

Close to Home Annual Report 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New York City and New York State are leading a historic transformation of the youth justice system – a transformation that has positioned New York as a beacon for the entire nation after repealing draconian laws that failed to effectively treat and prevent delinquency.

Six years ago, the City and State launched Close to Home, an innovative youth justice program that shifts away from sending New York City youth to large, geographically isolated institutions far from New York City and instead places them in residences near their home communities where they receive rehabilitation programs that focus on their individualized needs, provide comprehensive treatment planning, educational continuity, and rehabilitative services. Prior to the advent of the Close to Home Initiative young people adjudicated as juvenile delinquents in New York City Family Court were typically placed in facilities far from their families and home communities. Although many received academic credits, they encountered considerable difficulties when attempting to transfer credits to local New York City schools. In contrast to this traditional approach to treating delinquency, Close to Home residences have been intentionally designed to ensure participation in programming while affording youth the opportunity to accumulate academic credits without interruption and preserving the safety and security of youth, staff, and the surrounding community.

In 2017, the State passed a new law that took effect on October 1, 2018, known as “Raise the Age,” which requires that 16- and 17-year-olds be treated as minors in the justice system. Prior to the legislation passing, New York was one of only two states that treated these minors as adults in the justice system. As of the writing of this report, newly-arrested 16-year-olds are served in the

youth justice system. By October 1, 2019 17-year-olds will be folded into the youth justice system as well. “Raise the Age” legislation also ushered in the closure of Riker’s Island’s adolescent jail; all 16- and 17-year-olds arrested in New York City who are recommended for detention will now be served by ACS Secure Detention or ACS-contracted Non-Secure Detention.

While the State both reauthorized Close to Home last year and began implementation of the Raise the Age law, the State has eliminated all of its financial support for Close to Home and failed to provide New York City with any funding to implement Raise the Age. Notably, the State supports 50% of the placement costs for young people outside New York City who are not impacted by the Raise the Age law and 100% of the costs for youth outside NYC who come into the justice system due to the Raise the Age law.

New York’s statewide youth justice reform efforts arrive on the heels of unprecedented public safety achievements in New York City and subsequent reductions in the local jurisdiction’s youth justice system. Since 2010, youth arrests in New York City have fallen 68 percent, from 12,744 to 4,099 in calendar year 2017. Admissions to detention during this period decreased 61 percent from 4,990 in 2010 to 1,948 in 2017. Against the backdrop of Citywide decreases in the number of young people entering the justice system, the number of youth admitted to Close to Home also declined. Since 2013 (the first full calendar year of Close to Home operations), admissions have fallen 51 percent, from 394 to 193 in 2017.

Attributable in part to the decline in youth arrests, ACS has contributed to this decrease by expanding intensive services to prevent young people from entering or re-entering the youth justice system. This includes full implementation of the Risk, Needs, and Responsivity (RNR) Framework, a series of structured, validated and responsive risk assessments that matches youth to the most appropriate, least restrictive intervention throughout placement while reducing public safety risks by seeking out and targeting contributing factors.

ACS' efforts to target risk factors that contribute to recidivism and prevent further system penetration were realized in 2017, as there was a decline in the number of youth entering CTH who had previously gone through the program. Continued commitment to programs and services anchored to the principles of Positive Youth Development, which foster social and cognitive skill development and build supportive, trusting, and caring relationships with adults and peers, has provided youth with linkages to community-based services meant to extend far beyond their Close to Home placement.

In response to years-long observations of “what works,” ACS has completely redesigned the Non-Secure Placement (NSP) aftercare model to improve continuity of services for the duration of each youth's placement. These investments by NYC were all made to solidify ACS' commitment to placement stability, community reintegration, and public safety. We hope to see the State recommit its responsibility to the children and families served by ACS through Close to Home and Raise the Age.

With juvenile crime, arrests, detention and placement all decreasing in New York City, the implementation of the Raise the Age law, and our ongoing efforts to collaborate with the state on juvenile justice reform, the success of Close to Home is a critical piece of the successful system transformation. As described in detail in this report, Close to Home is making a positive difference in the lives of youth, families and communities.

Notable achievements for youth in both Non-Secure Placement (NSP) and Limited Secure Placement (LSP) in the last year include:

■ A 7.4% decrease in NSP AWOL Incident Rate:

From calendar years 2016 to 2017, there was a 7.4% drop in the already historically low AWOL incident rate for Non-Secure Placement (NSP).

■ A 57% decrease in LSP AWOL Incident Rate:

From calendar years 2016 to 2017, there was a 57% drop in the AWOL incident rate for Limited-Secure Placement (LSP).

■ A 45% increase in oversight and monitoring:

ACS continued to expand oversight and monitoring activities, increasing the total number of site inspections from a total of 348 in 2016 to a total of 505 in 2017.

■ An 18% increase in the LSP youth released to their parents:

59 % of LSP youth were released to their parents, up from 50% in 2016. This increase was associated with a drop in nine percentage points for LSP youth released to foster care — a critical measure of permanency.

■ A 21% decrease in youth admitted to Close to Home with a previous placement:

11% of all youth admitted to Close to Home in 2017 had a previous placement – a decrease in three percentage points from 14% in 2016.

■ An increase in the number of NSP youth passing classes at school:

NSP youth attending Passages passed classes at a rate of 93% during the 2017-2018 school year — up from the lofty 91% threshold of the previous year.

■ An 89% academic advancement rate among the youngest students:

At the end of the 2017-2018 school year, 89% of Close to Home middle school students enrolled in Passages were promoted at least one grade level.

■ A substantial number of NSP youth passing Regents exams:

Of the NSP youth enrolled at Passages who took New York State Regents exams, 43 % passed one or more Regents at the Regents level (a score of 65 or higher). Additionally, 62 % of the NSP youth with a disability enrolled at Passages who took a Regents exam passed at the Local level (a score of 55 or higher).

■ An outstanding Course Pass Rate for English Language Learners:

The course pass rate for NSP ELL students was 90%, while the course pass rate for LSP ELL students was 100%.

■ A 100% participation rate in Aftercare:

Among the 180 Close toHome youth who transitioned out of placement in 2017, 100% were released to an Aftercare resource.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	7
Overview	7
What is Close to Home?	7
The Close to Home Journey	8
Arrest	8
Probation Intake	8
Adjustment	8
Petition Filing & Arraignment	9
Plea or Fact Finding	9
Disposition	10
The Close to Home Experience	10
Core Principles	11
Close To Home Residential Placement	12
Non-Secure Placement (NSP)	12
Limited Secure Placement (LSP)	14
Close to Home Aftercare	15
The Three Pillars of Close to Home	16
Family Engagement and Permanency	17
Positive Youth Development	19
Educational Continuity	23
Close to home in 2017	29
Who Entered Close to Home in 2017?	29
Demographics	29
Close to Home Movement	36
Transfers and Modifications	36

Close to Home Aftercare in 2017	37
Released Where?	37
Length of Stay.....	38
Permanency and Discharge Resources	40
Revocations.....	41
Incident Trends.....	41
Substantiated VPCR Reports	43
Oversight, Monitoring, And Technical Assistance	44
Monitoring Activities.....	45
Heightened Monitoring and Corrective Action.....	46
Community Engagement.....	48
Community Advisory Boards and Community Engagement.....	48
Youth Activities	49
Conclusion.....	50
Appendix A.....	51
Appendix B.....	52

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects and promotes the safety and well-being of New York City's children and families by providing child welfare, youth justice, and early care and education services.

The Division of Youth and Family Justice (DYFJ) is the youth justice division of ACS and is responsible for services and programs across the youth justice continuum. DYFJ serves young people and families in the community, in pre-trial detention, and in Close to Home. In this continuum, we strive to provide supportive services that prevent, intervene, and treat delinquent behaviors in a manner that is responsive to the needs of youth and families. Our goal is to build stronger and safer communities so that young people do not enter or return to the City's youth justice system.

This report serves to inform the public of key indicators of the Close to Home Initiative and to satisfy annual reporting requirements to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the New York State Legislature.

What is Close to Home?

Close to Home (CTH) allows young people who are found to have committed a delinquent act by the New York City Family Court to receive placement services in a program in, or close to, the communities where they live. CTH placement is a combination of time in a residential program and time in the community with services and supervision, known as Aftercare.

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Division of Youth and Family Justice (DYFJ) is responsible for CTH implementation and oversight. DYFJ contracts with nonprofit Provider Agencies to operate two types of residential placement facilities:

1. Non-Secure Placement (NSP)
2. Limited-Secure Placement (LSP)

The Close to Home Journey

There are 6 main steps in a young person's path to Close to Home, all of which include various stakeholders and decision makers. In many cases, diversion programs provide an off-ramp for youth to remain in the community and avoid out-of-home placement.

Arrest

An arrest, or a serious NYPD interaction, results in a call from the police precinct to the NYPD Juvenile Crime Desk. The Juvenile Crime Desk recommends whether the youth will be brought to Detention or Family Court for a Probation Intake, released to a parent with a Family Court Appearance Ticket (FCAT), or released to a parent after the creation of a Juvenile Report.¹

Probation Intake

If the Juvenile Crime Desk recommends the youth be brought to Detention or Family Court, a Department of Probation (Probation) Intake is conducted. During this intake the youth's case is evaluated for public safety risk factors, such as failure to appear in Court, using the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI).² The youth is then categorized as low-, mid-, or high-risk. Low-risk youth are eligible to be released to family with an FCAT. If the family of a low-risk youth refuses or is unavailable, the youth is admitted to Detention or brought to Family Court, if open.³ At Family Court, a Probation Officer interviews the youth and family members to determine eligibility for adjustment.

Adjustment

If a Probation Officer determines a case is eligible for adjustment, the youth will not have to appear in Family Court. Instead, the youth is diverted to an alternative path outside of the Court system. Once adjusted, the youth is expected to follow certain conditions while monitored by Probation for up to 60 days. If a youth successfully follows conditions of adjustment, the case ends without any Family Court involvement.

1 Juvenile Report: precinct report not officially registered as an arrest, after which the youth is released.

2 DRAI: an evidence-based, validated instrument that assesses youth for public safety risk factors.

3 If Probation recommends detention during open Family Court hours, youth is brought to Court (not Detention)

If a Probation Officer does not adjust a child's case or the youth does not successfully follow the conditions of adjustment, the case is referred to the New York City Law Department (Law Department), which prosecutes delinquency cases. The Law Department has 4 options:

- decline to prosecute (charges will not be filed in court);
- send the case back to Probation to reconsider Adjustment;
- refer the youth to a Law Department diversion program; or
- file a petition with the Family Court to prosecute the youth.

Petition Filing & Arraignment

If the Law Department files a petition, then the youth will see a judge for arraignment, or the initial court appearance. At the arraignment, the judge reads the charges to the youth, the youth's attorney enters a plea, and a fact finding date is set. Finally, the judge determines which interventions, if any, will be ordered until the next court date. These include:

- Release;
- Release, with enrollment in an Alternative-to-Detention (ATD) program;
- Remand to a non-secure detention group home;
- Remand to ACS secure detention; or
- Open remand (ACS selects the detention type)

Plea or Fact Finding

If the youth's attorney and the Law Department enter into a plea agreement, the young person's rights to a fact finding⁴ are waived. If the youth's attorney and the Law Department cannot agree on a plea, then the case goes to fact finding and the judge renders a decision.

4 In Family Court, a fact finding is equivalent to a trial.

Disposition

If the judge adjudicates the youth as juvenile delinquent (JD)⁵, the judge will refer to information contained in a Probation Investigation Report and a Mental Health Study prepared by a psychologist before ordering one of the following dispositions:

- Conditional discharge;
- Probation;
- Alternative-to-Placement (ATP) program;
- **Close to Home Non-Secure Placement (NSP);** or
- **Close to Home Limited-Secure Placement (LSP)**

The Close to Home Experience

While the journey to Close to Home involves many decision makers, a young person's journey in Close to Home is more predictable. When the Family Court places a youth in Close to Home, ACS begins the process of evaluating the youth's needs, creating an individualized service plan, and gathering as much information as possible to identify an appropriate placement facility.

