending
- Youth Refused
- Parent Refused
- Family Plans to Follow Through
- Transferred Schools
- Other (moved away/death/etc)

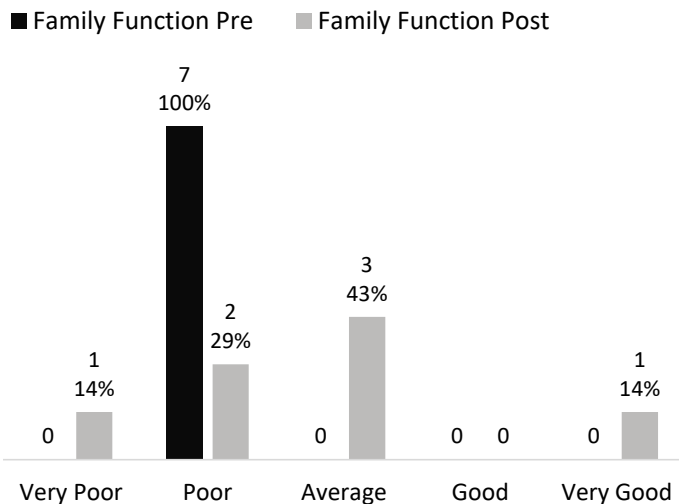


41% of families referred to the program were enrolled and successfully completed the program. Most cases were unsuccessfully discharged because the youth refused (24%) or for another reason (18%). Three families plan to follow through with the program.

Family Outcomes for Successful Cases

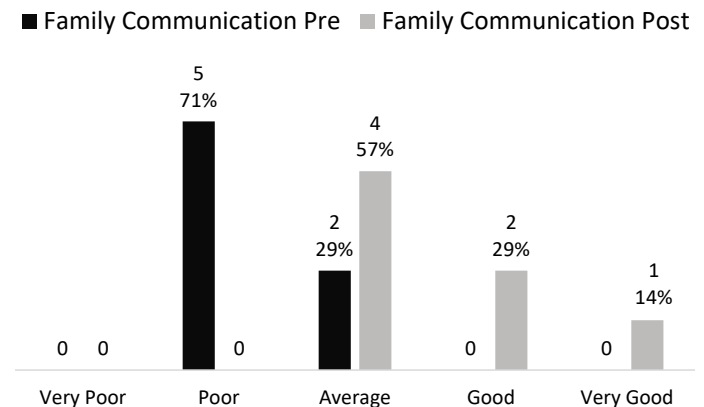
Family Function

The mean score for successful cases on family function improved from poor during pre-enrollment to average post-intervention.



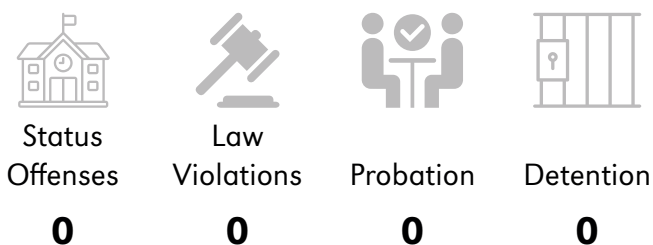
Family Communication

The mean score for successful cases on family communication substantially improved from poor during pre-enrollment to good post-intervention.

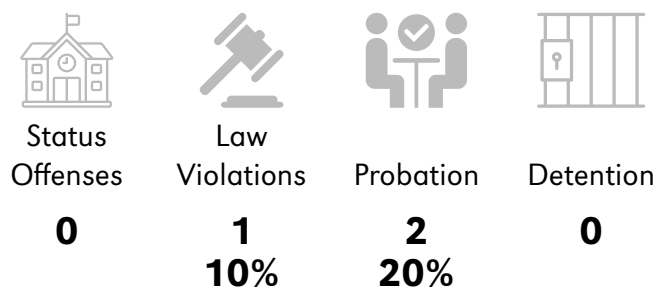


Youths' Future System Involvement

7 Successful Closed Cases



10 Unsuccessful/Other Closed Cases



2024 Program Evaluation¹

 Needs Attention  Promising  Working Well  Cannot be Assessed

| Criteria the Program Met | Process/Outcome |
|---|--|
| Has over 80% of data on process and outcome measures entered. | Meets Data Standards |
| Program’s population is reflective of county’s population. | <div>Program Population</div> <div>✓+</div> |
| Closes between 40% and 80% of cases successfully. | <div>Successful Cases</div> <div>✓</div> |
| For cases successfully closed, family function and family communication both improved compared to pre-intervention. | <div>Family Outcomes</div> <div>✓+</div> |
| Fewer successfully closed cases had FSI than unsuccessful/other closed cases in all FSI categories. | <div>Future System Involvement</div> <div>✓+</div> |

