RESEARCH REPORT

Evaluation Report on New York City's Advocate, Intervene, Mentor Program

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NYC Opportunity Response to Urban Institute Evaluation of the Advocate, Intervene, Mentor Program

October 2018

This report presents the findings of an implementation and outcome evaluation of the Advocate, Intervene, Mentor (AIM) program, a court-mandated juvenile alternative-to-placement program serving probation clients ages 13 to 18 years with high criminogenic risk. The evaluation finds that AIM successfully helps participants avoid out-of-home placement[1] and reduce recidivism, as well as pursue and achieve individualized goals to help reduce their risk of reoffending.

Launched in July 2012 by the New York City Department of Probation (DOP) as a component of the New York City Young Men's Initiative (YMI) and with oversight from the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity), AIM seeks to reduce the use of costly out-of-home placement and to enhance community safety by increasing resiliency and reducing criminogenic risk factors for adolescents on probation. The program uses a one-on-one mentoring model with a paid advocate-mentor available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Advocate-mentors are credible messengers, defined as individuals who are respected in the communities served, typically coming from the same neighborhood and backgrounds as the participants. Advocate-mentors work to improve participants' criminal justice and personal outcomes through the co-creation of individualized service plans designed to transform attitudes and behaviors that have led to delinquent activity.

The Urban Institute conducted the implementation and outcome evaluation, and collected data from September 2016 through March 2017. The evaluation documented AIM program operations, described participant outcomes and stakeholders' experiences with the program, identified best practices, and developed recommendations to address program challenges. The evaluation drew upon qualitative and quantitative data, including focus groups and interviews with participants and alumni, participants' caregivers, program staff, DOP staff, and Family Court actors and other stakeholders; review of program materials and participant case files; and analysis of program administrative data and criminal justice data, conducted in partnership with DOP.

The Urban Institute found the following:

- Over 90 percent of participants avoided felony rearrest within 12 months of enrollment—far exceeding the program target of 60 percent.
- Over two-thirds of AIM participants completed the program without an out-of-home placement. When excluding out-of-home placements due to technical violations of probation conditions (for reasons other than rearrests or risk to public safety), this figure rises to over 80 percent.
- Fewer than 10 percent of participants received a felony adjudication in Family Court (equivalent to being convicted in the adult context) and only 3 percent received a felony conviction in Criminal Court.

While based on only a small number of youth participating in the program, these results indicate that AIM is a promising strategy to improve outcomes of justice-involved youth.

Implementation findings indicate that participants, alumni, caregivers, program staff, and other stakeholders all had positive feelings about their experience with the AIM program. Participants value their one-on-one interactions with mentors, and caregivers value the program's family team meetings and mentors' responsiveness to participant needs.

The report also identified challenges related to the program's enrollment criteria and process, the absence of formal aftercare services, and stakeholder communication and coordination at various stages throughout the program cycle. Based on these findings, the report presents recommendations to address identified challenges, including enabling provider input on enrollment decisions, expanding in-program services and establishing formalized alumni services following the completion of mandated enrollment, enhancing communication across stakeholders, and improving programmatic performance reporting.

These findings and recommendations highlight valuable opportunities for enhancements to the AIM program model. NYC Opportunity and YMI will partner with DOP, AIM providers, and other stakeholders to carefully consider the programmatic recommendations presented in this report, with the goal of strengthening the AIM model and juvenile justice services more broadly.

At the time of publication, the City is embarking upon multiple cross-cutting justice system reform efforts. Raise the Age legislation will significantly expand the number of youth eligible for juvenile justice services such as AIM, as 16 and 17 year olds transition to Family Court in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Given the demonstrated promise of AIM in serving the needs of youth with high criminogenic risk, the program is well positioned to support the success of Raise the Age reforms.

Simultaneously, the City is moving forward with plans to replace the Rikers Island complex with borough-based facilities, a strategy that includes ongoing and significant reductions to the population of detained and sentenced individuals held in City custody. This evaluation builds evidence about what works in alternatives-to-placement programming for juveniles, and these findings can inform the development and implementation of alternative-to-incarceration programming necessary to fulfill the City's commitment to close Rikers.

Finally, this evaluation follows after the Urban Institute's and NYC Opportunity's evaluation of the DOP Arches Transformative Mentoring program, which established credible messenger mentoring as an evidence-based approach with positive impact on young adult justice system outcomes. These findings contribute to that body of knowledge and can support the growing national momentum toward credible messenger approaches to human service provision for justice-involved populations and beyond.

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Note

[1] Out-of-home placement refers to placement in a juvenile residential facility, which is equivalent to a sentence of jail or prison in the adult context.

Executive Summary

The Advocate, Intervene, Mentor (AIM) program is an alternative-to-placement (ATP) program that serves high-risk adolescents, ages 13 to 18, who are under probation supervision by the New York City (NYC) Department of Probation (DOP). AIM was launched in 2012 as part of the NYC Young Men's Initiative (YMI), a comprehensive public-private strategy to engage boys and young men of color in achieving personal, professional, and academic goals. Similar to other ATPs, AIM is designed as an alternative to juvenile incarceration and is intended to reduce the use of out-of-home placement.

AIM is implemented in all five New York City boroughs by local service providers. While each of the five providers customize certain program components, the core components of AIM as designed by DOP remains consistent across all boroughs. AIM comprises the following key parts:

- **Advocate-mentor:** Each youth is assigned a paid advocate-mentor, who is recognized in the community as a credible messenger. Credible messengers, as defined in the context of AIM, are adults who share similar backgrounds, life experiences, and areas of interest with participants.
- **Individual service plan (ISP):** Each participant's family, advocate-mentor, and probation officer meet with the participant to develop a six- to nine-month plan to achieve certain goals.
- **Mentorship:** The youth and mentor meet for up to 30 hours a week to build relationships, move toward ISP goals, and participate in social activities.
- **Family team meetings:** The participant's support team, including their mentor, family, and probation officer, meets regularly with the youth to determine progress toward achieving ISP goals.