The ACS Close to Home Intake & Assessment (I&A) Unit is responsible for matching youth to an appropriate facility and facilitating transition meetings. Once a residential facility is selected, I&A coordinates a transition meeting with the young person, close family members, and the assigned CTH Provider. The purpose of the transition meeting is to describe the placement assignment, discuss program expectations, and answer any questions the youth, family member, or provider may have. Release planning also begins in this conference and continues throughout placement.

During the residential stay, the youth attends school, receives services specific to their individualized needs, participates in group-oriented programming, and engages in recreation geared toward positive youth development. ACS and the CTH Provider closely monitor the youth's progress to identify and explore service related needs, engage with family, and continue to plan for the youth's release.

5 Juvenile Delinquent: a child between the ages 7 and 16 who a judge has found to have committed an offense.

How long each youth stays in a residential facility depends on several factors. The most important factor is the youth's progress toward benchmarks identified through treatment planning, such as academic achievements or behavioral milestones. Another important factor is whether the youth has earned release. Although each young person's service plan is unique, all youth in Close to Home are given the opportunity to partake in family and community events before returning home. This includes closely supervised home visits and/or enrollment in a community school, during which the youth practices skills gained in placement. These real-life experiences allow youth to earn release in a practical, objective manner. Moreover, youth may be awarded credit that effectively reduces the residential placement length (e.g., time spent in detention). Similarly, time can be added equal to the number of days absent from program without permission (e.g., absence without leave or "AWOL").

Aftercare is the transition period after the residential stay, during which youth continue to receive support and supervision in the community. While Aftercare officially begins when youth are released from a residential facility, release planning begins at intake. ACS works with Provider Agencies to outline treatment goals, identify service needs, address barriers to release, and ensure that necessary service referrals and linkages are in place prior to release.

Core Principles

Under Close to Home, all efforts to improve outcomes for youth are grounded in the following principles, which were developed by engaging national leaders in the youth justice field so that evidence-based models, best practice, and contemporary research findings are woven into each program's unique design:

■ Public Safety:

Consistent with the Family Court's determination that each youth requires supervision and treatment within the least restrictive setting possible, intensive supervision and monitoring is provided by well-staffed residential and community-based aftercare programs.

■ Accountability:

Data is used to drive programmatic decisions and to ensure that Close to Home is effective, efficient and responsive.

■ Evidenced Based/Evidence Informed Treatment:

Close to Home operates along a trauma informed continuum of care that empowers and supports youth by responding to individual treatment needs and skills gained with services that have a proven track record of achieving positive outcomes.

■ **Educational Continuity and Achievement:**

Individualized educational services through the NYC Department of Education allow youth to earn transferrable academic credits, while assigned Educational Transition Specialists ensure academic continuity upon return to community schools.

■ **Community Reintegration:**

Youth connect and remain connected to positive adults, peers, and community supports embedded in their neighborhoods well past Close to Home placement.

■ **Family Engagement and Collaboration:**

Family support and contact are essential to each youth's well-being; Close to Home minimizes dislocation to nurture frequent and meaningful opportunities for participation in treatment and to engage with families.

■ **Permanency:**

Close to Home is structured to develop, support and maintain permanent connections for youth and families.

CLOSE TO HOME RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT

Close to Home facilities are small, supportive neighborhood-based group homes where youth learn new skills designed to address their unique needs and risk factors. In calendar year (CY) 2017, DYFJ partnered with 7 local nonprofit agencies ("Provider Agencies") to serve youth in 25 NSP residences and 5 LSP residences.

Non-Secure Placement (NSP)

In CY 2017, 7 Provider Agencies operated 25 Close to Home NSP residential placements located in New York City and Dobbs Ferry (Westchester County). Each Provider offers structured residential care in a supervised and home-like environment with varying capacity ranging from 6 to 13 beds. In addition, NSP residences are further distinguished by service type, gender served, and program model. See Tables 1 and 2 for a breakdown of NSP Provider Agencies by capacity, program type, gender served, program model, and population.

Table 1. CY 2017 NSP Provider Agencies — General

Provider Agency	Site	Borough	Gender	Program Model	Capacity
Good Shepherd Services	Barbara Blum	Brooklyn	M	Missouri Approach/ Sanctuary	12
Good Shepherd Services	Rose House	Brooklyn	F/LGBTQ	Missouri Approach/ Sanctuary	12
Rising Ground ⁶	Manida	Bronx	M	Missouri Approach	12
Rising Ground	Scholars	Brooklyn	M	Missouri Approach	13
Martin De Porres Group Homes	Elmhurst	Queens	M	Lasallian Culture of Care	6
Martin De Porres Group Homes	Ozone Park	Queens	M	Lasallian Culture of Care	6
Martin De Porres Group Homes	Queens Village	Queens	M	Lasallian Culture of Care	6
SCO Family of Services	128th Street	Queens	M	Missouri Approach	6
SCO Family of Services	189th Street	Queens	M	Missouri Approach	6
SCO Family of Services	Beach 38th Street	Queens	M	Missouri Approach	6
SCO Family of Services	Sunset Park	Brooklyn	F	Missouri Approach	6
Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services	162nd Street	Bronx	F	Integrated Treatment Model ⁷	12
Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services	Marolla Place	Bronx	M	Integrated Treatment Model	12
Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services	White Plains Road	Bronx	M	Integrated Treatment Model	12
Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services	Astoria 1 & 2	Queens	M	Integrated Treatment Model	13
St. John's Residence for Boys	Rockaway Park	Queens	M	Missouri Approach	12
St. John's Residence for Boys	Bayside	Queens	M	Missouri Approach	12

⁶ Formerly Leake & Watts Services

⁷ Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services transitioned to ITM from the Missouri Approach in July 2018.

**Table 2. CY 2017 Non-Secure Placement
Provider Agencies — Specialized**

Provider Agency	Site	Borough	Gender	Program Model	Program Type	Capacity
SCO Family of Services	Cottage 1	Bronx	M	Missouri Approach	Specialized – Developmental Disabilities	6
SCO Family of Services	Cottage 2	Bronx	M	Missouri Approach	Specialized – Developmental Disabilities	6
The Children's Village	Smith	Dobbs Ferry	M	Integrated Treatment Model	Specialized – Fire Setting Behavior	9
The Children's Village	Van Horn	Dobbs Ferry	M	Integrated Treatment Model	Specialized – Problematic Sexual Behaviors	6
The Children's Village	Kendall	Dobbs Ferry	M	Integrated Treatment Model	Specialized – Problematic Sexual Behaviors	9
The Children's Village	Promise North	Staten Island	F	Integrated Treatment Model	Specialized – Serious Emotional Disturbance	10
The Children's Village	Promise South	Staten Island	F	Integrated Treatment Model	Specialized – Serious Emotional Disturbance	10
The Children's Village	Collins	Dobbs Ferry	M	Integrated Treatment Model	Specialized – Substance Abuse and Addiction	9

Limited Secure Placement (LSP)

While sharing common goals and anticipated outcomes with NSP, LSP facilities are designed for young people who require more restrictive supervision. In CY 2017, 3 Provider Agencies operated 5 Close to Home LSP residential placements, also located in New York City and Dobbs Ferry (Westchester County). The residences ranged in capacity (6 bed minimum to 18 bed maximum) and are distinguished by program type (general versus specialized) and program model. LSP residences also maintain a lower youth-to-staff ratio than NSP residences and operate with additional security features throughout the facility (e.g., 24/7 control rooms, sally port entrances, and interior door hardware with electronic locking mechanism). Youth placed in LSP attend school and participate in most services on-site. See Table 3 for a breakdown of LSP Provider Agencies by program model, program type, and capacity.

Table 3. CY 2017 Limited-Secure Placement Provider Agencies

Provider Agency	Site	Borough	Gender	Program Model	Program Type	Capacity
The Children's Village	Fanshaw	Dobbs Ferry	M	Integrated Treatment Model	Specialized	6
The Children's Village	Crest	Dobbs Ferry	M	Integrated Treatment Model	Specialized	6
Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services	South Ozone Park	Queens	M	Integrated Treatment Model	Specialized	18
Rising Ground	Ryer Avenue	Bronx	F	Person-Centered, Relational Organizational Milieu aimed at Increasing Self-Efficacy	General / Specialized	16

Close to Home Aftercare

Aftercare is a critical element of successful community reintegration, and in 2017 ACS continued to work with a network of nonprofit service providers (“Aftercare Providers”) to support NSP youth upon their release from residential placement. LSP youth are released to Aftercare under the supervision of their residential placement provider. This model is designed for youth with unique needs to experience continuity of targeted services and to maintain the positive, caring relationships forged during the residential stay⁸. Aftercare Providers aid in the transition home by working with youth to practice and enhance the skills they acquired in placement, connecting them to community-based services and programs, and checking in. ACS contracted with 5 Aftercare Providers to work with NSP youth in CY 2017.

See Table 4 for a list of Aftercare Provider Agencies by model and population served.
The Three Pillars of Close to Home

⁸ Starting in November 2018, ACS redesigned NSP Aftercare so that all Close to Home youth receive services from the same Provider Agency for the duration of their time in Close to Home.

Table 4. CY 2017 NSP Aftercare Provider Agencies

Agency	Population Served	Model
Boys Town New York ⁹	General NSP — Youth citywide	Boys Town Model
Children's Aid Society	General NSP — Youth returning to Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island	Family-Functional Therapy (FFT)
The Children's Village	Specialized NSP — Youth with sexually abusive behaviors	MST-FIT
The Children's Village	Specialized NSP — Youth with severe emotional disturbance or fire-setting behaviors	MST-FIT
Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services	General NSP — Youth returning to Manhattan and the Bronx	FFT

The Three Pillars of Close to Home

Recognizing that public safety is best achieved through the development of social and cognitive skills, significant resources have been committed to three foundational pillars of Close to Home. The first, Family Engagement and Permanency, is grounded in ACS' agency-wide Family Team Conference (FTC) model yet tailored to justice-involved youth by incorporating a series of structured, validated and responsive risk assessments known as the Risk-Needs-Responsivity Framework. The second, Educational Continuity, is a symbol of New York City's commitment to Close to Home and serves as a reminder of the historic injustices that led to the transformative youth justice landscape of 2017. The third pillar, broadly referred to as Positive Youth Development, is grounded in research that suggests youth are more likely to achieve positive outcomes when they have meaningful engagement in activities where supportive, trusting, and caring relationships with adults and peers are nurtured and developed.

⁹ Boys Town Aftercare was closed in August 2017

Family Engagement and Permanency

ACS' approach to family engagement and permanency is driven by the union of Family Team Conferencing (FTC) and the Risk, Needs, and Responsivity (RNR) framework. The RNR framework matches youth to the most appropriate, least restrictive intervention throughout placement and reduces criminogenic risk by seeking out and targeting contributing factors. The FTC is a venue where the youth's family support networks are brought together to collaboratively develop and champion execution of the youth's treatment plan.

Placement and Permanency Specialists

Central to the Close to Home Case Management process is the Placement and Permanency Specialist (PPS), who oversees the provision of services and serves as each youth's primary case manager, guide, and liaison to family members and service providers. PPS assignments remain the same for the entirety of each youth's Close to Home residential placement and Aftercare supervision. This provides continuity, consistency, and a caring and trusting adult that youth and families can depend on. Working in geographically designated units under the guidance of an ACS Close to Home (CTH) Director of Placement and Permanency, PPS staff conduct risk assessments, identify individual needs, facilitate goal identification and development, and coordinate services with providers and caring adults involved in the youth's treatment.