Overall Program Rating

Ineffective

Promising

Effective

¹ For full evaluation criteria, see Family Support Programs Evaluation Matrix on the [Evidence-based Nebraska Website](#).

Evaluation Summary

Saunders County Youth Services' Family Support Services program is rated as **effective**. The program's population was reflective of the Saunders county youth population, as the majority of the county's youths are White. Over 40% of the families referred successfully completed program requirements. For families who successfully completed the program, family function improved from pre-enrollment to post-intervention and family communication substantially improved. The program was also effective in preventing Future System Involvement (FSI; i.e., status or law violation court filings, probation, or detention) for the successful youth compared to cases closed unsuccessfully/for other reasons. However, caution is advised when interpreting FSI due to the small number of successful cases available for comparison.

Recommendations

Saunders County Youth Services' Family Support Services program should focus on increasing the proportion of youths and families successfully completing the program. To accomplish this, the program should consider a survey with families who refuse services or close for another reason. We acknowledge that this may be difficult data to obtain, but incentivizing involvement in the program may prove an effective approach.

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Youth Services | School Based Behavioral Health Program

Saunders County | July 2020-June 2022 | Mental Health

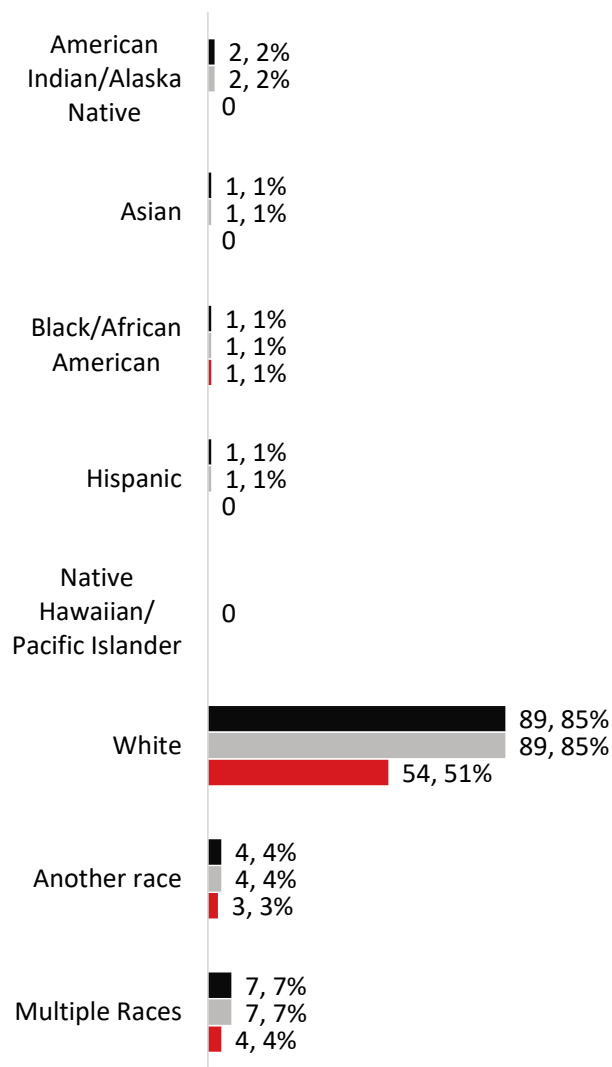
105
Youths Referred

105
Enrolled

62
Successful

Program Involvement by Race and Ethnicity

■ Referred ■ Enrolled ■ Successful



Gender and Age of Youths Referred



52% (55)
Male



48% (50)
Female

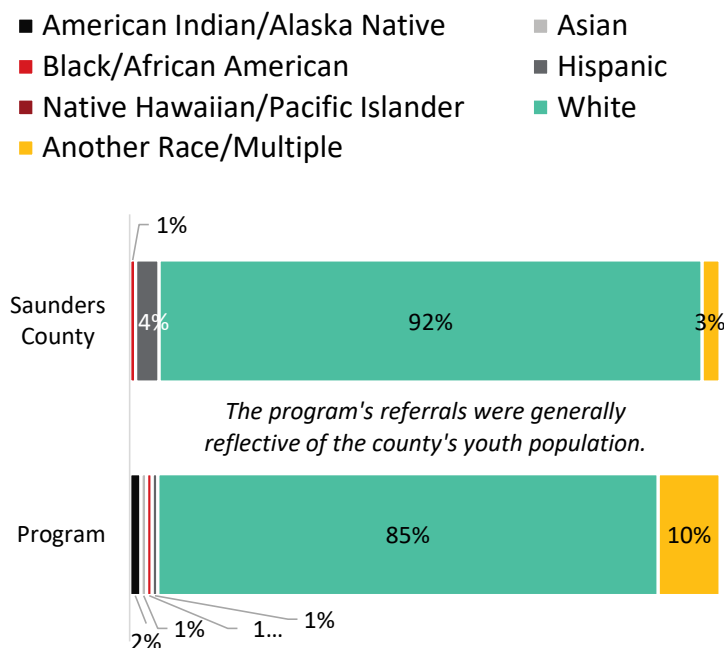


0
Nonbinary



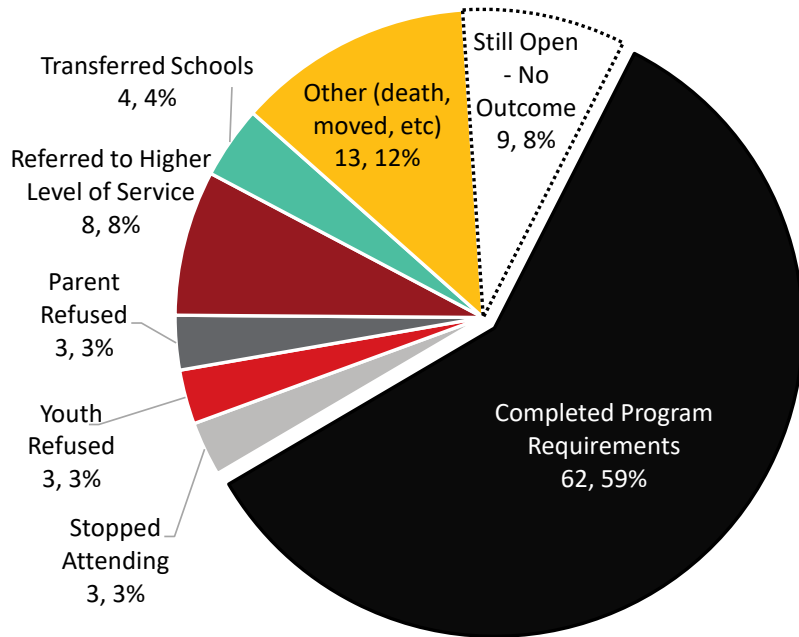
Average Age – **12**
Age Range – **4-18**

Program Population Compared to Saunders County's Youth Population



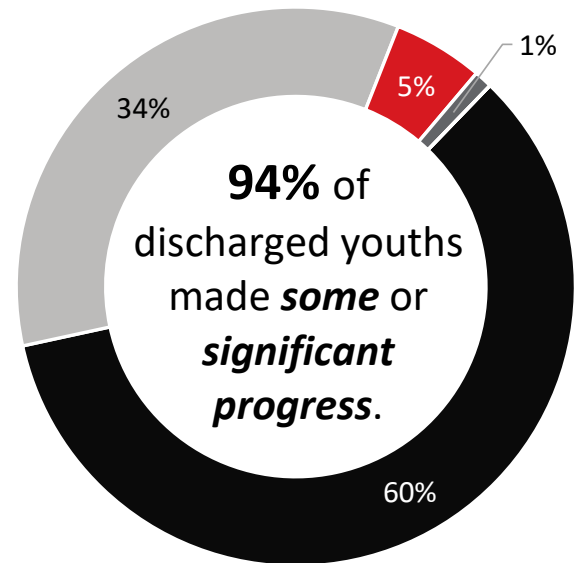
Discharge Reasons

59% of youths referred to the program were enrolled and successfully completed the program. Most cases not closed successfully were closed for other reasons (12%) (e.g., the youth moved away) or the youth was referred to a higher level of service (8%).