This report documents Urban Institute's (Urban's) evaluation findings related to the implementation of the AIM program and participant outcomes. From September 2016 to March 2017, Urban collected qualitative data from several sources, including focus groups with current and former AIM participants, participants' parents, AIM program staff, DOP staff, and other stakeholders from key juvenile justice agencies. Urban also reviewed program materials and participant case files, as well as analyzed participant data in partnership with DOP.

Key outcome findings include these three:

- The majority (67 percent) of AIM participants remained out of an out-of-home placement (i.e., placement in a juvenile residential facility, which is equivalent to a sentence of jail or prison in the adult context) by the end of their time in the program. When technical violations of

probation are excluded (i.e., the absence of a new arrest or absconding/running away from home), 80.2 percent of AIM participants remained out of an out-of-home placement by the end of their time in the program.

- Within 12 months of enrollment, fewer than 20 percent (18.7 percent) of participants were ultimately adjudicated (equivalent to being convicted in the adult context) in New York City Family Court (Family Court) and fewer than 6 percent (5.7 percent) were reconvicted in New York City Criminal Court (Criminal Court). Within 12 months of program end, only 3 percent of participants had any felony reconviction in Criminal Court.
- Participants' most frequently identified goal areas were education, legal compliance, family, and prosocial skills, which corresponded with the areas in which they exhibited high risk. Greater participant goal completion was associated with more time spent in the program and increased hours spent with mentors.

Key implementation findings include these four:

- AIM participants, program alumni, and their families, as well as AIM staff and stakeholders, viewed the AIM program positively, particularly the one-on-one conversations and activities involving mentors and participants. Participants' parents appreciated the family team meetings, the mentors' responsiveness to youth's needs, and the mentors' ongoing support such as transporting youth to appointments and accompanying participants to Family Court hearings.
- According to program staff, the wide range of eligible ages—13 to 18—presented challenges for making activities relatable to all participants, thus making it challenging to sustain engagement with youth. Related, staff found the restricted program catchment area limited their ability to serve more youth in their boroughs.
- Program staff indicated that the program duration—six to nine months—was often not enough time for participants to fully engage in the program and make progress regarding their goals. This led staff to engage program alumni through formal and informal means after the six- to nine-month period.
- Coordination and communication between AIM providers and probation officers was inconsistent and led to implementation challenges such as unclear roles and responsibilities, as well as lack of transparency between the organizations.

Based on the evaluation, Urban proposes the following five recommendations to strengthen the implementation of AIM:

- Increase education of Family Court stakeholders on the assessment process and involve program staff during this time.
- Train mentors on additional evidence-based practices, particularly around youth development, conflict management, and staff self-care.
- Expand the activity offerings to participants, including employment opportunities, educational support, and mental health support. Offer additional alumni engagement opportunities.
- Implement more frequent and transparent reporting mechanisms across AIM stakeholders, and provide formal and routine reporting on participant outcomes and program targets.
- Adopt and routinely report on intermediate participant outcome measures such as engagement in school, connection to support systems, involvement with families, and development of prosocial interaction and communication skills.

Introduction

Launched in 2012 as part of the New York City (NYC) Young Men's Initiative (YMI), the Advocate, Intervene, Mentor (AIM) program is an alternative-to-placement (ATP) program for high-risk adolescents ages 13 to 18 being supervised on probation by the NYC Department of Probation (DOP). AIM is borough based and operated by a different service provider organizations in each of the five city boroughs. AIM matches youth participants with an adult advocate-mentor who meets with them one on one for 7 to 30 hours a week for six to nine months. The advocate-mentor engages with participants and their families to develop an individualized service plan that addresses participants' attitudes and delinquent behavior by connecting them to services in the community and by strengthening their bonds to family members, caregivers, and the community. AIM is designed to reduce the use of out-of-home placement (i.e., placement in a juvenile residential facility, which is equivalent to a sentence of jail or prison in the adult context) for high-risk youth on probation supervision.

With funding from the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity), the Urban Institute conducted a multimethod evaluation of AIM, including a qualitative evaluation to document the implementation of the AIM program, as well as an outcome evaluation to examine participants' out-of-home placement, justice-related, and goal attainment outcomes. The implementation and outcome evaluation had five goals:

- Document program operations including participant demographics and enrollment mechanisms.
- Describe stakeholder and participant experiences with the AIM program.
- Identify best practices associated with positive participant outcomes, including program completion, successful completion of probation sentence, attitudinal and behavioral change, strengthening social and family support systems, and reducing recidivism.
- Assess participant outcomes, including whether AIM has helped keep participants in the community and not adjudicated to out-of-home placement.
- Develop recommendations to overcome identified challenges to programmatic success.

This report documents Urban's evaluation findings related to the implementation of the AIM program and participant outcomes. Drawing on the information collected from the review of program materials, program staff and stakeholder interviews, participant and parent focus groups, case file reviews, analysis of the DOP's administrative and goal attainment data, and recidivism data collected

from the New York City Juvenile Justice Database, this report documents the implementation of AIM, assesses participant outcomes, synthesizes implementation strengths and challenges, and presents recommendations for program refinements. Specifically, this report is divided into six sections:

- A **literature review** synthesizing the literature on ATP programs and providing the context for the implementation and evaluation of AIM.
- A **description of the AIM program**, including the historical background and context of the program and such key characteristics as the target population, recruitment mechanisms, the enrollment process, program duration, and program services.
- An overview of the **evaluation methodology**, including the data sources and data collection and analysis methods.
- A description of the **key outcomes** achieved by AIM program participants.
- A summary of the **implementation findings** related to implementation strengths and challenges.
- A set of proposed **recommendations** for program modifications and refinements.