Family Team Conferencing

The Family Team Conferencing (FTC) model is used across ACS to facilitate effective service interventions for young people and to engage families and relevant stakeholders in the planning process. Whenever possible, youth, parents, relatives, foster parents, adoptive parents, family friends, service providers, community representatives, ACS, and Provider Agencies are invited to attend each FTC. In CY 2017, Close to Home realized full implementation of FTCs to augment the work of the PPS and align with agency-wide practice. As a result, all youth and their families are provided with a comprehensive continuum of support that weaves together familial expertise and the knowledge of professionals to collaboratively design effective service plans.

Close to Home deploys a team of Family Engagement Conference Facilitators (FECF) to facilitate FTCs for the duration of the youth's placement. Each FECF is assigned to specific residential placement facilities to foster and build strong working relationships with youth, families, and Provider treatment teams. In addition to facilitating conferences at critical decision points during a youth's placement, the FECF's convene conferences with the youth, family, PPS and service providers following a critical incident (such as an AWOL) to discuss presenting challenges and work together to craft a plan of action.

Risk-Needs-Responsivity Framework

In CY 2017, ACS continued to partner with nationally recognized leaders in youth justice and Close to Home stakeholders to fully implement the Risk, Needs, and Responsivity (RNR) framework for Close to Home. The primary principles of the RNR framework are:

- **Risk** — Program intensity is matched to the level of risk posed by the individual;
- **Needs** — Interventions target dynamic or changeable criminogenic risk factors;
- **Responsivity** — Strategic service delivery adapted to individual development level and learning capacity;
- **Professional Discretion** — Decisions are not made solely based on "scores" and are weighed alongside legal, ethical, humanitarian, and service availability factors.

This framework utilizes the Youth Level of Service Inventory (YLSI), a validated Risk Assessment Instrument used to identify criminogenic risk factors among young offenders, as the foundation for case management, service planning, and service delivery for youth. In New York City, the YLSI is initially administered by Probation for all youth appearing in Family Court on a delinquency matter. This is a component of the Probation Investigation Report judges use to make decisions at disposition, and is well-suited to the Close to Home workforce, as the assessment can be administered by non-clinicians once fully trained and certified. The YLSI assesses youth service needs in the following domains:

- Prior and Current Offenses/Dispositions
- Family Circumstances
- Education/Employment
- Peer Relations
- Substance Abuse
- Leisure/Recreation
- Personality/Behavior
- Attitudes/Orientation

In CY 2017, ACS incorporated the YLSI into service plans for every youth that entered Close to Home. Formal protocols ensure that existing YLSI data from Probation is streamlined into the admissions process. For any youth whose Probation assessment was not conducted within the last six months, an assessment is administered by the Close to Home Intake and Assessment Unit. The YLSI is then administered at critical moments in each youth's placement. The objective of each assessment is to tailor services and inform the intensity or level of supervision each youth will receive throughout placement and, most critically, upon release to Aftercare. As of the publication of this report, ACS has completed over 300 YLSI.

Due to an inherent emphasis on risk and needs, these types of assessments can be interpreted as relying on individual youth deficits. With thoughtful development and planning, the Risk-Needs-Responsivity framework has been designed to account for individual youth strengths as motivation in treatment and to foster positive long-lasting service linkages. Through continued collaboration with Close to Home stakeholders, ACS is currently developing and refining quality assurance mechanisms and will provide ongoing training and technical assistance to support and sustain a framework of care that empowers youth to play a central role in their behavior change process.

Positive Youth Development

In CY 2017, ACS continued to grow the profile of Close to Home services that align with positive youth development. These programs offer youth an opportunity

to engage in services that promote prosocial skills, vocational and academic engagement, creative and performing arts, and positive adult and peer mentoring while introducing residential placement providers to new resources for ongoing engagement.

Mentoring and Vocational Services

During the reporting period, ACS procured and expanded programs and services for CTH youth that promote career exploration, financial literacy, and social growth. This includes paid internships and job readiness workshops offered through the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development's Summer Youth Employment Program, gender-responsive mentoring services through Groomed Success and Girl Vow that promote academic, social, and career professional development, and training for youth to become certified referees for youth sports in the community.

ACS also partnered with the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC) to enroll Close to Home youth in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Architecture/Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) Academy program. Developed by DDC to establish a diverse and inclusive pipeline for New York City's youth into the architecture, construction, and engineering industries, STEAM Academy provides Close to Home youth with a paid summer internship that enables participants to gain exposure to careers in the built environment and to learn about what it takes to build New York City¹⁰.

Creative and Performing Arts

Close to Home youth participated in an array of creative and performing arts programs in CY 2017, all with the objective of providing youth with a consistent outlet for self-expression, building a community that stretches beyond the walls of the residential facility, and developing resiliency and leadership skills. Art Start offers workshops and programming to build self-confidence, develop critical thinking and problem-solving, and pursue meaningful opportunities for growth

10 <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/ddc/steam/steam.page>

(both in facility and at home in the community).¹¹ Drama Club is a mobile drama program that delivers theater training and fosters positive mentor relationships with youth through a curriculum centered on improvisational theatre.¹² Voices Unbroken and Youth Writes are creative writing programs that help build youth communication skills, help formulate future goals, and allow youth to share their stories through publication and performance.

Carnegie Hall Musical Connections is a collaboration with the Weill Music Institute that offers workshops, musical training, and public performances for family members and peers to celebrate youth achievements. In its third year of working with Close to Home, Carnegie Hall continues to offer opportunities to earn elective course credit toward high school graduation while inspiring creativity and encouraging personal and artistic growth. Close to Home youth also participated in Music Beyond Measure, which uses group-centered programming and a co-creative environment to help Close to Home youth develop healthy coping mechanisms that aid in their treatment and trauma recovery process.¹³

Physical Fitness and Mindfulness

Close to Home youth experienced the benefits of positive youth development through participation in programs that emphasize both physical fitness and emotional well-being. The Lineage Project offers trauma-conscious mindfulness and yoga programming that helps youth manage stress, build inner strength, and cultivate compassion.¹⁴ Lineage's curriculum has been shown to help justice-involved young people manage anger, improve self-regulation, and cope with stress and anxiety.¹⁵ I Challenge Myself, a sports-based youth development program, utilizes fitness challenges to promote physical and mental endurance while recognizing and celebrating the perseverance, accomplishments, and personal growth of participating youth.¹⁶

11 <http://www.art-start.org/about-us/>

12 <https://www.dramaclubnyc.org/#intro>

13 <https://musicbeyondmeasure.org/index.html>

14 <http://www.lineageproject.org/about-1/#our-mission>

15 <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0306624X16633667>

16 <https://www.ichallengemyself.org/programs/>

Cure Violence

Cure Violence is an evidence-informed public health model that identifies and engages youth at highest risk of gun violence by employing Credible Messengers¹⁷ to diffuse street disputes, offer emergency crisis intervention, mediation, mentorship, and counseling. In line with national best practice, Credible Messengers use an asset-based approach to engage youth and facilitate conflict mediation sessions in residential and school-based settings.

In CY 2017, ACS solidified Cure Violence services across the five boroughs. Full implementation of the YLSI affords ACS and Close to Home stakeholders the opportunity to identify and refer youth to Cure Violence, ensuring access to these services during residential placement, through aftercare, and well beyond their placement. Cure Violence staff have become integral to the fabric of Close to Home, participating in critical service plan meetings, coordinating with residential and aftercare providers, and providing linkages to neighborhood-based pro-social activities. See Table 5 below for the community expertise of each Cure Violence Provider.

Table 5. Cure Violence Providers

Cure Violence Providers	Community Expertise
Good Shepherd Services - Bronx Rises Against Guns (BRAG)	Bronx
Gangstas Making Astronomical Community Changes (GMACC)	Brooklyn
Getting Out and Staying Out (GOSO)	Manhattan
Life Camp	Queens
True 2 Life	Staten Island

17 Credible Messengers have high street credibility, are connected to the community, and can relate to and engage high risk youth.

Educational Continuity

Overview and School Year

Education is fundamental to the successful rehabilitation of young people in Close to Home. According to the New York City Department of Education (DOE), “more than 90 percent of students enrolled in Passages Academy read at least one grade level below the national norm for students in their grade level”.¹⁸ Many young people coming to CTH are significantly behind in credit accumulation and ACS CTH Providers work each day across a variety of school environments to ensure that the youth they supervise receive quality education and instruction. In all circumstances, credits earned in placement transfer back to NYC DOE upon the young person’s return to school in the community.

Young people in Close to Home attend:

- NYC Department of Education District 79 – Passages Academy
- NYC Department of Education District 75
- Greenburgh Eleven Union Free School District

The 2017-2018 school year data for the above districts include the Fall semester of 2017 and the Spring semester of 2018. Because data is captured on the school calendar, it should be noted that the following data also reflects young people who were not admitted during Calendar Year 2017.

District 79 / Passages Academy

Passages Academy (henceforth, Passages) is part of NYC DOE’s District 79, the alternative school and programs district, that is responsible for educating youth in detention or placement settings. Delivered at the Belmont

“I am learning
how to do the
work here.”

Young person
in Close to Home
District 79
Passages Academy

¹⁸ Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice and NYC Department of Education, *Maintaining the Momentum: A Plan for Safety and Fairness in Schools*, 11.

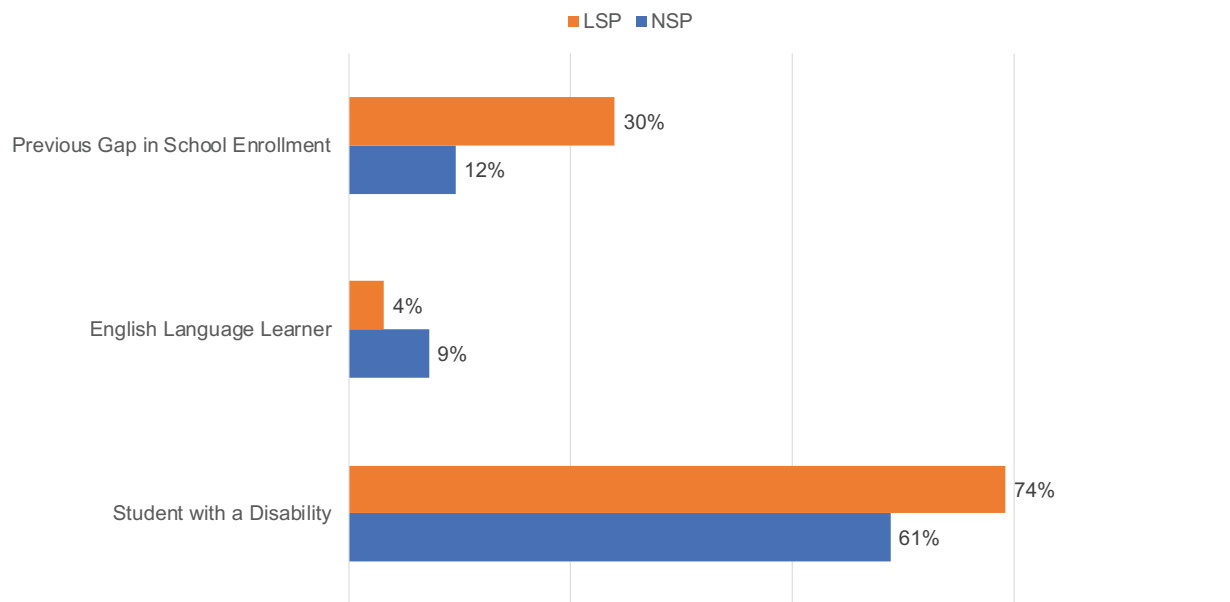
school in Brooklyn, the Bronx Hope school in the Bronx, and at residential facilities for LSP youth, the Passages curriculum focuses on building core area credits for graduation using a framework of academic and social emotional learning.

A young person is enrolled in Passages upon placement and participates in an orientation that evaluates the services they will need while in Close to Home. After orientation, youth are assigned to a class program that matches their needs and are enrolled in English, Math, Social Studies, Science, Art, and Physical Education. Passages staff prepare young people for middle school and Regents exams, in addition to a successful transition to a community school to continue their education.