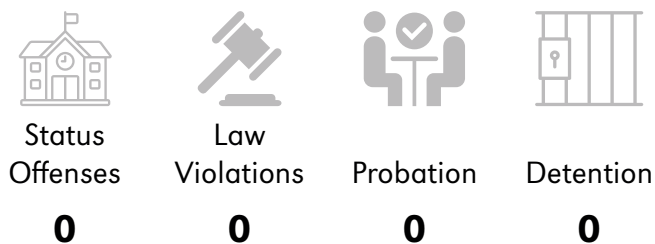
Progress at Discharge

- Significant Progress - 57
- Some Progress - 33
- No Progress - 5
- Some Regression - 1
- Significant Regression - 0

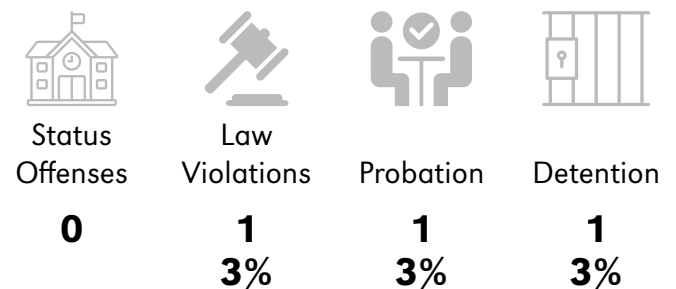


Youths' Future System Involvement (for 96 closed cases)¹

62 Successful Closed Cases







34 Unsuccessful/Other Closed Cases



¹ Nine cases were not included in FSI calculations because they remain open (i.e., no discharge date).

2024 Program Evaluation²

  Needs Attention
   Promising
   Working Well
  Cannot be Assessed

| Criteria the Program Met | Process/Outcome |
|---|---|
| Has over 80% of data on process and outcome measures entered. | Meets Data Standards |
| Program's population is reflective of county's population. | Program Population  |
| Closes between 40% and 80% of cases successfully. | Successful Cases  |
| Over 80% of youths enrolled made "some" or "significant progress" by discharge. | Progress at Discharge  |
| Fewer successfully closed cases had FSI than unsuccessful/other closed cases in all FSI categories. | Future System Involvement  |

Overall Program Rating

Ineffective

Promising

Effective

² For full evaluation criteria, see Mental Health Programs Evaluation Matrix on the [Evidence-based Nebraska Website](#).

Evaluation Summary

Saunders County's Youth Services School Based Behavioral Health Program is rated as **effective**. The youths referred to the program were generally reflective of the Saunders County youth population. Just under 60% of youths referred (62 or 59%) successfully completed program requirements. The other closed cases were discharged because the youth stopped attending, refused services, or for other reasons (e.g., referred to higher level services, transferred schools, moved, etc.). However, nine cases (8%) remain open with no discharge reason or outcome provided. For the youths who were discharged, nearly all youths (90 or 94%) made some or significant progress. The remaining six discharged youths made no progress by discharge (five or 5%) or experienced some regression (one or 1%). Finally, the program was very effective in preventing Future System Involvement (FSI; i.e., status offense or law violation court filings, probation, or detention) for the youths who successfully completed the program, compared to those whose cases were not successfully closed. None of the successful youths had any court filings, probation involvement, or admissions to detention after being discharged from the program.