Box 1 on the next page defines key terms used throughout this report.

BOX 1

Definitions

Adjudication: The court process that determines (judges) if a juvenile committed the act for which he or she is charged. "Adjudicated" is analogous to "convicted" and indicates that the court concluded the juvenile committed the act.

Delinquent act: An act committed by a juvenile for which an adult could be prosecuted in a criminal court, but when committed by a juvenile is within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Delinquent acts include crimes against persons, crimes against property, drug offenses, and crimes against public order.

Detention center: A facility that provides temporary care in a physically restricting environment for juveniles in custody pending court disposition and, often, for juveniles who are adjudicated delinquent and awaiting a court disposition or placement elsewhere, or are awaiting transfer to another jurisdiction.

Court disposition: Definite action taken or treatment plan decided on or initiated regarding a particular case after adjudication.

Long-term secure facility: A specialized type of facility that provides strict confinement for its residents. Includes training schools, reformatories, and juvenile correctional facilities.

Placement: Cases in which youth were placed in a residential facility for delinquents or were otherwise removed from their homes and placed elsewhere.

Placement status: Categories of juveniles held in residential placement facilities.

Committed: Refers to juveniles in placement in the facility as part of a court-ordered disposition. Committed juveniles include those whose cases have been adjudicated and disposed in juvenile court and those who have been convicted and sentenced in criminal court.

Detained: Includes juveniles held before adjudication while awaiting a hearing in juvenile court, as well as juveniles held after adjudication while awaiting disposition or awaiting placement elsewhere. Also includes juveniles awaiting transfer to adult criminal court, or awaiting a hearing or trial in adult criminal court.

Diversion: Includes juveniles sent to the facility in lieu of adjudication as part of a diversion agreement.

Probation: Cases in which youth were placed on informal/voluntary or formal/court-ordered probation or supervision.

Residential treatment center: A facility that focuses on providing some type of individually planned treatment program for youth (substance abuse, sex offender, mental health, etc.) in conjunction with residential care.

Sources: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Statistical Briefing Book* Glossary, https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/glossary.html; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement: 1997–2015*, https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/asp/glossary.asp.

Literature Review

Research has shown that mentoring can help support a youth's transition to adulthood, especially for youth who are justice involved. The following literature review provides context around the effectiveness of ATP and mentoring programs broadly. While not all studies included in this review focus on the same population or program design as AIM, it summarizes the knowledge base around ATP and mentoring programs for various populations including, to the extent possible, at-risk or justice-involved youth. Specifically, this literature review examines mentoring as one type of ATP programming and synthesizes the research on several components of mentoring programs, including the setting of, family involvement, mentor characteristics, matching criterion, and the length of the program.

The ages 13 to 18 mark a critical period as teenagers transition to early adulthood. Research on youth brain development has indicated that adolescents' (under the age of 20 years old) limited executive functioning can increase exposure to "risk-taking" behaviors (e.g., criminal offenses) and may be exacerbated by underdeveloped inhibitory control (Blakemore and Choudhury 2006) and regulatory systems (Steinberg 2005). For some youth, developmental vulnerabilities (immature decisionmaking, impulsivity, etc.) can lead to increased involvement in the criminal justice system. Additionally, barriers such as a lack of family and community support networks, low family income levels, low family educational attainment, poor physical health, and living in resource-poor neighborhoods can hinder the development of social-emotional skills as well as the ability to attain educational and career milestones (Eccles and Gootman 2002; Freudenberg and Ruglis 2007; Lee and Mortimer 2009; Paul and Moser 2009; Rhodes 2005). Youth may be more at risk for justice involvement if they face these barriers (Council of State Governments Justice Center 2015). Concurrently, placement within the justice system interrupts youth's ability to meet their behavioral health and educational needs (Huang et al. 2014; Sedlak and McPherson 2010).

Jurisdictions place youth in out-of-home placement facilities as the result of a Family Court adjudication. Generally, youth who are at a high risk for reoffending may be housed in an out-of-home placement facility. In New York City, for instance, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) oversees placement facilities (i.e., secure, nonsecure, and limited-secure) for youth who have been adjudicated by the court for committing a range of juvenile delinquent offenses.[2] While placement facilities in the juvenile justice system have been used to keep youth, families, and communities safe, research shows detention/placement has negative behavioral and mental health consequences (Holman and Ziedenberg 2006; Lambie and Randell 2013). Further, recent literature supports the use of cognitive behavioral and developmentally appropriate interventions for youth, along with, when

applicable, interventions that keep youth out of detention or placement completely (Landenberger and Lipsey 2005).

Alternative-to-placement programs promote prosocial activities and social-emotional learning in the community. Traditionally, ATPs divert individuals—after adjudication—to nonplacement or nondetention alternatives. The several types of ATPs include intensive supervision (e.g., probation) and home confinement, as well as community-based treatment, mentoring, and community service programs (Development Services Group Inc. 2014). While probation has been used for decades as an alternative to placement or detention, only recently have ATP programs emerged that focus on treatment and rehabilitation modalities—using individual or group multisystemic therapy, functional family therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and mentoring (Baglivio et al. 2014; Darnell and Schuler 2015; Henggeler and Schoenwald 2011; Henggeler et al. 1993). Such programs have demonstrated effects for decreasing criminal behavior. For instance, Wermink and her colleagues (2010) find that those with short-term prison sentences had higher recidivism rates than those assigned community service after an eight-year follow-up period, after accounting for bias through propensity matching.

