



**Eckerd Youth Alternatives
Annual Legislative Report
March 2010**

**Special Provision: S.L. 2009-451
Section 18.1**

Submitted by:
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the fiscal year of 2008-2009, The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (hereinafter referred to as the Department) continued its partnership with Eckerd Youth Alternatives (hereinafter referred to as EYA) to provide a residential camp placement for youth facing behavioral, emotional, and delinquency problems. The Department contracted with EYA to provide 346 beds at 7 wilderness camps, in which over 773 youth (including youth in camp on 7/01/08) were able to be served. Highlights of the Eckerd Wilderness Camps in FY 2008-2009 include a low recidivism rate, improved academic achievement, and a high percentage of successful completers.

- The post-completion adjudication rate for successful completers in FY 2007-2008 was 21.7% at 12 months.
- Using the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement at entry and exit, successful completers were able to show an average increase of 1.6 grade levels in reading and 1.4 grade levels in math within an average of 11.7 months length of stay.
- Of the 498 youth exiting the program in FY 2008-2009, 341 or 68.5% completed the program successfully.
- Seventy percent (70%) of youth completing the program in FY 2007-2008 were either working, attending school, or both at 12 months post completion.
- The average utilization rate for all seven (7) camps operating under the contract was 94%.
- Youth admitted into the Wilderness Commitment Program were able to be served at a significantly lower daily rate (\$134.94) than youth being served in a Youth Development Center (\$286) and the youth being served in Level III Homes (Medicaid Daily Rate is \$252.38).

Introduction

In response to North Carolina *Session Law 2009-451, Section 18.1, Annual Evaluation of Community Programs*, the Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention submits its annual evaluation of the Eckerd Wilderness Program for FY 2008-2009. The Department's evaluation will measure subsequent court involvement by youth completing the Eckerd Wilderness Program and whether the Eckerd Wilderness Program is achieving the goals and objectives of the *Juvenile Justice Reform Act, S. L. 1998-202*.

Description of Services

For FY 2008-2009, the Department contracted with EYA to provide 346 beds for boys and girls between the ages of 10 through 17 experiencing behavioral, emotional, and delinquency problems. These services were provided at the following seven (7) camps:

County	Camp	Genders Served
Bladen County	Camp E-Tik-Etu	Males
Carteret County	Camp E-Ma-Henwu	Males and Females
Henderson County	Camp E-Toh-Kalu	Males and Females
Montgomery County	Camp E-Ku-Sumee	Males and Females
Surry County	Camp E-Mun-Talee	Males
Vance County	Camp E-Ten-Etu	Males
Wilkes County	Camp E-Ma-Etu	Males and Females

Eckerd Wilderness Camps offer a staff secure, residential program that provides an alternative to a more restrictive setting. Eckerd Youth Counselors live with the youth in groups of ten and are responsible for facilitating the group process. The EYA Model focuses on the importance of the group dynamic as it relates to planning, problem solving, and conflict resolution. Each youth must learn to fulfill his/her respective roles and responsibilities within that group in order to effectively master the group process. The process is intended to promote an understanding of cause and effect relationships, personal responsibility, communication skills, self-discipline, and self-esteem. Each youth has his/her own individualized treatment plan that is linked directly to needs. As treatment goals are mastered, new goals are set with input from the youth, family, referring agency worker, and EYA staff. Eckerd Camps in North Carolina are licensed by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services as "Foster Care Camps."

The camps provide experiential education services designed to promote a positive attitude towards learning. EYA education services follow the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Course of Study and the camps provide 30-33 hours of instruction per week. Each camp is budgeted for four (4) certified teaching positions, one (1) education coordinator, and one (1) teacher certified in special education services. EYA educational services are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS/CASI) as a special purpose school.

Youth are given the opportunity to earn credit for all the coursework completed while in the program and, in most cases, are able to improve by one or more grade levels during their camp stay.

During the admission process each youth is assigned a family worker who serves as the liaison between the referring agency, youth's family, and camp. Family workers assist youth in their transition back to the community during ¹homedays and upon exiting the program. Their responsibilities include assisting families with strengthening their parental skills, providing a positive home environment, and helping families connect to community resources.

Program Cost

For FY 2008-2009, the state appropriation for Eckerd Youth Alternatives was \$17,041,572 and was determined by the following formula: \$134.94 (daily rate) x 346 (number of beds contracted for) x 365 days. Additional funding included federal education dollars for Title I, Neglected and Delinquent P. L. 105-220 services (\$282,528) and Individual with Disabilities Education Act P. L. 101-476 services (\$97,936).

Due to the budget crisis experienced by North Carolina in FY 2008-2009, the EYA state appropriation was reduced. This reduction, along with anticipated cuts for FY 2009-2010, forced EYA to close Camp E-Toh-Kalu in Henderson County and Camp E-Ma-Henwu in Carteret County in June 2009. Youth being served at these camps were given the opportunity to transfer to the remaining five camps.