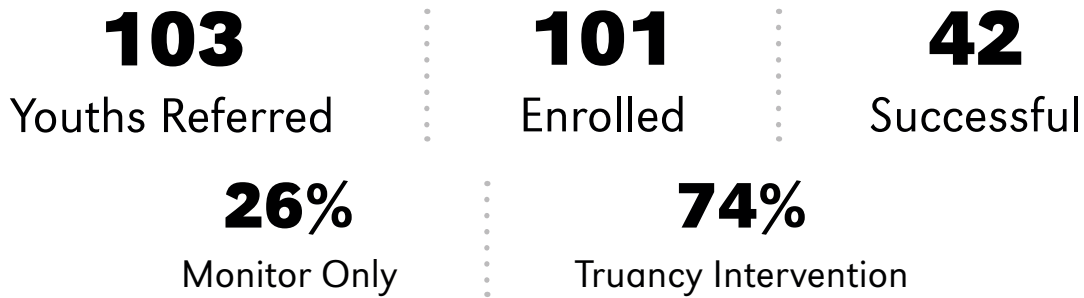
Recommendations

Saunders County's Youth Services School Based Behavioral Health Program may wish to examine why some cases were discharged because the youth stopped attending, refused services, or for other reasons (e.g., referred to higher level services, transferred schools, moved, etc.). Conducting a brief survey while the youth is attending may be informative for improving services and increasing the number of youths who successfully complete the program requirements. Additionally, the program should confirm the closure reasons on nine cases (8%) that remain open with no discharge reason or outcome provided. The positive progress and reduced FSI for youths successfully completing the program indicate the program could have a greater impact by serving more youths and increasing successful case closures.

This project is supported by Contract CC-24-737 awarded by the Nebraska Crime Commission. Points of view or opinions contained in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Nebraska Crime Commission or the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program.