ATP programs could better meet the developmental needs of adolescents than placement in a juvenile residential facility (i.e., out-of-home placement). Placement in a juvenile residential facility has been linked to lower high school completion rates (Holman and Zeidenberg 2006), increased rates of incarceration as an adult (Aizer and Doyle 2015), and negative behavioral and mental health consequences (Lambie and Randell 2013). Combating many of the negative consequences of juvenile detention, assignment to an ATP program significantly increases the likelihood that youth will return to school and decreases the likelihood that they will be diagnosed with an emotional or behavioral disorder in comparison to youth assigned to placement (Aizer and Doyle 2015; Lambie and Randell 2013). Although some evidence points to the benefits of ATP programs, additional research is warranted on the effectiveness of these programs, particularly on the impact on recidivism for youth who remain in the community.

Mentoring is one common type of ATP programming. Mentoring can reduce the negative impacts of disadvantage by giving youth a role model to support their developmental progress, easing youth back toward a successful transition to adulthood. Youth who may be at risk for poor academic, behavioral, or health outcomes are more likely to benefit from mentoring, suggesting that youth at risk of placement are an appropriate audience for this type of intervention (DuBois et al. 2002, 2011). Also, mentoring can help support justice-involved youth who face a myriad of challenges when they return to their communities after incarceration (Liberman and Fontaine 2015; Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, and Guckenberg 2013). Further, a recent evaluation of the Arches Transformative Mentoring program, a

group-based mentoring program for New York City youth and young adults on probation, found that program participants were less likely to be reconvicted of a crime than similarly situated youth (Lynch et al. 2018). The evaluation also found that youth under the age of 17 particularly benefited from the program.

There is such a broad array of mentoring programs that assessing fidelity to any one model may be difficult (Tolan et al. 2013). The most common way to measure the success of mentoring programs is to home in on the intended outcomes of the program and frequently measure youth's progress toward those outcomes by using assessments such as pre-, mid-, and post- surveys. If the mentoring program is designed to affect outcomes related to education or family relationships, it is important to also ask teachers and parents or guardians to participate in the assessments, to measure youth's outcomes from various perspectives. Specifically, prosocial outcomes including the youth's behavior among friends and family can be measured using self-reported delinquency scales: the Hemingway Measure of Preadolescent Connectedness, Test of Nonverbal Intelligence Behavioral Rating Index for Children, the Behavioral Emotional Rating Scale II, Child Behavior Checklist, Family APGAR (Adaptability, Partnership, Growth, Affection, and Resolve) Questionnaire, and Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Eddy et al. 2015; Grossman and Rhodes 2002; Keating et al. 2002; Tolan et al. 2014; Weiler et al. 2015). Youth's self-esteem can be measured using the Hopelessness Scale for Children, Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, self-perception profile for children and the Piers-Harris Self-concept Scale (Grossman and Rhodes 2002; Tolan et al. 2014). Educational outcomes can be tested using the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement and Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Grossman and Rhodes 2002; Tolan et al. 2014).

Using these measures, one-on-one mentoring has shown to improve youths' behavior at school and at home, dependency on marijuana and other drugs, and incidents of delinquency, self-worth and perceived social acceptance and academic achievement (Eddy et al. 2015; Grossman and Rhodes 2002; Keating et al. 2002; Tolan et al. 2014; Weiler et al. 2015). Alongside these outcomes for youth, the Mentor Youth Alliance Scale, Global Mentoring Relationship Quality Scale, and Quality of Mentoring Relationship Engagement Scale are often used to measure the strength of the mentor-mentee relationship (Ferro et al. 2014; Nakkula and Harris 2014).

Several components of mentoring programs can influence their effectiveness for youth, including the setting of the mentoring program, family involvement, mentor characteristics, matching criterion, and length of the program.

Setting

The setting in which a mentoring program is implemented can affect youth outcomes. A review of mentoring studies found, for example, that programs set in schools only have a significant, positive impact on youth's time management and health risk management while programs set in youth development organizations only have a significant, positive impact on youth's personal and social identity and prosocial values (Hamilton et al. 2006). Hamilton explains that it is possible that this difference in outcomes stems from the different types of activities, attitudes, and types of goals a youth associates with different settings. More research is needed to further understand how differing contexts as well as differing inputs and activities affect youth outcomes (Karcher et al. 2006; Wandersman et al. 2006).

Family Involvement

Some mentoring models situate family members and the mentees' core support system at the center of the intervention. In this model, parents and other close adult role models are included in behavioral change decisions and goal-setting processes. Mentoring programs that reach out to parents have greater success in impacting youth outcomes (DuBois and Karcher 2005; DuBois et al. 2002; Rhodes 2005). Mentors reaching out to family members can lead to stronger ties in a mentee-mentor pairing and serve as a model for other adult relationships in the youth's life (DuBois and Karcher 2005; Ferro et al. 2014; Rhodes et al. 2006). While mentors attempting to engage family members leads to more positive outcomes, there is conflicting research as to whether youth with supportive family members are the population best served by mentoring. Soucy and Larose conducted a study in 2000 finding that mentoring was more effective when mentees had highly supportive family members, and Raposa and colleagues conducted a study in 2016 showing that environmental stress at home reduced the amount of time mentors spent with mentees (DuBois and Karcher 2005; Raposa, Rhodes, and Herrera 2016). These results were in direct conflict to Johnson's findings in 1997 that mentoring outcomes were enhanced for mentees with impaired families (DuBois and Karcher 2005). As family structures are typically ingrained in contextual community factors, there needs to be more research conducted on how differing levels of family engagement and support impact youth outcomes (Larson 2006).