Staff work with youth with disabilities by developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP), providing them with licensed special education teachers, small classroom settings, and counseling, if mandated through their IEP. Staff also work with youth who are learning English as a New Language (ENL) by keeping them in classes with the other youth and assigning them an ESL certified teacher, who collaborates with their other teachers to ensure all needs are met. To ensure a swift transition into a school in the community upon release, Passages employs a Transition Specialist to visit schools with them, aid with their applications, and serve as support for 6 months after release from a Close to Home facility.

Passages Enrollment

During the 17-18 School Year, 192 NSP youth enrolled in Passages. On average, there were 102 students enrolled in classes each school day. The median length of enrollment in instructional days was 104 days or about 3.4 months. On the LSP side, there were 50 youth enrolled during the school year with an average daily enrollment of 31 young people. The median length of enrollment for LSP youth was 123 days or 4 months. Figure 1. below illustrates the special need details of Close to Home students enrolled at Passages.

Figure 1. SY 17-18 Passages Students by Special Need Details

Non-Secure Placement Academics

Of the 192 NSP youth in Passages in SY 17-18, 83 percent (or 160) were in High School. The average attendance rate for NSP students was 86 percent.

Table 6. SY17-18 NSP High School Student Outcomes

9 credits	Average credits earned during their time of enrollment
8.6 credits	Average credits earned for youth with disabilities
93%	Students earning 5 or more credits
93%	Average course passing rate among 113 NSP students
92%	Average course passing rate for students with a disability
90%	Average course passing rate for NSP English Language Learners

Table 7. Regents Exam Access and Performance

43%	Students who passed 1 or more Regents with a score of 65+
62%	Students with a disability who passed 1 or more Regents with a score of 55+
62%	Among the 26 enrolled students with a disability who took one or more Regents exams, 62 percent (16) passed at the Local level (a score of 55 or higher).
82%	Among the 34 middle school students eligible for promotion at the end of the school year, 82 percent (28) were promoted at least one grade level.

Table 8. SY17-18 NSP Educational Continuity

89%	Among the 114 NSP high school students discharged from Passages, 89 percent (or 102 youth) were transferred to a DOE school or program.
58%	Among the 59 NSP high school students with both prior- ¹⁹ and post-discharge ²⁰ attendance rates, 58 percent (or 34 youth) saw at least a five percent improvement in school attendance.
49%	Among the 59 NSP high school students with both prior- and post-discharge attendance rates, 49 percent (28 youth) saw at least a 10 percent improvement in school attendance.

Limited Secure Placement Academics

Of the 50 LSP youth in Passages in SY 17-18, 94 percent (or 47) were in High School. The average attendance rate for LSP students was 72 percent.

Table 9. SY17-18 LSP High School Student Outcomes

7.9 credits	Average credits earned during their time of enrollment
8.2 credits	Average credits earned for youth with disabilities
79%	Students earning 5 or more credits
84%	Average course passing rate among 33 students
82%	Average course passing rate among students with a disability
100%	Average course passing rate among English Language Learners

Table 10. Regents Exam Access and Performance

24%	Students who passed 1 or more Regents with a score of 65+
46%	Students with a disability who passed 1 or more Regents with a score of 55+.
62%	Among the 26 enrolled students with a disability who took one or more Regents exams, 62 percent (16) passed at the Local level (a score of 55 or higher).

Table 11. SY17-18 LSP Educational Continuity

75%	Of the 28 LSP students who were discharged from Passages in SY 17-18, 75 percent (21) were transferred to a DOE school or program.
63%	Among 8 LSP high school students with both prior attendance rates and post-discharge attendance rates, 63% (5) saw at least a 5% improvement in school attendance.
63%	Among 8 LSP high school students with both prior attendance rates and post-attendance rates, 49% (28) saw at least a 10% improvement in school attendance.

¹⁹ Prior Attendance: From Fall or Spring term of the prior SY; if both are available, data are taken from the Spring

²⁰ Post-Attendance: Attendance rate from the first 60 instructional days of community school enrollment

District 75 / St. John's Residence for Boys

"What would I say to a little kid? Stay in school if you want to be a superhero."

Young person
in Close to Home
District 75
St. John's Residence for boys

As part of the NYC Department of Education, District 75 (D-75) provides citywide educational, vocational, and behavioral support programs for students who have cognitive, behavioral, emotional, or other disability challenges. D-75 programs exist in inclusive programs, special classes in specialized schools, agencies, hospitals, and homes. Young people in Close to Home who are admitted into St. John's Residence for Boys NSP sites are enrolled in D-75.

During the 17-18 School Year, 29 NSP youth enrolled in D-75. Of these youth, 90 percent were starting at the high school level. More than half (62 percent) had Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and were students with a disability.

Table 12. SY17-18 D-75 NSP School Youth Outcomes

96%	Average attendance rate
10.6	Average credits earned during their time of enrollment
88%	Average course passing rate
88%	Average course passing rate for students with a disability
100%	Students with a disability who took one or more Regents who passed one or more regents at the local level (score of 55 or higher)

Greenburgh Eleven

The Greenburgh Eleven Union Free School District (G-11) is a New York State public school district located in Dobbs Ferry, New York, operating on the grounds of The Children's Village servicing young people with emotional, behavioral, and/or learning problems in grades K-12. The District, in coordination with the residential treatment sites on The Children Village campus, provides structured learning, a

"I want to beat the statistics."

Young person
in Close to Home
Greenburgh Eleven

New York State Education Department Common Core aligned curriculum, and an intensive focus on literacy. G-11 currently serves all NSP youth at The Children's Village Dobbs Ferry sites.

For SY 17-18, 33 NSP youth were enrolled in the G-11 school district. Of these youth, 91 percent were starting at the high school level. Eighty-two percent of the students were students with a disability and there was one English Language Learner. There were also 79 percent of students who had an IEP.

Table 13. SY17-18 G-11 NSP School Youth Outcomes

67%	Average attendance rate
3	Average credits earned during their time of enrollment
67%	Average course passing rate
72%	Average course passing rate for students with a disability
67%	Among the 6 enrolled students with a disability who took one or more Regents exams, 63 percent (4) passed one or more Regents at the Local level (a score of 55 or higher).
50%	Among the 6 enrolled students with a disability who took one or more Regents exams, 50 percent (3) passed at the Regents level (a score of 65 or higher).

CLOSE TO HOME IN 2017

Who Entered Close to Home in 2017?