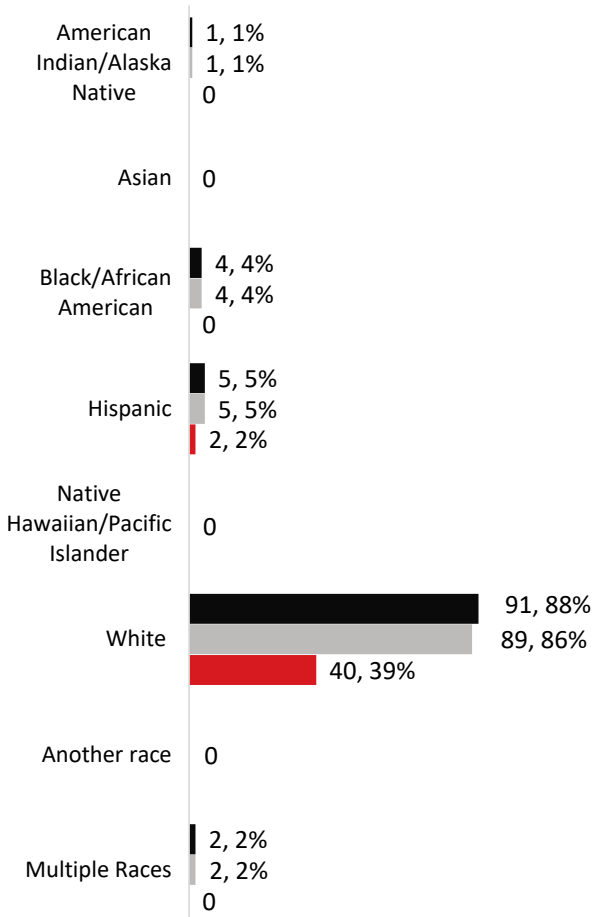
Saunders County Attorney | ARRIVE

Saunders County | July 2020-June 2022 | Truancy

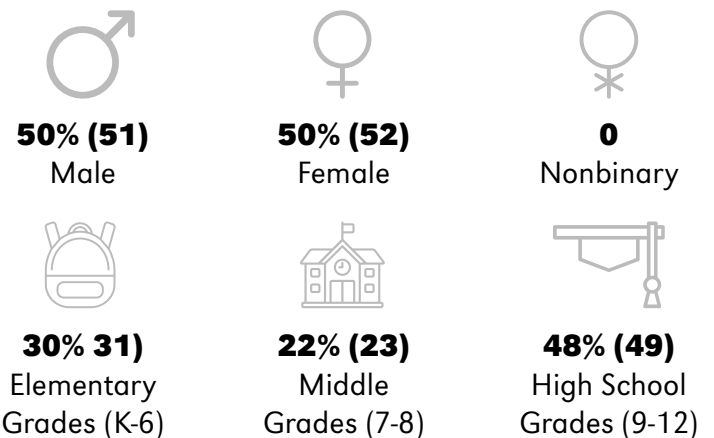


Program Involvement by Race and Ethnicity

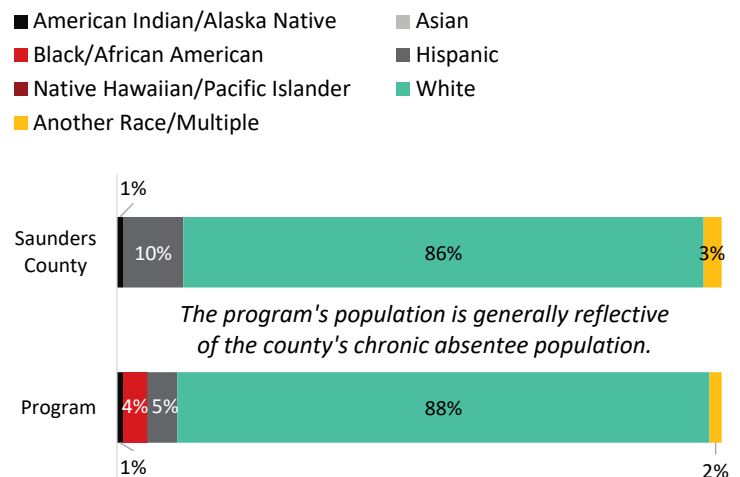
■ Referred ■ Enrolled ■ Successful



Gender and Grades of Youths Referred



Program Population Compared to Saunders County's Chronic Absentee Population

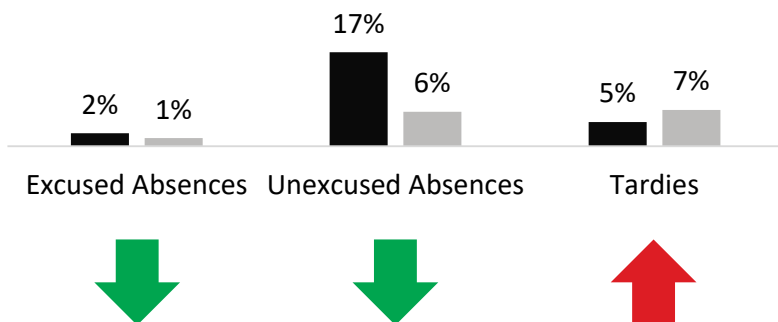


Outcomes for Successful Cases

Change in Attendance

Total absences declined by 12% post-intervention.
Tardies increased by 2%.

■ Absences Pre ■ Absences Post

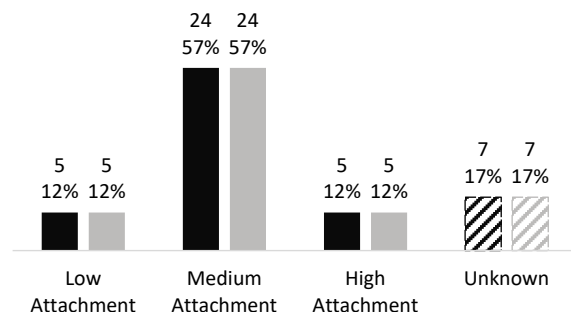


Note: The overall attendance change was statistically significant.

Change in School Attachment

Levels of school attachment did not change from pre-enrollment to post-intervention for the successful youths. Attachment was unknown for 17% of youths.

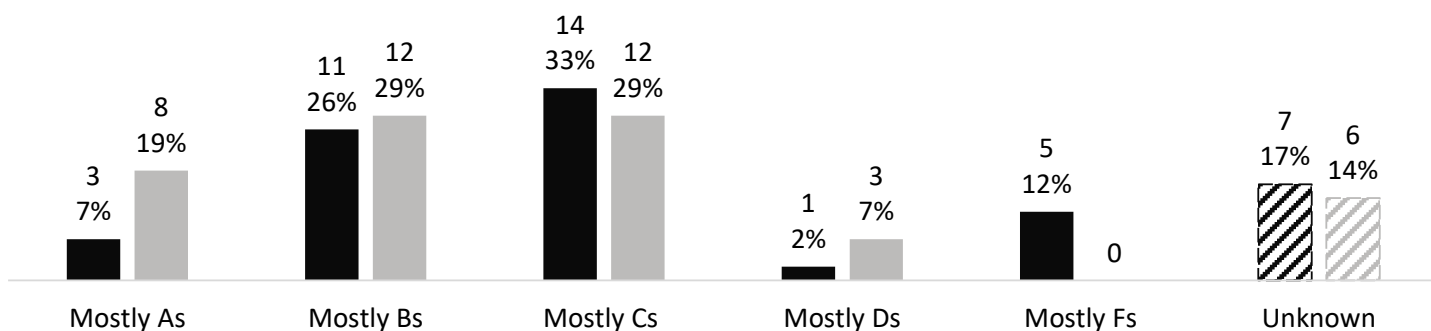
■ School Attachment Pre ■ School Attachment Post