Mentor Characteristics

Among special youth populations, including justice-involved youth, it is important that the mentor hiring and onboarding processes include specific guidelines for recruitment, screening, and training of mentors, along with a process for matching mentees and mentors (Britner et al. 2006; Higley et al. 2014). More-effective mentors are equipped with a skill set including training in theory-based approaches such as motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral theory, trans-theoretical model of change, asset-based goal setting, and attachment theory (DuBois et al. 2002; Higley et al. 2014). Mentors should receive ongoing professional development including training in mentoring curriculum and promising practices in the mentoring field (Britner et al. 2006; Higley et al. 2014).

Interestingly, mentees matched with mentors with prior mentoring experience do not show improved outcomes and have lower levels of emotional engagement in the process (Raposa, Rhodes, and Herrera 2016). While prior mentoring experience has not been shown to be beneficial, prior educational and occupational backgrounds in fields corresponding to youth goals is beneficial (DuBois et al. 2011). For example, if a mentoring program is structured to reduce recidivism rates and all youth have goals to meet probation conditions, it is useful for mentors to be familiar with the criminal justice system. Mentors should be are able to engage in a high-stress, high-demand position while maintaining self-care and avoiding burnout. This trait allows mentors to form stronger connections with youth. Mentors who have higher self-efficacy and prior involvement with youth in the community could better mitigate the negative impact of environmental stress on youth, improving outcomes of mentees (Raposa, Rhodes, and Herrera 2016).

Matching Criterion

The literature has shown that it is important that mentors are "credible messengers" and are paired with mentees they can connect with over gender, racial, and cultural identity. Credible messengers should come from similar communities and have similar experiences (e.g., prior criminal involvement) and/or areas of interest (Astone et. al. 2016; Lynch et al. 2018; Raposa, Rhodes, and Herrera 2016). The saliency of racial, ethnic, and gender identities should be considered during mentor-mentee matching. For some youth of color, a white mentor could lead to a less effective pairing due to a higher level of cultural mistrust (Darling et al. 2006; DuBois et al. 2011; Higley et al. 2014). There needs to be more research on how mixed-gender matches impact program outcomes. To date, there is very little balanced research measuring these variations, as it is rare to pair a male mentor with a female mentee (Darling et al. 2006; Larson 2006). Same-gender pairings are the most common, though this decision does not

appear to be evidence based (Eddy et al. 2015; Grossman and Rhodes 2002). Mentors that are able to provide mentees with knowledge and activities in their interest area may be better able to engage mentees and reduce their initial distrust.

Length of Program

While youth with backgrounds of disadvantage are more likely to benefit from mentoring programs, short-term matches could lead to negative outcomes (DuBois et al. 2002; Grossman and Rhodes 2002; Keating et al. 2002). Examining impacts on youth outcomes by match duration, Grossman found that matches that ended early and lasted less than three months (the average match lasted longer than one year) showed no positive outcomes, declines in perceived self-worth and perceived educational competence, and a significant increase in alcohol use (Grossman and Rhodes 2002). Meanwhile, matches lasting longer than a year showed improvements in perceived self-worth, social acceptance, educational competence, family relationships, school engagement, and alcohol use (Grossman and Rhodes 2002). Eddy found in a study of elementary school youth that significant positive outcomes did not develop until five years of constant mentoring (Eddy et al. 2015). Rhodes has found through qualitative studies that mentors often note an early period lasting six months to a year when the mentee is distrustful, uncommunicative, and unresponsive. The mentee has to see that the mentor is willing to commit to the relationship and endure through this early period to feel comfortable developing a productive relationship (Rhodes et al. 2006.). It is not until after this productive relationship has developed that youth can be comfortable in their attachment to their mentor and begin attaining positive outcomes. Program duration varies significantly across studied mentoring programs, as does the amount of time mentors spend with mentees. Outcomes may be magnified with increased mentor-mentee contact, but additional research is needed (Farrington and Welsh 2008). Additional research is also needed on the optimal mentoring program length to reach positive outcomes.

Summary

Mentoring is an intervention with promising implications for supporting youth's successful transition to adulthood, especially youth involved with the criminal justice system. However, in several areas additional research would be beneficial. For instance, additional research is warranted to explore the impact of the criminal justice system context on mentee outcomes and program structure (DuBois et al. 2002; Hollin and Palmer 2009; Weiler et al. 2015). It is imperative to also measure how a youth's

involvement with probation, the mentor's engagement with the court system, and the length of the match in relation to the youth's time on probation affect justice-related outcomes such as recidivism (Weiler et al. 2015). To better understand the ideal mentoring program structure, additional data need to be collected on part-time versus full-time mentoring programs, the dosage of mentoring over time, and whether mentoring is more or less effective relative to other types of ATP programs such as functional family therapy. It is crucial to further engage in research on mentoring within the criminal justice system to understand how this intervention can be used as an alternative to placement and best meet the behavioral health, educational, and criminogenic needs of youth while bolstering a smooth transition to adulthood. This report provides a valuable addition to the field by contributing a mixed-methods analysis on how youth in the criminal justice system in New York City respond to an intensive mentoring program as an alternative to placement.

AIM Program Background

AIM is one of several ATP programs designed for young adults under DOP supervision in New York City. The Department of Probation defines an ATP program as a form of post-adjudication placement that allows young people to stay in their communities while on probation supervision and provides intensive services. The department began developing ATP programs in the early 2000s with the implementation of the Esperanza program in 2002. Esperanza provides youth on probation with in-home crisis management and family therapeutic services for six months. In 2007, ACS implemented the Juvenile Justice Initiative (JJI) as an ATP program for justice-involved youth on probation. The initiative provides youth and their families in-home therapeutic services, using methods such as functional family therapy, multi-systemic therapy, and multidimensional treatment foster care (Ferone, Salsich, and Fratello 2014).