■ **193 Total young people
newly admitted to Close
to Home in 2017**

■ 175 NSP admissions

■ 18 LSP admissions

Demographics

Non-Secure Placement

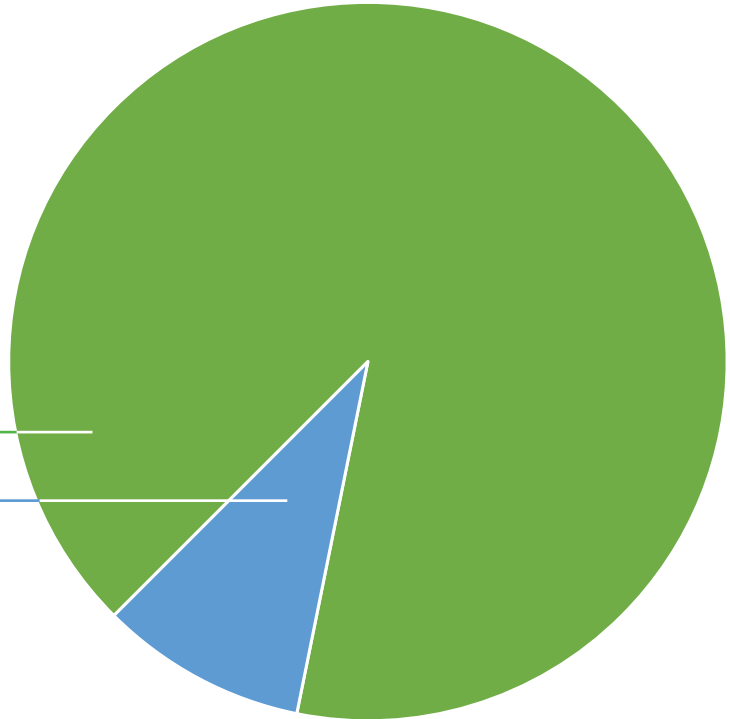


Figure 2. CY 2017 NSP Admissions by Race and Ethnicity

■ Black 57%

■ LatinX / Hispanic 32%

■ White 6%

■ Asian 1%

■ Other 4%

N = 174

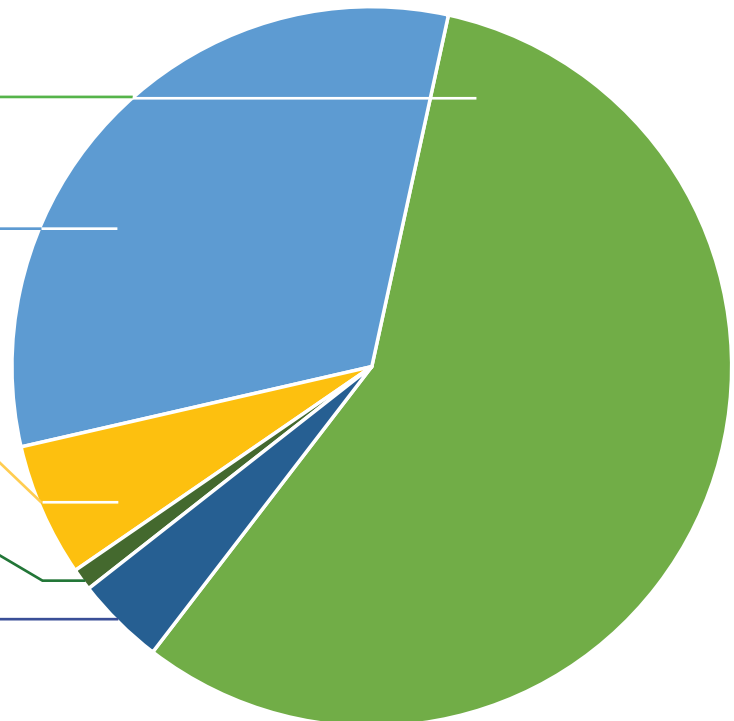


Figure 3. CY 2017 NSP Admissions by Gender

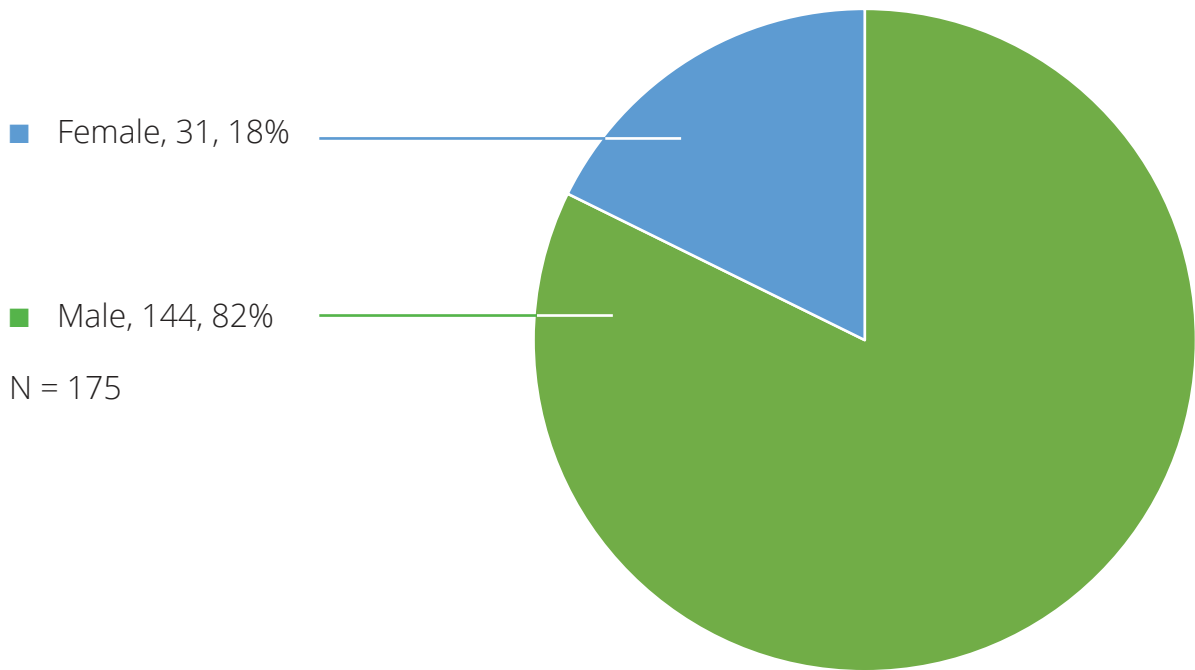


Figure 4. CY 2017 NSP Admissions by Age at Admission

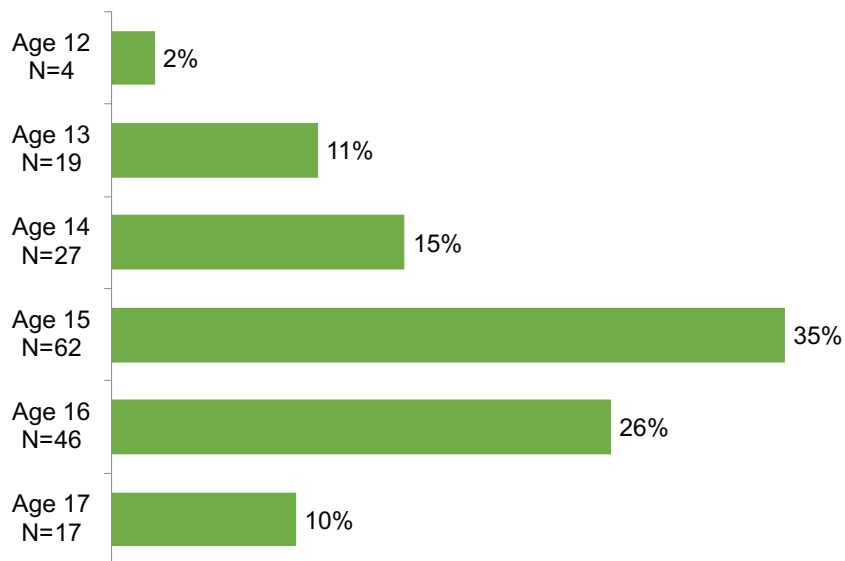


Figure 5. CY 2017 LSP Admissions by Race and Ethnicity

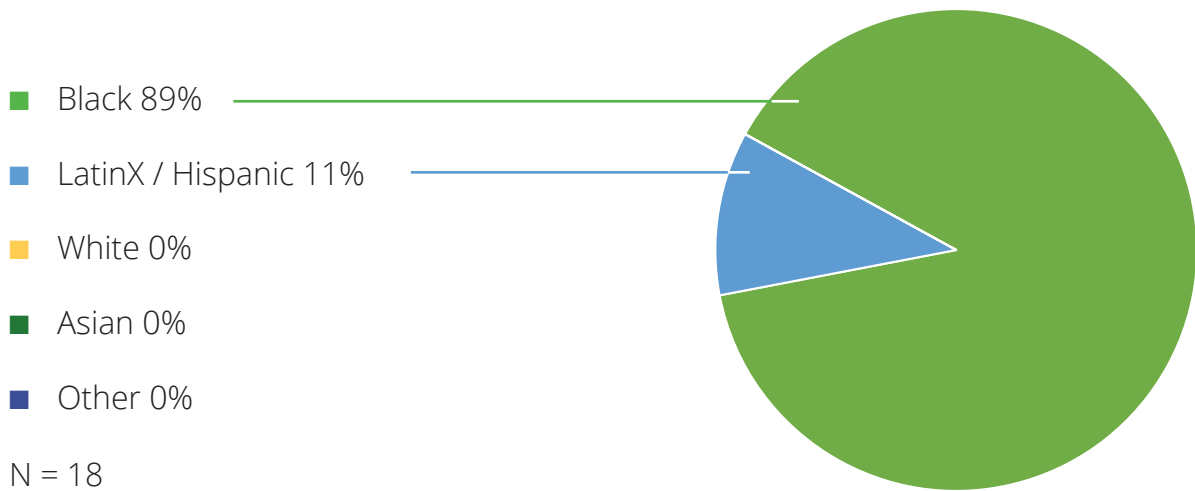


Figure 6. CY 2017 LSP Admissions by Gender

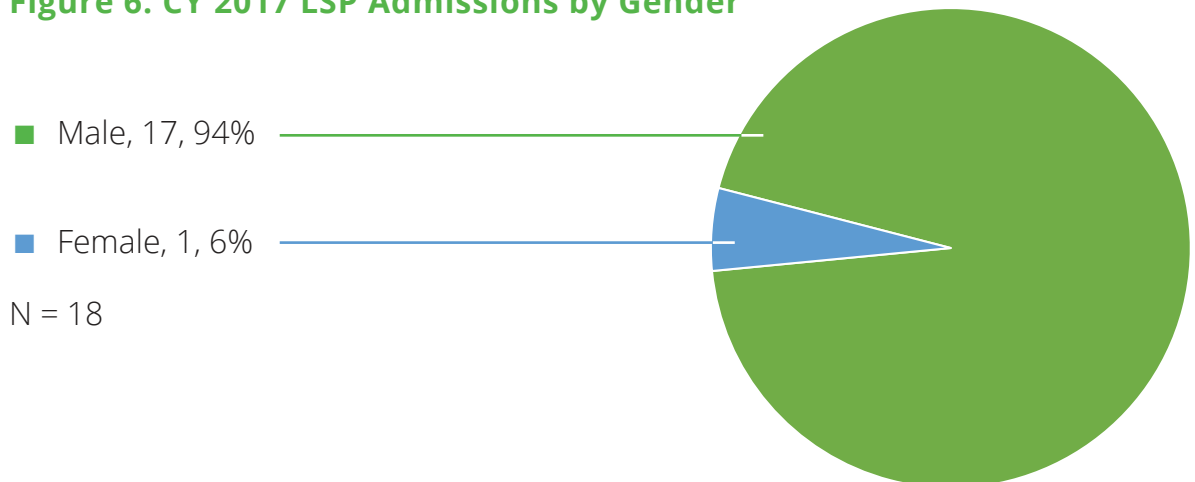
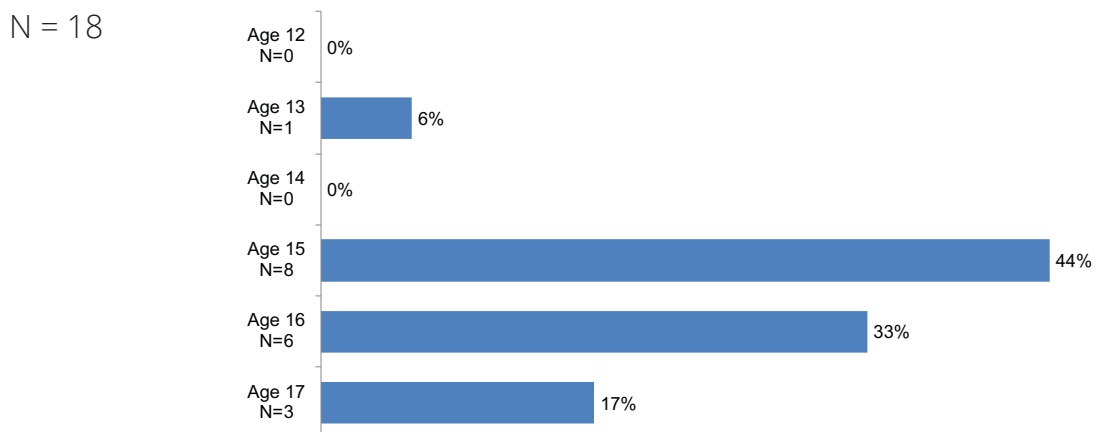


Figure 7. CY 2017 LSP Admissions by Age

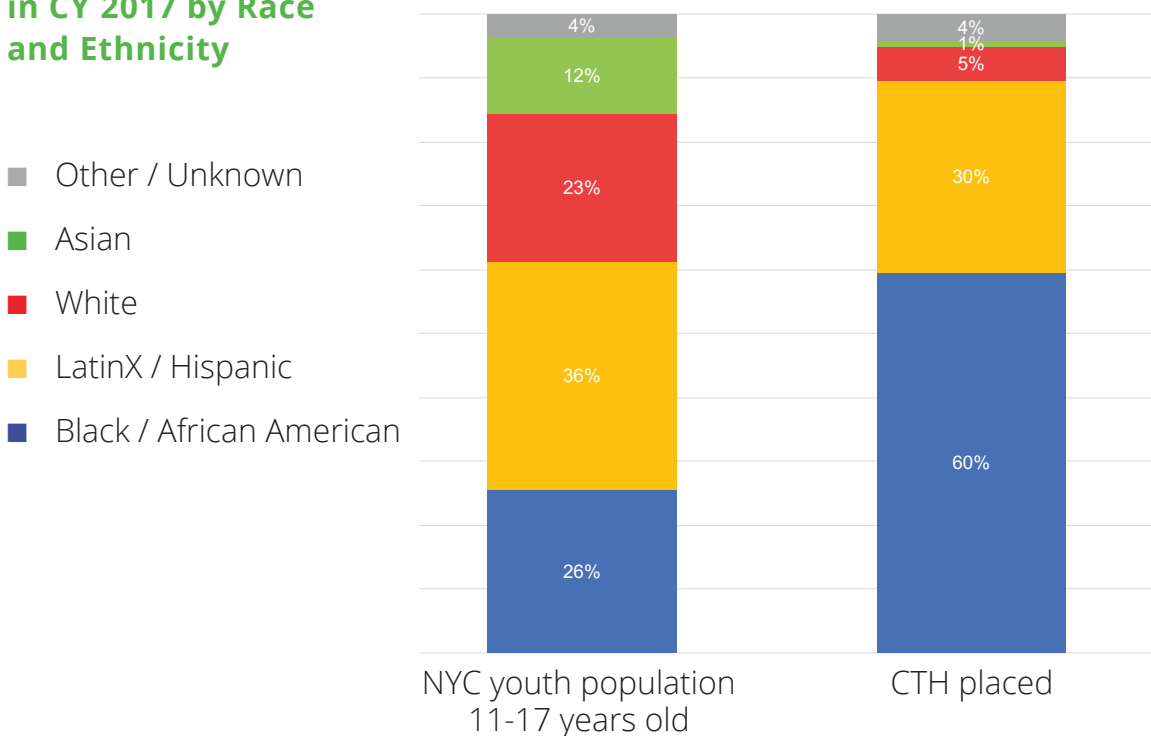


Racial and Ethnic Disparity

Racial disproportionality and disparity are serious problems that affect children and families of color in the child welfare, youth justice, education, mental-health, and healthcare systems. Disproportionality exists when a certain racial/ethnic group is over or under represented at a system point when compared to their overall population. For example, if Black / African American youth represent 25% of the city's youth population, but make up 50% of all child welfare cases, there is disproportionality.

Disparity focuses on unequal outcomes based on a specific characteristic such as race and ethnicity. Research has shown that Black and Latinx/Hispanic students are suspended from school at higher rates and are punished more severely for similar behaviors than their white peers.²¹ The disparities that we see today did not come about by accident; they exist because of racist policies, past and present, across institutions in our city, state, and country. For this report, ACS looked closely at Close to Home demographic data to identify such disproportionality and disparity in NYC's youth justice placement system.