Utilization Rate for Eckerd Camps

County	Camp	% Utilization
Bladen County	Camp E-Tik-Etu	90.0%
Carteret County	Camp E-Ma-Henwu	95.0%
Henderson County	Camp E-Toh-Kalu	95.0%
Montgomery County	Camp E-Ku-Sumee	95.0%
Surry County	Camp E-Mun-Talee	95.0%
Vance County	Camp E-Ten-Etu	90.0%
Wilkes County	Camp E-Ma-Etu	96.0%
Average for all seven (7) Camps		94.0%

¹ Days youth are at home occurring every fifth weekend of their camp stay

Demographic Profile

For ²FY 2008-2009, there were a total of 418 new admissions with the following characteristics at intake:

- Sixteen percent (16%) of the new admissions were female. Camp E-Ku-Sumee in Montgomery County admitted the most females for FY 2008-2009 with 25.
- Fifty-seven percent (57%) of new admissions were white, 33% were African-American, and 10% were Latino/Multi-Racial/Asian.
- The average age at admission was 14.2, and 76% of youth admitted were 14 years old or older at time of admission.
- The average IQ score of new admissions was 87, and the average grade level for new admissions was 8th grade.
- There were 143 special education campers served by the camps in FY 2008-2009.
- Forty-five percent (45%) of youth admitted were from single parent homes, 39% were from two-parent homes, 10% were from other relatives, and 6% came from other living situations (Foster home, Group home, Youth Development Center).
- Wake County had the highest number of admissions with 46 youth and accounted for 11% of all new admissions.
- Fifty-seven percent (57%) of all new admissions were referred by Department sources, 29% by NC Department of Public Instruction, 10% from Mental Health, and 4% from other sources including private agencies and DSS.

Referral Sources for Admissions

Referral Source	Overall Percentage of Admissions
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	57.0%
Department of Public Instruction	29.0%
Mental Health	10.0%
Other (Private Agencies & Department of Social Services)	4.0%
Total	100%

² Fiscal year runs from July 01 – June 30

Admission by Gender

The data over the last several years indicate that EYA continues to admit significantly more males than females; however, the percentages are somewhat proportionate to the number of males and females coming into contact with the juvenile court system. In FY 2007-2008, ³74% of all juvenile complaints received were male, indicating a greater need for more male beds.

County	Camp	Percentage of Male Admissions	Percentage of Female Admissions
Bladen County	E-Tik-Etu	100%	0%
Carteret County	E-Ma-Henwu	70%	30%
Henderson County	E-Toh-Kalu	90%	10%
Montgomery County	E-Ku-Sumee	59%	41%
Surry County	E-Mun-Talee	100%	0%
Vance County	E-Ten-Etu	100%	0%
Wilkes County	E-Ma-Etu	68%	32%
Average for all Admissions		84.0%	16.0%

Admission of Minority Population(s)

For FY 2008-2009, 43% of admissions into camp were minority or non-white. Camps in the eastern and central areas of the state had higher percentages of minority admissions, while camps in the west admitted mostly white youth. The percentages were in proportion to the types of referrals being made. For example, 35% of all referrals received in FY 2008-2009 at Camp E-Mun-Talee in Surry County were minorities and 35% of all admissions were minorities. Data from the ⁴NC DJJDP 2008 Annual Report indicate 61% of all juvenile complaints received were committed by minorities. To be more reflective of the Departments needs, EYA needs to continue increasing minority admissions.

County	Camp	Percent of Minority Admissions
Bladen County	E-Tik-Etu	53.0%
Carteret County	E-Ma-Henwu	42.0%
Henderson County	E-Toh-Kalu	25.0%
Montgomery County	E-Ku-Sumee	54.0%
Surry County	E-Mun-Talee	35.0%
Vance County	E-Ten-Etu	56.0%
Wilkes County	E-Ma-Etu	26.0%
Average for all (7) Camps		43.0%
Minority Populations include all non-white admissions		

³ The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 2008 Annual Report, p.7.

⁴ The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 2008 Annual Report, p.7.

Delinquency Involvement for Admitted Youth

- Seventy-three percent (73%) of the 418 new admissions had some involvement with juvenile court with 27% having no previous court involvement.
- Sixty-two percent (62%) had a least one prior adjudication.
- Of youth who had court involvement, property offenses (22.6%) and person offenses (22.1%) were the most common offense types admitted into camp.