Change in Grades

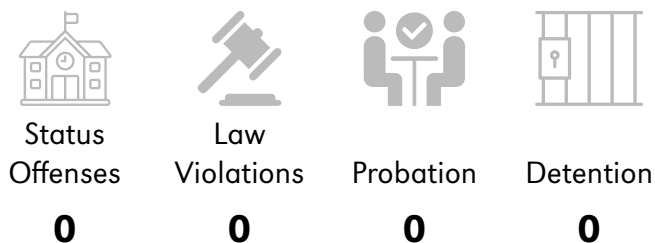
Student grade outcomes improved after the program. While 12% of students had mostly Fs prior to enrollment, none had mostly Fs afterwards. Students with mostly As increased by 12% after completing the program.

■ Grades Pre ■ Grades Post

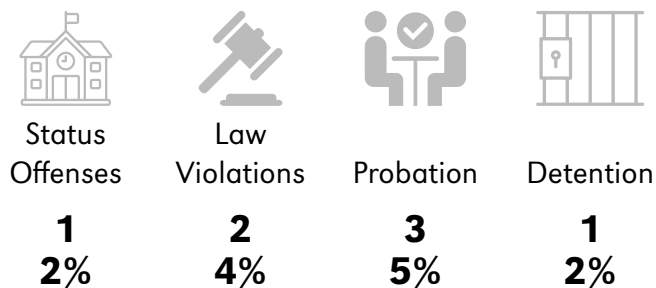


Youths' Future System Involvement (for 99 closed cases)¹

42 Successful Closed Cases








57 Unsuccessful/Other Closed Cases



¹ Four cases were not included in FSI calculations because they remain open (i.e., no discharge date).

2024 Program Evaluation²

 Needs Attention
  Promising
  Working Well
  Cannot be Assessed

| Criteria the Program Met | Process/Outcome |
|---|--|
| Has more than 80% of data on attendance measures. | Meets Data Standards |
| Receives referrals for youths proportionate to the rate of chronic absenteeism in county. | Program Population  |
| Closes between 40% and 80% of cases successfully. | Successful Cases  |
| Attendance significantly improved during the post-enrollment period. | Impacts on Absences  |
| Youths successfully discharged demonstrated either higher school attachment or higher grades post-intervention. | School Outcomes  |
| Fewer successfully closed cases had FSI than unsuccessful/other closed cases in all FSI categories. | Future System Involvement  |

Overall Program Rating

Ineffective

Promising

Effective

² For full evaluation criteria, please see the Absenteeism Program Evaluation Matrix on the [Evidence-based Nebraska Website](#).

Evaluation Summary

Saunders County Attorney's ARRIVE program is rated as **effective**. The program served youths from all racial/ethnic groups overrepresented in the county's chronic absentee population. For youths successfully discharged from the program, overall attendance significantly improved post-intervention. Youths who successfully completed the program also demonstrated improved grades after enrollment in the program. Finally, the program was very effective in preventing future system involvement (FSI; i.e., court filings, probation, or detention) for the youths who successfully completed the program, compared to those whose cases were not successfully closed.

Recommendations

While an effective program, we recommend ARRIVE concentrate on increasing the proportion of youths successfully completing the truancy program. The positive school outcomes for youths successfully completing the program indicate the program could have a greater impact by serving more youths. To accomplish this, the program may survey youths/families who were not successfully discharged about their satisfaction with program and where the program could have served them better. Implementing changes based on the results of such surveys could strengthen the program's ability maintain youths successfully through the program. Finally, we acknowledge that we are unable to determine potential reasons why cases are closed unsuccessfully without assessment tool findings for youths referred and enrolled in ARRIVE. Assessments can identify youths service needs and results can be used to assess whether youths are receiving appropriate treatment.

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