Figure 8. NYC Youth Population vs CTH Placed Youth in CY 2017 by Race and Ethnicity



21 https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ymj/downloads/pdf/Disparity_Report.pdf

As Figure 8 above shows, Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic youth make up 62% of the New York City youth population, but 90% of Close to Home admissions. When analyzing demographic data, Black or African American youth are disproportionately admitted into Close to Home. At only 26% of the city's youth population, Black/African American youth make up 60% of Close to Home admissions. While ACS does not decide who arrives in Close to Home, the agency acknowledges a responsibility to investigate ways to work with other City agencies to reduce disparity in the youth justice system.

Equity Goal

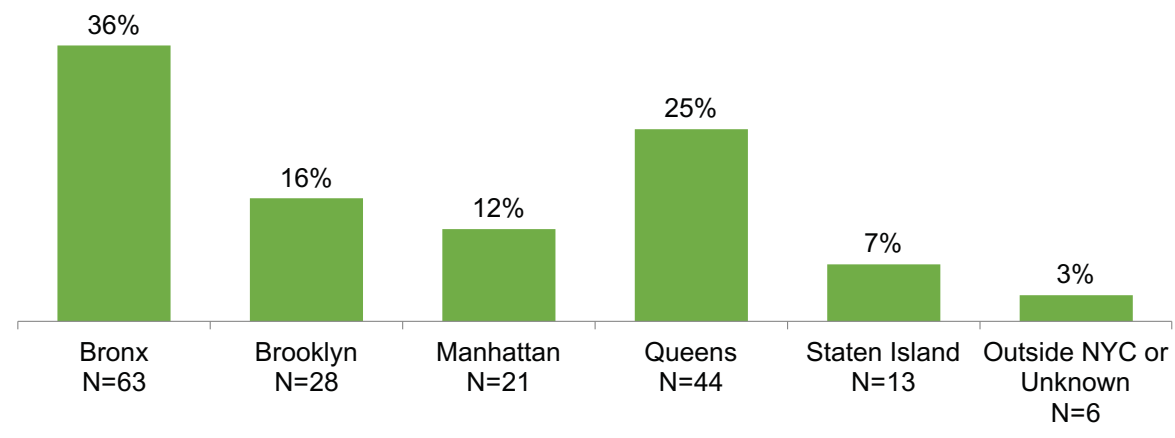
In compliance with Local Law 174²² passed by the New York City Council in 2017, ACS is actively developing an action plan that identifies and addresses the disparities that exist in the youth justice system. As part of these efforts, ACS is committed to the following goal:

"Youth and families who touch the youth justice system should be treated fairly, safely, and with respect. ACS envisions a system that prevents and reduces involvement in the youth and criminal justice systems. No group should be disproportionately represented or receive disparate outcomes in CTH."

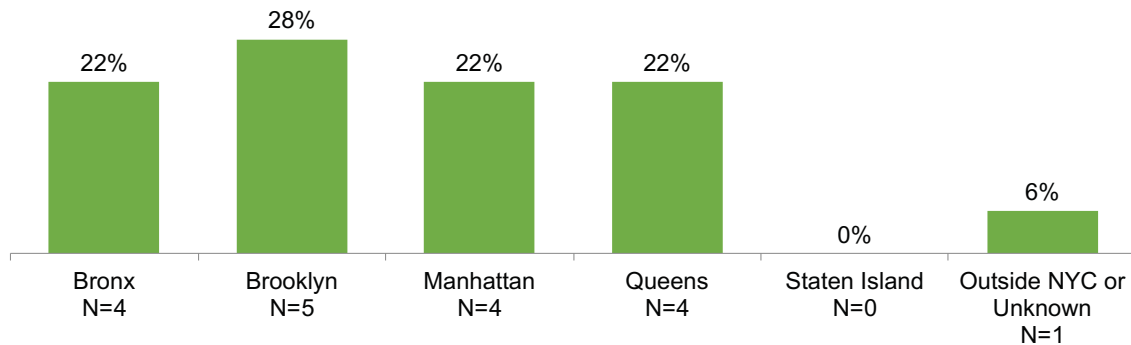
Geography

Close to Home youth come from all over New York City and are raised in communities where opportunities for education, mental-health, and healthcare services look different. See figures 9 and 10 below for NSP and LSP admissions by home borough.

Figure 9. CY 2017 NSP Admissions by Home Borough



²² <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/View.ashx?M=F&ID=5543696&GUID=08C845D1-14E8-4B94-A3DB-B104790B2860>

Figure 10. CY 2017 LSP Admissions by Home Borough

More than a quarter (28 percent) of all Close to Home youth come from the 5 community districts listed in table 14 below. To contextualize the neighborhoods that CTH youth come from, we used the American Human Development Index (AHD), which measures the health, education, and income indicators of individual communities.

Table 14. CY 2017 CTH Admissions Top Community Districts

Borough	Top Community District in Borough	Number of CY 2017 Admissions	Percent of CY 2017 Admissions
Bronx	Williamsbridge/Baychester	14	7%
Brooklyn	East New York/Starrett City	8	4%
Manhattan	Central Harlem	10	5%
Queens	Jamaica/Hollis	11	6%
Staten Island	Saint George/Stapleton	12	6%

The top 5 community districts scored below the New York City AHD average (10 being the highest possible score). Additional facts about these communities are as follows:

- Jamaica/Hollis in Queens and Williamsbridge/Baychester in the Bronx had higher life expectancies than the NYC average.
- Only Saint George/Stapleton in Staten Island had a median income higher than the NYC average, while East New York and Central Harlem had a median income almost \$30,000 below average.
- The 5 community districts all had higher percentages of disconnected youth²³, or teens and young adults between 16-24 years of age who are neither working nor in school, than the NYC average.
- Lastly, all districts except Saint George (equal to NYC average) had higher rates of families entering the homeless shelter system than the NYC average.

23 <http://www.measureofamerica.org/disconnected-youth/>

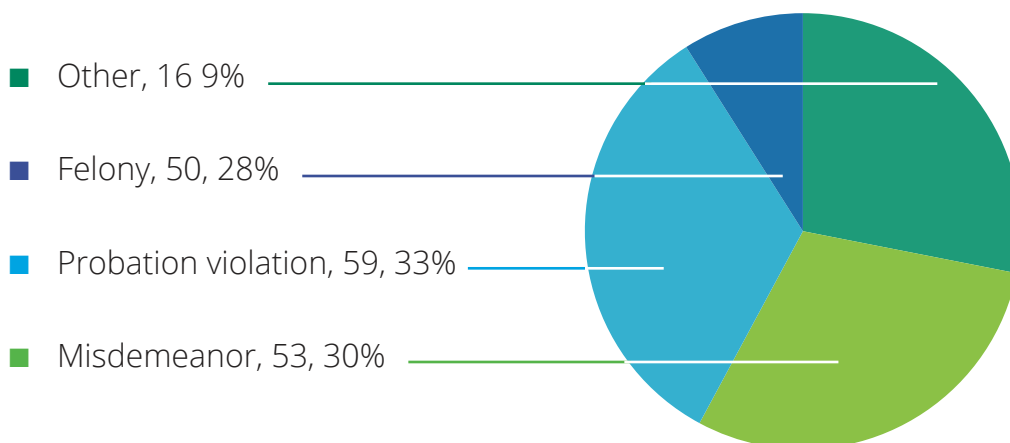
Acknowledging the existence of these factors allows for ACS to gain an understanding of the circumstances and backgrounds the youth we serve are coming from. With that understanding we know that the ecological impact a community may have on the possibility of a youth entering into the justice system has added to the disparities acknowledged in this report.

System Involvement

Of the 193 Close to Home admissions in CY 2017, 11 percent (or N=22) of young people (NSP and LSP combined) had a previous CTH placement, a decrease from 14 percent in 2016. This improvement is representative of ACS' efforts to target risk factors that contribute to recidivism and prevent further system penetration for all Close to Home youth.

Out of the 178 youth with available adjudication type information²⁴, 33 percent came to CTH on a probation violation, 30 percent on a misdemeanor, and 28 percent on a felony. The remaining 9 percent are classified as entering Close to Home on multiple adjudication types, such as both a felony/misdemeanor and probation violation, and one youth who was placed for a charge other than a felony, misdemeanor, or probation violation.

Figure 11. CY 2017 Close to Home Admissions by Adjudication Type

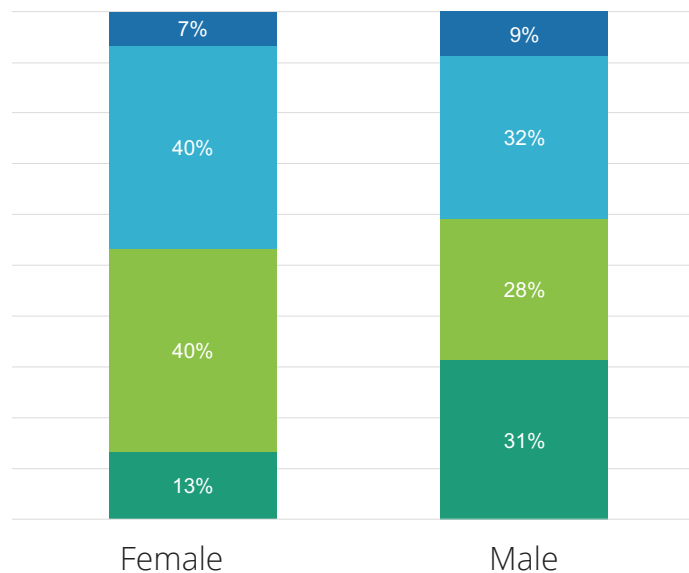


When broken out by gender, youth who identify as female are coming to Close to Home on more misdemeanors and probation violations than youth who identify as male. As shown below, females coming to CTH in 2017 on misdemeanors and probation violations make up 80 percent of adjudication types. Felony case types among males is 31 percent whereas for females, it is 13 percent.

²⁴ 15 youth were excluded from this analysis due to missing adjudication type data

**Figure 12. CY 2017
Close to Home
Admissions by Gender
and Adjudication Type**

- Other
- Probation Violation
- Misdemeanor
- Felony



When broken out by Placement Level, LSP youth are more likely to enter on a felony charge. However, youth entering Close to Home on a probation violation are just as likely to enter LSP as NSP (38 percent vs 33 percent, respectively). There were no youth coming to LSP on multiple adjudication types.

Close to Home Movement

Transfers and Modifications

In some circumstances, Close to Home staff and Provider Agencies may determine that a youth in residential placement requires either a different residential setting of the same security level (transfer) or a more restrictive level of residential care (modification). Transfers and modifications are only considered when all efforts to prevent such action have been exhausted. This includes using interventions established during FTC meetings to address recurring problematic behaviors. See Table 15 below for the number of transfers and modifications in CY 2017.

Table 15. Transfers and Modifications CY 2015-2017

Movement Type	CY 2015	CY 2016	CY 2017
NSP to NSP Transfers	112	66	75
LSP to LSP Transfers ²⁵	0	11	5
NSP to LSP Transfers	0	5	3
NSP to LSP Modifications	10	6	14
LSP to OCFS Modifications	0	0	0

²⁵ Note: LSP began in December of 2015.

Close to Home Aftercare in 2017

As stated earlier in this report, release planning begins immediately upon admission into placement, and ACS is committed to appropriately matching youth and families to Aftercare services upon release. In line with the philosophy of applying the least restrictive environment to meet a young person's rehabilitative needs, Close to Home aims to release all youth to supervised Aftercare as soon as possible with consideration to public safety, individual progress in residential care, enrollment in a community-based school, and the development of a comprehensive Aftercare service plan.

In CY 2017, there were 180 young people released to Aftercare. A few youth were excluded from this analysis because they did not spend any time in residential placement and were transferred from OCFS custody directly to Aftercare.

- 151 were released from NSP
- 29 were released from LSP

Released Where?