Offenses at Intake

Offense	Percent of Overall Admission
None	27.1%
Property Offense	22.6%
Person Offense	22.1%
Ungovernable	10.6%
Victimless Crime	10.1%
Truancy	1.7%
Runaway	0.4%
Other	5.4%

Exit Cohort for Youth Exiting Camp FY 2008-2009

In FY 2008-2009, there were a total of 498 exits from the program with 341 or 68.5% of youth successfully completing the program. Eighteen percent (18%) of youth were terminated from the program, and 12% withdrew prior to completing. The average length of stay for successful completers was 11.7 months and 4.9 months for youth who were unsuccessful or withdrew.

Reasons for Exiting Program

Reason	Percentage of Campers
Completion	68.5%
Withdrawal	12.0%
Program Termination	18.0%
Other	1.5%

Academic Growth for Youth Exiting Camp

The majority of youth served by Eckerd in FY 2008-2009 achieved academic progress through experiential learning at camp. Of the youth exiting camp in FY 2008-2009, 92% were able to achieve a higher grade placement than when they entered, with 8% remaining in the same grade. Eckerd administers the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement as a way to measure academic progress in reading and math while youth are at camp. Campers are given a pre-test upon their arrival and post-test at their completion. For youth successfully completing the program in FY 2008-2009, results show an average increase in reading scores of 1.6 grade levels and an average increase in math scores of 1.4 grade levels.

Woodcock-Johnson III Average Test Score Growth

Subject	Intake Score	Exit Score	Grade Level Improvement
Reading	7.3	8.9	1.6
Mathematics	7.0	8.4	1.4

Outcomes

The Department is charged with determining subsequent court involvement of youth completing the EYA Program as referenced in *Session Law 2009-451, Section 18.1, Annual Evaluation of Community Programs*. In FY 2007-2008, there were 279 successful completions from the wilderness camps. The subsequent juvenile court involvement was determined by querying the names of the successful completers through the Department's North Carolina Juvenile On-Line Information Network (NC JOIN), to determine if there had been any post-completion adjudication.

This analysis focused on the 155 youth completing the program under the age of 16. Only 78 youth completing the program in FY 2007-2008 were able to be examined at 12 months post-completion for new adjudications. Seventy-seven (77) youth were able to be examined for new adjudications occurring less than 12 months post-completion, as they turned 16 at some point during those 12 months. There were 124 youth who were 16 at time of completion from the program and were not included in this analysis, as 16 year old youth would be charged as adults and not recorded in NC-JOIN. The Department's ability to accumulate data regarding youth who are no longer subject to a juvenile court's jurisdiction is limited.

**Subsequent Juvenile Justice Involvement
Youth Completing in FY 2007-2008**

	At 12 months post-completion	Less than 12 months	16 at Completion
New Adjudication	17	9	
No New Adjudications	61	68	
16 at End of Camp	0	0	124
Total	78	77	
Post-Completion Adjudication Rate	21.7%	11.6%	

Seventy percent (70%) of the youth completing the program in FY 2007-2008 were attending school, working, or both at 12 months post-completion. The data indicate that the EYA Wilderness Program is successful in helping youth continue their educational pursuits and develop necessary vocational skills.

**Educational and Vocational Status
Youth Completing in FY 2007-2008 at 12 Months Post-Completion**

Status at 12 Months Post-Completion	Percent
Youth in school and not working	48.0%
Youth not in school and not working	30.0%
Youth working and in school	14.0%
Youth working and not in school	8.0%

Wilderness Commitment Program (WCP)

In 2003 the Department and EYA began a pilot program to admit youth who were in commitment status as an alternative to a Youth Development Center. A motion in court must be filed stating reasons why the youth is a good candidate for a community commitment. The committing judge must approve the motion before the placement in camp can occur. WCP youth participate in the same model of care as regular campers. If it is determined by the treatment team that the youth is non-compliant with the WCP Program, the decision can be made to return the youth to his/her assigned Youth Development Center.

Demographics of WCP Youth Admitted for FY-2008-2009

Minority Admissions	100%
Male and Female Admissions	95% male, 5% female
Special Education Youth	30%
Average Age of Youth at Intake	15.3
Average Number of Offenses at Intake	3.19

Residential Cost Comparisons for Committed Youth

Placement	Costs
Eckerd Camp Placements (daily cost)	\$134.94
Secure Detention (daily cost)	\$194*
Youth Development Centers (daily cost)	\$286
Medicaid Rate for Level III Homes (daily cost)	\$252.38

*Both Detention and YDC amounts represent cost to the Department for FY 2007-2008.

In FY 2008-2009, EYA admitted 13 youth under the Wilderness Commitment Program. There were nine (9) youth who completed the program, and seven (7) were terminated and returned to a Youth Development Center. Six (6) campers admitted in FY 2007-2008 remain active in the camps. A WCP youth in FY 2008-2009 had a 56.3% probability of graduating from camp.

WCP Program Success for FY 2008-2009

Total Number of Exits	Number of Graduated Campers	Success Rate
16	9	56.3%