In 2012, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the Close to Home legislation that officially shifted the care and custody of New York City youth in placement from the state to the city. The three key components of the legislation are to implement a systematic recommendation process (i.e., the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory assessment and a Structured Decision-Making Grid) before the disposition (i.e., final court decision), expand the options for community-based alternatives to placement, and provide residential services to youth who receive a placement disposition (Ferone, Salsich, and Fratello 2014). Through this new policy, youth are no longer placed in nonsecure detention facilities far from their homes, families, and neighborhoods and can maintain the positive connections to their support networks. As part of the Close to Home initiative, the City provides residential and educational services, which have helped youth earn high school credits while in a facility, reenroll in school once they return, and complete their Regents Examinations (Butts 2015).

Through these efforts, the Close to Home legislation also aimed to identify and implement cost-effective methods of serving justice-involved youth. This provided DOP with an opportunity to develop additional programming; as a result, DOP expanded its continuum of alternative options by developing three more ATP programs. This included AIM in 2012, the Every Child Has an Opportunity to Excel and Succeed (ECHOES) program in 2012, and the Pathways to Excellence, Achievement, and Knowledge (PEAK) program in 2013. ECHOES provides justice-involved youth ages 14 and older with conflict management, job training, and life coaching services. As originally designed, PEAK enrolled youth under age 18 who were on probation and provided them and their families a secure after-school environment inclusive of school liaison services, after-school programming, family counseling, caretaker forums, and mental health services.[3]

The development of AIM, ECHOES, and PEAK happened in parallel with several high-profile citywide initiatives to improve outcomes, decrease recidivism, and reduce criminogenic activity among the justice-involved population. In 2011, then-mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the Young Men's Initiative (YMI), a comprehensive, multiprogram public-private strategy to engage boys and young men of color in achieving personal, professional, and academic goals. In 2012, the DOP developed a strategic plan to implement evidence-based crime prevention policies in several Neighborhood Opportunity Networks (NeONs) where high concentrations of people on probation live (DOP 2012). The strategic plan called for the DOP to locate alongside community-based organizations, government agencies, and employment and education organizations in the NeON offices. The 2012 DOP strategic plan also emphasized moving justice-involved young people away from juvenile facilities outside the city and closer to their homes, families, and social networks. Influenced by these initiatives and the changing philosophy at DOP, AIM was developed as one of several programs to engage probation-involved young people through local networks of community-based organizations, with an emphasis on public safety, education, and connections to family and community.

I have also been there through the change in philosophy with New York City Juvenile Justice system and NYC's Department of Probation, which essentially was a push from a placement-based model to a counseling or mentoring approach. As a result, across NYC, arrests are down not only from a decrease in crime, but also the way in which cases are being handled. —Probation officer

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Program Description

As designed by DOP, AIM intends to reduce the use of out-of-home placement for high-risk youth. Before implementing the program, DOP defined aggregate performance targets for the program related to youths' justice involvement and achievement of personal goals (e.g., prosocial activities, education, employment, family support). AIM has four contractual goals:

- Eighty percent of participants will not be arrested for a felony while in AIM.
- Sixty percent of youth who complete the AIM program will remain felony arrest–free for three months after completion.

- Eighty-five percent of program completers will have an identifiable positive support system outside the family unit when they complete the program (e.g., school/education or employment networks).
- Eighty-five percent of program completers will be reconnected to their family support system.

AIM enrolls justice-involved youth ages 13 to 18 identified as demonstrating high criminogenic risk (i.e., youth identified as those with a high likelihood of reoffending) who would otherwise be placed in a juvenile residential facility (i.e., an out-of-home placement). Specifically, AIM's target population is youth who are being supervised on juvenile probation, facing a placement disposition to a juvenile residential facility, sentenced to probation with the condition to participate in an ATP program, facing a violation of their probation sentence, or rearrested for committing a class 1 or 2 felony offense.

Before sentencing, youth are evaluated during DOP investigations using an instrument called the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). Developed from the Level of Service Inventory-Revised for adults, the YLS/CMI is a risk-needs assessment tool designed to inform case management plans for adolescents (Hoge and Andrews 2011). When presented with a high-risk youth, a Family Court judge can order an exploration of alternatives (EOA). A judge orders an EOA when he or she is considering an ATP disposition. The EOA process is meant to identify the ATP program that will best fit the youth's unique needs and circumstances. After a judge requests an EOA, the ATP unit reviews the reports provided by the court liaison officer, such as an investigative report, mental health report, school records, the youth's criminal history, and information on the youth's family composition.

The ATP assessor at DOP conducts additional assessments with the youth and evaluates his or her suitability for ATP programs and specifically AIM, including whether the family lives in the designated geographic catchment area in each of the five boroughs. Youth living outside the catchment area can be enrolled in AIM, with conditions, and if it does not create difficulties for the youth to report to their probation officer. The ATP assessor interviews the youth individually first, then meets with the youth's parents or family members, attorney, and probation officer. Through these interviews, the ATP unit gathers information about the youth's offense, needs, educational background, current family situation, and the services available at the different providers when developing its recommendation. The ATP unit then assesses the youth's fit against other ATP programs, such as JJI, Esperanza, or ECHOES. If AIM is identified as a suitable fit for the youth, the ATP unit submits its recommendation to the Family Court judge. ATP assessors use the youth's risk-level, relationship with family members, gang involvement, substance abuse issues, prior engagement in programming, and age to categorize youth as suitable for the AIM program. The Family Court judge takes the recommendation made by the ATP unit and decides

whether to order AIM as a condition of probation. AIM follows a "no eject, no reject" policy, whereby the AIM program providers (listed below) do not reject any referrals received from Family Court, or eject participants from the program after they are enrolled. The program providers and DOP meet to discuss any potential participant who may present an extenuating circumstance. After youth are enrolled in AIM, the probation officers share results of the YLS/CMI with program staff. Program staff then use these results to identify participants' goals develop their individual service plans (ISPs).