Of the 151 NSP youth released to Aftercare in CY 2017, 37 percent (56) were released to Placement and Permanency Specialist (PPS) supervision as the primary resource. While PPS maintained primary supervision of these youth, they were also paired with community-based organizations and local supports in the neighborhoods that they return to. All LSP youth remained with the same Provider Agency from residential placement to Aftercare. The Provider Agencies that worked with the most youth on Aftercare in 2017 were Children's Village, SCO Family of Services, and Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services. See table 16 below for a full breakdown of Aftercare provider or resource for youth released in 2017.

Table 16. CY 2017 Aftercare Releases by Aftercare Provider or Resource

Aftercare Resource	N	%
ACS Citywide (PPS)	56	31%
Children's Village	30	17%
SCO Family of Services	21	12%
Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services	14	8%
Rising Ground (formerly Leake and Watts Services, Inc.)	14	8%
BoysTown	14	8%
Children's Aid Society	13	7%
Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services	12	7%
Other Community-Based Resource	6	3%
Total	180	100%

Length of Stay

Research shows that young people who stay longer in residential out-of-home placements do not necessarily do better than youth with shorter stays. Studies across the country have found that extended treatment time may not be correlated with lower recidivism, or with re-arrest or reconviction of young people.²⁶ To gain a sense of how long young people stay in Close to Home, ACS reviewed when they entered a facility for the first time and when they were released to Aftercare. The time in between those two dates is the Length of Stay (LOS).

Of the 180 NSP and LSP youth released to Aftercare in 2017, the median LOS was 8.42 months. The median LOS for all youth released from NSP and LSP were also both 8.42 months. However, CTH youth have different experiences. Some youth may have been transferred, modified, or gone AWOL during their time in residential placement. To better account for these individual experiences, youth releases to Aftercare by case "type" and LOS were analyzed. See tables 17 and 18 below for NSP and LSP releases to Aftercare by case type.

26 <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2015/04/reexamining-juvenile-incarceration>

Table 17. CY 2017 NSP Releases to Aftercare by Case Type and Length of Stay

	Type	Median LOS (in months)	Number of Youth
	All Releases	8.42	151
	First Time Releases (never previously released to Aftercare)	8.19	143
	First Time Releases - No Transfer/Modification History	8.02	122
	First Time Releases - No Transfer/Modification History, No New Adjudications	7.99	121
	First Time Releases - No Transfer/Modification History, No New Adjudications, No AWOLs	7.86	103

Table 18. CY 2017 LSP Releases to Aftercare by Case Type and Length of Stay

	Type	Median LOS (in months)	Number of Youth
	All Releases	8.42	29
	First Time Releases (never previously released to Aftercare)	7.43	25
	First Time Releases - No Transfer/Modification History	6.9	14
	First Time Releases - No Transfer/Modification History, No New Adjudications	6.9	14
	First Time Releases - No Transfer/Modification History, No New Adjudications, No AWOLs	6.9	14

While all youth have the exact same LOS when looking at the universe of Close to Home releases, the data shows that LSP youth have a shorter LOS than NSP youth when controlling for individual experiences. Furthermore, both NSP and LSP youth who were never previously released to Aftercare, did not have any history of transfers or modifications, did not receive a new adjudication while in residential placement, and had zero AWOLs spent anywhere from 1 week to 1.5 months less time in residential placement than youth who had such an experience.

These findings have helped to inform significant changes to the provision of Aftercare. When looking at LOS data, it is clear that the Aftercare model designed for youth to experience continuity of targeted services and to maintain the positive, caring relationships forged during the residential stay has a positive impact on their residential stay. In turn, youth experience fewer interruptions in placement

and are released earlier. As of the publishing of this report, ACS has redesigned NSP Aftercare provider contracts to align the entire Close to Home system with the LSP model.

Permanency and Discharge Resources

An important case processing point that ACS monitors is who a Close to Home youth is released to when exiting residential placement. Compared to the previous year, CY 2017 saw more LSP youth returning to their parents (59 percent) and less youth going into foster care (22 percent). There were also more young people who returned to family other than parents and permanent resources other than family members compared to 2016.

Figure 13. CY 2017 NSP Releases by Receiving Resources

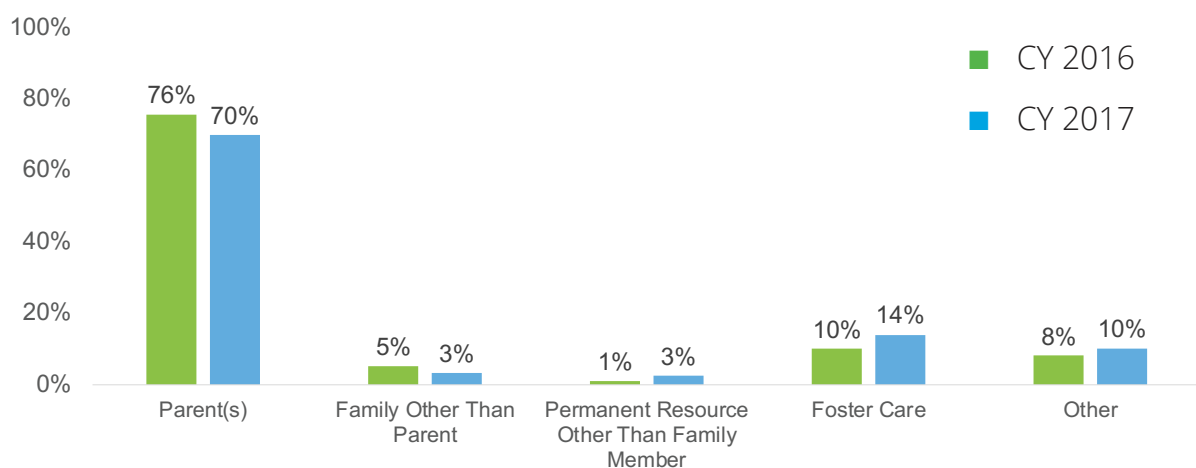
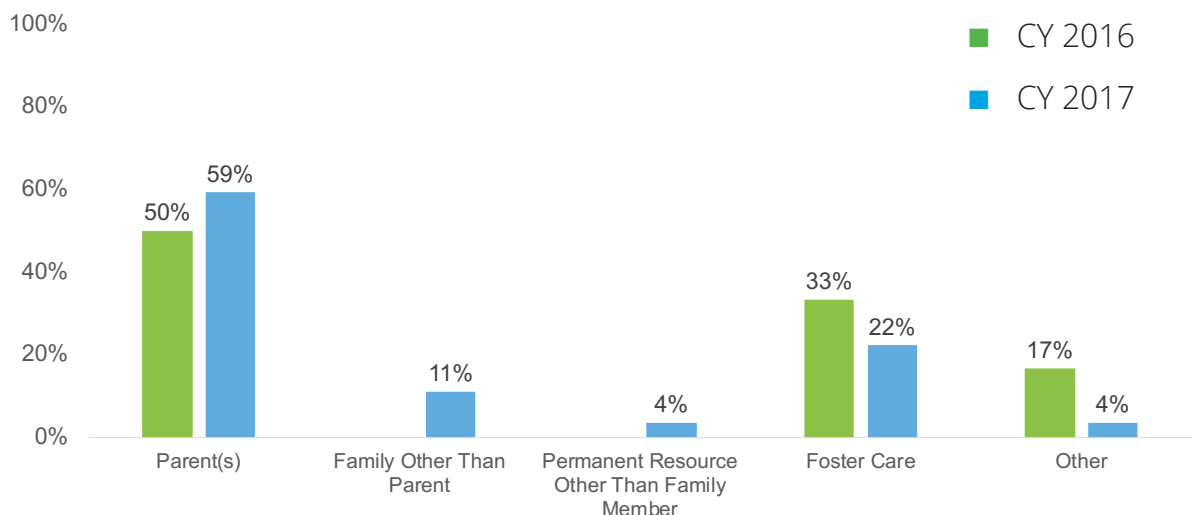


Figure 14. CY 2017 LSP Releases by Receiving Resource



Revocations

Within the RNR framework and in response to ongoing YLSI assessments, each youth's release plan is continuously updated to target specific risks and needs. This targeted approach also provides ACS and Providers with a clear, objective set of benchmarks to monitor while the youth is on Aftercare.

Prior to release, young people sign a "conditions of release" document which articulates ACS' expectations for youth to remain in the community, including services or prosocial activities that the youth must participate in. If youth violate one or more conditions of release, they may be revoked, or sent back, to residential placement. Revocation is only considered after interventions of increasing intensity are exhausted while on Aftercare. A total of 48 youth were revoked from Aftercare to residential placement in CY 2017.

Incident Trends

Incident reporting in Close to Home is necessary to identify service needs, discover gaps in training, and develop technical assistance resource deployment strategies. A better understanding of where and how often incidents occur allows ACS staff to assist Provider Agencies with reducing incidents. ACS has engaged experts in trauma-informed de-escalation strategies and deployed additional resources to reduce the number of assaults and altercations in CTH. In CY 2017, the incident trends analyzed include:

- Youth Absent Without Leave (AWOL)
- Youth on Youth Assault and Altercations
- Youth on Staff Assaults
- Physical Restraints
- Hospital Runs
- Contraband
- Substantiated VPCR Reports

In addition to reporting the raw number of the above incident categories, ACS is also reporting the incidence rates for AWOL incidents, assaults, and physical restraints. The incidence rate is a public health measure of the probability of

occurrence of a given event or condition in a population within a specified period of time. Close to Home incidence rates are calculated by dividing the number of incidents (of a particular category) that occur in a given year by the total number of care days in a given year, multiplied by 100 as follows:

$$\frac{\text{number of incidents}}{\text{care days}} \times 100$$

See the tables below for NSP and LSP year-to-year comparison data, and Appendix A for AWOL Incidents by De-Identified Provider and Site.

Table 19. NSP Safety Incidents CY 2015-2017

Incident Category	2015		2016		2017		% Change (2016-2017)	
	#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
AWOL Incidents	321	0.39	136	0.27	128	0.25	-5.9%	-7.4%
Youth that AWOL'ed	134	-	86	-	82	-	-4.7%	-
Total Assaults and Altercations	450	-	280	-	366	-	30.7%	-
Youth on Youth	302	0.49	186	0.37	268	0.52	44.1%	40.5%
Youth on Staff	148	0.23	94	0.19	98	0.19	4.3%	0.0%
Restraints	608	0.96	405	0.81	562	1.1	38.8%	35.8%
Hospital Runs	200	-	237	-	222	-	-6.3%	-
Contraband	186	-	152	-	175	-	15.1%	-

Table 20. LSP Safety Incidents CY 2016-2017

Incident Category	2016		2017		%Change (2016-2017)	
	#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
AWOL Incidents	3	0.14	4	0.06	33.3%	-57.1%
Youth that AWOL'ed	3	-	3	-	0.0%	-
Total Assaults and Altercations	65	-	96	-	47.7%	-
Youth on Youth	24	0.75	44	0.86	83.3%	14.7%
Youth on Staff	41	1.22	52	1.05	26.8%	-13.9%
Restraints	149	5.05	200	4.00	34.2%	-20.8%
Mechanical Restraints	10	0.34	9	0.22	-10.0%	-35.5%
Hospital Runs	14	-	37	-	164.3%	-
Contraband	38	-	46	-	21.1%	-

Substantiated VPCR Reports

All Close to Home facilities fall under the jurisdiction of the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs (Justice Center). The Justice Center investigates allegations of abuse and neglect within CTH facilities, often in collaboration with OCFS, ACS, and CTH Provider Agencies.

Initial allegations of abuse or neglect are reported to the Justice Center's Vulnerable Persons Central Registry (VPCR) by staff from CTH Provider Agencies, ACS, other "mandated reporters", and any individual who witnesses or suspects the abuse or neglect of a youth in CTH. If the allegation does not meet the criteria of abuse or neglect, the Justice Center may direct another entity – namely OCFS or the CTH Provider Agency – to investigate the circumstances of the allegation and take various measures to mitigate similar incidents from occurring in the future. If the allegation meets the criteria of abuse and neglect, the Justice Center will commence an investigation. When the Justice Center determines that an instance of abuse and neglect occurred, the report is "substantiated".

Over the last two years, ACS worked closely with the Justice Center to improve access to data for reports to the VPCR involving youth in CTH. In doing so, ACS

has realized improved responses to allegations and identification of system-wide trends. In addition, Close to Home has increased efforts to educate youth and families of their right to report abuse and neglect and introduced mechanisms to ensure youth, family members, staff, and other mandated reporters can report incidents to the Justice Center in a secure and confidential manner. See Table 21 for the total number of reports and substantiated allegations in CTH from CY 2014 through 2017.

Table 21. CTH Child Abuse and Neglect Allegations and Substantiations by CY 2014-2017

Year	Allegations Reported (NSP/LSP)	Total Substantiated	% Substantiated (of Total Reports)
2014	496	31	6.25%
2015	373	37	9.92%
2016	1099	76	6.92%
2017	824	76	9.22%

OVERSIGHT, MONITORING, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Within the Division of Youth and Family Justice, the Office of Planning, Policy, and Performance (OPPP) is responsible for monitoring, providing technical assistance, and evaluating performance of Close to Home programs. OPPP monitoring, technical assistance and evaluation activities operate within a quality assurance framework that uses data and regular oversight to drive continuous system improvement. These activities are centered on a foundation of data-driven performance management and quality improvement. The office is charged with:

- Conducting programmatic reviews and site inspections using standardized tools;
- Analyzing, interpreting, and responding to real-time data and data trends to guide quality improvement;
- Developing improvement plans to address program deficiencies;
- Communicating regularly with programs and providing targeted technical assistance.

Collaboration with Close to Home service providers is essential to improving practice, preventing critical incidents, and uncovering trends. OPPP maintains frequent communication with Close to Home Providers regarding individual incidents or an uptick in concerning trends. This communication is informed by routine oversight activities and observations or feedback from Close to Home partners.

Monitoring Activities

Monitoring includes regular site inspections, data review and analysis and improvement planning focused on identifying successes as well as targeting potential areas of practice improvement. In CY 2017, OPPP continued to conduct unannounced safety and security checks and routine site inspections on both the overnight and daytime shifts at all CTH facilities. As a result, OPPP increased the number of site inspections by 45 percent, from a total of 348 in CY 2016 to a total of 505 in CY 2017. This total included 110 unannounced overnight inspections and 395 daytime inspections.

To support and further streamline this ongoing work, OPPP increased staffing from a team of 3 Quality Improvement Specialists in 2016 to team of 8 in 2017. OPPP has also implemented, in partnership with the Division of Planning, Policy, and Performance, a Juvenile Justice Provider Agency Measurement System (PAMS) to more closely and routinely hold providers accountable for case work practice standards and ongoing improvement. Practice areas of focus for data review and routine oversight activities include, but are not limited to, the following domains:

- Organizational/Program Structure and Staffing Ratio
- Staff Permanency, Retention, and Recruitment
- Staff Support, Supervision, and Accountability
- Training and Professional Development
- Incident Reporting and Documentation
- Required Log Books and Paper Files
- Maintenance, Upkeep, and Environmental Safety
- Youth, Staff, and Public Safety and Security

- Therapeutic Programming and Daily Activities
- Evidence-Based Model/Approach Fidelity
- School Engagement, Attendance, and Academic Transition Planning
- Recreational and gender responsive programming
- Youth Treatment, Case Management, and Transition Planning

ACS continues to work closely with national experts and model developers to integrate measures of model fidelity into ongoing monitoring quality assurance, and technical assistance. This includes ongoing review of performance metrics and frequent collaboration and performance reviews with expert consultants from the Missouri Youth Services Institute (MYSI) and Integrated Treatment Model (ITM) modality.

In CY 2017, OPPP and DYFJ leadership commenced a series of visits and meetings with each provider agency to collaboratively review annual data and discuss plans for continued quality improvement with Agency heads and executive leadership teams.

Heightened Monitoring and Corrective Action

When technical assistance does not sufficiently address programmatic concerns or additional oversight is warranted, OPPP may elevate the Close to Home Provider or individual program to formal monitoring status. Placement on formal monitoring status occurs when routine oversight activities find persistent negative trends in practice domains or following an act or incident that seriously jeopardizes youth safety and/or overall risk to the program.

Formal monitoring status involves an increased level of support, targeted technical assistance in relevant practice domains, and increased contact with the Close to Home provider through formal meetings and frequent site inspections. OPPP utilizes two formal monitoring status levels: **Heightened Monitoring Status (HMS)** and **Corrective Action Status (CAS)**. This increase in direct contact is both supportive and collaborative with a dual focus on short-term triage and long-term sustainability, and often involves stakeholders from the DYFJ Office of Juvenile Justice Programs and Services (OJJPS), CTH Residential Placement, CTH Field Operations, OCFS, model developers/consultants, and service providers. See Table 22 below for the nature and outcome of each instance of HMS or CAS in 2017.

**Table 22. Heightened Monitoring (HMS)
and Corrective Action (CAS) Status, CY 2017**

Program	Status	Reasons for Status	Start Date	End Date	Outcome
AF	HMS	AWOL	11/29/2016	3/1/2017	Site stepped down to regular monitoring status after meeting ACS expectations
DC	HMS	Group AWOL	1/13/2017 (HMS) 6/26/17 (CAS) 10/2/2017 (HMS)	12/27/2017	Stepped up to CAS due to another AWOL. Stepped down to HMS 10/2. Returned to regular monitoring 12/27/17
AD	HMS	AWOL	10/3/2017	1/11/2018	Site stepped down to regular monitoring status after meeting ACS expectations
AE	HMS, CAS, HMS	AWOL	11/29/2016 (HMS), 3/29/2017 (CAS), 9/22/2017 (HMS)	none	As of 2018, site is still on heightened status
CB	HMS	AWOLs	12/28/2017	3/28/2018	Site stepped down to regular monitoring status after meeting ACS expectations
BA	HMS	Group AWOL	4/3/2017	7/13/2017	Returned to regular monitoring
BB	HMS, CAS	AWOL, group AWOL	11/24/2017 (HMS), 11/14/17 (CAS), 3/7/18 (HMS)	6/6/2018	Site closed intake from 11/14 - 3/7/18 to address AWOLs. Stepped down to HMS on 3/7/18, returned to regular monitoring status on 6/6/18
BD	HMS	AWOLs & youth drug use	8/23/2017	3/7/2018	Site closed intake from 8/23 - 12/5 to address issue
FB	HMS	AWOLs	8/16/2018	11/30/2017	Site stepped down to regular monitoring status after meeting ACS expectations
FF	HMS, CAS, HMS	AWOLs	8/29/2017 (HMS), 9/25/2017 (CAS), 11/3/2017 (HMS)	1/30/2018	Site closed intake from 9/25 - 11/3 to address AWOLs

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Two critical building blocks for Close to Home community engagement are establishing closer relationships with community leaders and cultivating a robust network of linkages to community-based programs. ACS surveyed Close to Home Provider Agencies on Community Advisory Board (CAB) meetings, existing relationships with the local NYPD precinct, and the nature and type of programming providers made available to young people while in residential placement. 100% of all CTH provider agencies responded to the survey, allowing for a complete representative analysis of system-wide community engagement.

Community Advisory Boards and Community Engagement

In CY2017, all 31 programs (100%) held two or more CAB meetings, an improvement from 2016 when 93% held one or more CAB meeting. The relationship between Close to Home Provider Agencies and community members was strong in 2017, with 87% of providers noting that relationships with neighbors were satisfactory to excellent and 77% reporting that members of the local NYC Community Board regularly attend CAB meetings. One of the primary drivers behind steady neighborhood relationships is active participation and recruitment to the CAB. According to some respondents, CABs helped to strengthen community engagement through collaborative outreach and volunteerism in the community. CAB involvement was also identified as a helpful communication tool between facilities and the surrounding neighborhood following incidents involving youth.

Many Close to Home providers reported positive relationships with law enforcement in 2017, with 68% of respondents reporting police attendance at all CAB meetings and 84% expressing a positive relationship with the local police precinct. According to providers, the benefits of a positive relationship with law enforcement include increasingly prompt responses from police when assistance is requested, support and understanding of the unique nature of CTH programs when youth go AWOL, donations from police during holidays, and participation in facility-based Alternative to Violence programming.

One aspect of community engagement targeted for system-wide improvement in 2018 is provider relationships with elected officials or their offices. Only 42% of respondents reported elected officials attend one or more CAB meeting, with 58% reporting no participation.

Youth Activities

Community-based organizations (CBOs) were identified by providers as strong resources for the youth they serve, with 87% of respondents indicating positive relationships with local service providers. Partnerships with the YMCA, Paws Crossed, and Pace University furthered Close to Home's system-wide commitment to positive youth development by affording youth additional opportunities to engage in positive prosocial activities and foster strong community bonds.

Nearly 65% of all programming identified by respondents occurred inside the facility and nearly 55% of facilities participated in programming outside the facility. Some of the programs or services youth accessed in the community were POTS, Bronx Public Library, Allen AME Church (for community service), St. Albans Printing, and Merrick Academy.

58% of the respondents reported youth involvement in community service, most notably volunteering at a local food pantry, neighborhood snow removal, volunteering to help senior citizens, making Easter baskets for toddlers, and tree planting. It is important to note that some campus-based providers believe programmatic offerings on-campus are inherently robust, and that youth benefit from accessing campus-based services not specifically targeted to Close to Home youth.

CONCLUSION

ACS and our Close to Home partners possess more than half a decade of successes and challenges behind us, and we continue to learn from those experiences. Just as Close to Home youth were transformed through the development of insights and skills that will help them achieve future success, New York City's youth justice system has been transformed by the shrinking system and legislative reforms described in this report. While innovation is and always will be a hallmark of Close to Home, the approach to treating delinquency described in this report is not particularly earth shattering. The most important steps we can take to improve the way youth, families, and communities benefit from interacting with the youth justice system is to account for the spirits and voices of those who have experienced the system before.

At this time, the markers of a successful discharge from Close to Home are that a young person finishes placement without being arrested or re-adjudicated on a new offense and does not end up in the adult justice system. In acknowledgement of the notable achievements Close to Home has realized after significant and sweeping system-wide changes, ACS is committed to defining success more rigorously and with consideration to the individual complexity of each youth's case circumstances. Youth and families who have experienced placement possess vital information about the many ways Close to Home can meaningfully interact with and prepare our youth for sustainable positive outcomes. In that regard, ACS is currently developing feedback channels and evaluation mechanisms, and building an internal workforce to engage communities most impacted by the justice system in an effort to help us gauge the true impact of this program.

Appendix A: Table 23: AWOLs by De-Identified Provider and Site

Provider	Total Number of AWOL Incidents ≥ 24 HRS	Unique Youth that AWOL'd ≥ 24 HRS
PROVIDER A	17	14
AA	2	2
AB		
AC		
AD	4	4
AE	11	8
PROVIDER B	25	19
BA	8	6
BB	9	7
BC	6	4
BD	2	2
PROVIDER C	16	11
CA	3	2
CB	13	9
PROVIDER D	4	4
DA	3	3
DB	1	1
PROVIDER E	22	12
EA	12	6
EB	6	2
EC	4	4
NSP School	13	7
NSP School	13	7
PROVIDER F	25	11
FA		
FB	7	2
FC	5	3
FD	2	2
FE	4	2
FF	7	2
PROVIDER G	6	4
GA	4	2
GB	2	2
Grand Total	128	82

Appendix B: Table 24: LSP AWOLs by De-Identified Provider and Site

Provider	Total Number of AWOL Incidents >=24 HRS	Unique Youth that AWOL'd >=24 HRS
PROVIDER A		
AF		
AG		
PROVIDER B	4	3
BE	4	3
PROVIDER D	4	3
DC	4	3
Grand Total	4	3