From its inception in 2012 through May 2016, 229 participants were enrolled in AIM, which is implemented in the five boroughs[4] in New York City by the following service providers:

- Bronx: Youth Advocate Programs
- Brooklyn: Good Shepherd Services
- Manhattan: Union Settlement Association
- Queens: Community Mediation Services
- Staten Island: Fund for the City of New York/Center for Court Innovation

While each of the five AIM providers has customized the program and each participant's experience is unique, the core components of the AIM program, as designed by DOP, remain consistent across all boroughs. Once a youth is enrolled in AIM, the service provider matches him or her with an advocate-mentor. The advocate-mentors hired by the service providers are recognized in the community as credible messengers and have similar life experiences and areas of interest as the participants (e.g., live in the same neighborhood, prior justice involvement).[5] Although not required, the advocate-mentors could also have professional social work or clinical backgrounds. As explained in the implementation findings section, it became apparent during interviews with program staff, participants, and stakeholders that they embraced this broad definition of "credible messenger" and explained that participants often deemed an advocate-mentor "credible" when youth could trust him or her, especially during times of crisis or need.

Mentors across all sites participate in an intensive DOP-provided online training for the fundamentals of mentoring and mandatory reporting. Both types of mentors—mentors with social work backgrounds and credible messengers—receive the same training. Each respective AIM provider also provides additional and ongoing training opportunities that are site- or mentor-specific. Additional trainings include motivational interviewing, CPR certification, first aid, crisis intervention, family development, and other trainings that provide mentors with tools for engaging youth and their families. New mentors may also spend time shadowing more experienced mentors, and many use the skills they

learned in past trainings, from former case management positions, or from coursework for relevant degrees.

After a participant is enrolled in AIM, the youth, mentor, family members or guardians, and probation officer – known as the family team – meet to develop the participant's ISP. The ISP identifies the youth's needs related to school, family, community, and supervision. The ISP also outlines the youth's goals or outcomes they hope to achieve while in AIM and the associated action steps with each goal. It is designed to guide the services and activities participants receive while they are in AIM, but the plan can evolve over time as the youth progresses through the program. The participant, mentor, family members, and probation officer are then expected to hold routine family team meetings to check on the participant's progress toward the goals. While the family team meetings are a core program component, they happen to varying degrees depending on the level of family engagement and there are no prescribed consequences if the family does not participate. If family members do not participate, the mentor and probation officer will continue to work with the youth towards achieving their goals in their ISP and will attempt to re-engage with the families to involve them in the family team meetings.

While enrolled in AIM, participants are expected to check in weekly with their probation officer; the mentors typically also attend this meeting. Outside of this check-in, AIM staff communicates with probation officers weekly, or as needed, to discuss the youth's status and progress in the program. A youth is enrolled in AIM for six to nine months. After completing the program, although not required, participants can return to the service provider for assistance as needed. Box 2 below summarizes the enrollment process and the program trajectory for an AIM participant.

Apart from these program requirements, the AIM program composes three foundations: advocacy, intervention, and mentorship. To help participants work toward their goals, the participant and adult mentor participate in individual mentoring sessions for up to 30 hours per week; anecdotally, the median amount of time mentors spend with participants is between 8 to 10 hours per week. The meetings can take place anywhere in the community including the service provider office, local recreation center, restaurants, schools, probation offices, or other areas selected by the participant. In addition to the individual mentoring sessions, the service providers organize group activities such as field trips or social outings open to all the youth in the current cohort.

Aside from mentorship, mentors also play a key role in advocating on behalf of youth participants in educational and justice settings so that participants can progress toward their goals. Mentors support youths' interests when it comes to school, such as meeting with guidance counselors or principals to discuss necessary school or classroom accommodations and transfers. Mentors play a key role in

advocating on behalf of youths' progress in the courts, such as describing the positive goals the youth have achieved even if he or she faced a setback. Mentors also play a key intervention role in the lives of the youth by providing support for pro-social activities and positive decision-making, instead of activities that would result in probation violations and further court involvement. Mentors not only provide a role model and demonstrate alternative activities and behaviors, but also directly intervene to prevent youth from making decisions that would potentially violate their terms of probation.

BOX 2

Pathway through AIM

Below is an overview of how youth in New York City are enrolled in the AIM program and how they complete the program:

1. **Sentencing:** Youth are eligible for AIM if they are (1) currently on juvenile probation or (2) facing an out-of-home placement as a result of a Family Court disposition and sentenced to probation with an initial order to participate in AIM as an alternative to placement. Youth are also eligible for AIM if they are on probation and are facing a violation of probation due to chronic absenteeism and/or chronic unresponsiveness to interventions, or are rearrested for a class 1 or 2 felony offense.
2. **Court order:** The Family Court judge orders an exploration of alternatives.
3. **Assessment:** The ATP unit conducts an assessment to determine a youth's fit for one of the ATP programs, including residence in the geographic catchment area for AIM. If the youth is deemed suitable, the ATP unit makes a recommendation to the Family Court judge.
4. **Intake:** At program intake, youth are matched to a mentor and the mentor works with the participant to develop an individual service plan (ISP). A family team meeting also occurs.
5. **Program participation and completion:** The program lasts six to nine months. AIM may extend to, or beyond, nine months if additional support is needed and DOP approval is received. Youth and their mentors meet for up to 30 hours a week. Weekly check-ins with probation officers, engagement with schools, and group activities occur. Successful completion of AIM means active engagement in the program through the six- or nine-month mark and accomplishment of goals, or making progress toward achieving the goals identified in the ISP.

Source: AIM Request for Proposals, 2012.

Evaluation Methodology

Using a multimethod approach, Urban conducted an implementation and outcome evaluation from April 2016 to July 2018, with its primary data collection occurring between September 2016 and March 2017. The research team collected qualitative and quantitative data to: (1) document program operations including participant demographics and enrollment mechanisms; (2) describe stakeholders' and participants' experiences with the AIM program; (3) identify best practices associated with positive participant outcomes, including program completion, successful completion of probation sentence, attitudinal and behavioral change, strengthening social and family support systems, and reducing recidivism; (4) assess participant outcomes, including the extent to which AIM has helped reduce the use of out-of-home placement; and (5) develop recommendations to overcome challenges to programmatic success.

Specifically, the evaluation set out to answer the following research questions:

- **Participant profile:** Who participates in the AIM program? What are their common characteristics?
- **Enrollment:** How are participants referred and enrolled in the program? Does program enrollment align with individuals' risk levels and recommendations to the court?
- **In-program:** What are stakeholders' and participants' perceptions and experiences with the program (e.g., one-on-one mentoring, individualized service planning, and wraparound services)? Are there program components they would change?
- **Intermediate outcomes:** What types of outcomes does the AIM program seem to help participants achieve, from the perspective of stakeholders and participants (e.g., program completion, goal attainment, and reducing recidivism)?
- **Family Courts:** How do Family Court stakeholders interface with the AIM program? What are their experiences with the program? Does AIM contribute to reduced out-of-home placement?

To help answer these research questions, Urban used a multimethod approach, collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources, as described in table 1.

TABLE 1

Evaluation Data Sources

Source	Description
AIM program materials	Review of program materials including DOP request for proposals, AIM project description, service provider scopes of work, and monthly initiative update reports from DOP
Qualitative interviews	Semistructured, one-on-one interviews with AIM staff and stakeholders including: AIM program directors, mentors, other service provider staff, NYC Opportunity staff, DOP leadership staff, Family Court judges, Corporation Counsel representatives, defense attorneys, and DOP ATP unit staff
Qualitative focus groups	Semistructured group discussions with AIM current and past participants, participants' parents, probation officers, and supervising probation officers
Participant case file review	Review of a sample of AIM participants' case files including: participants' individual service plans, transition plans, case notes, and court reports
DOP administrative data	Analysis of DOP's administrative data on AIM participants including demographic information, measures of reconviction, and out-of-home placement
DOP goal attainment data	Analysis of DOP's administrative data on AIM participants including the participants' risk areas, types of goals identified and achieved, amount of time in the program, and number of hours spent with mentors
JJDB administrative data	Analysis of JJDB's administrative data on AIM participants including measures of rearrest; JJDB data were matched to data from the New York City Criminal Justice Agency

Qualitative Data Sources

To collect qualitative data, Urban conducted multiday field visits to the five AIM service provider locations to complete the following evaluation activities:

- Semi-structured interviews to learn about the development and implementation of AIM, the enrollment process, collaboration with external stakeholders and partners, implementation challenges, and recommendations for program refinements.
- Focus groups or group interviews with AIM participants and their family members to gather their perspectives on the services provided as part of AIM; the perceived usefulness of AIM; and the degree to which AIM helped youth achieve their goals.
- Case file reviews to document the providers' data collection forms and methods; the types of data collected on AIM participants; and ways the providers monitored participants' outcomes.

In addition to the field visits, Urban conducted the following data collection activities:

- Review of program materials to help inform Urban's understanding of AIM.

- Semistructured interviews with staff at NYC Opportunity, members of DOP leadership, Family Court judges, and representatives from Corporation Counsel[6] and Legal Aid Society to further understand the daily operations of AIM and the coordination and collaboration among the agencies involved.
- A group interview with the DOP ATP unit to gather information about the enrollment and assessment process for youth placed into AIM.
- Focus groups with probation officers and supervising probation officers to understand the coordination and collaboration between AIM provider staff and probation officers.

Table 2 breaks down each respondent type and the number of respondents interviewed.

TABLE 2
Qualitative Data Respondents

Respondent type	Number of respondents
AIM service providers	
Program directors	5
Mentors	17
Other service provider staff	2
Current participants	11
Past participants	9
Parents	9
AIM stakeholders	
NYC Opportunity staff	2
DOP leadership staff	5
Family Court judges	4
Corporation Counsel representatives	5
Defense attorneys	4
DOP ATP unit staff	4
DOP probation officers and supervising officers	10

Qualitative Data Analysis

While collecting the qualitative data, Urban researchers took detailed notes during the review of program materials, semistructured interviews, focus groups, and case file reviews. After reviewing the qualitative notes, Urban researchers developed a coding scheme to identify common themes and key findings regarding program implementation, best practices, challenges, and recommendations. Using NVivo, qualitative data analysis software, Urban researchers systematically analyzed the qualitative summaries based on a coding scheme that included the following domains:

TABLE 3

Qualitative Coding Domains

Domain	Description
Program development	The origin and development of the AIM program, including DOP's culture shift through the 2012 strategic plan
Program objectives and goals	AIM's program objectives and goals, including its target population and participant eligibility, expectations and goals for participants, outcomes achieved and not achieved for participants
Program implementation	All program components, including referrals and assessments, initial intake and mentor matching, program length, all program activities and components, program impact on social and family connections, and alumni engagement
Staffing structure and training	Characteristics of AIM staff, including mentors and program directors; descriptions of relations among staff; and mentions of staff training needs
AIM relationship with probation	The role of individual probation officers in the AIM Program, including relationships with program participants and coordination with AIM staff
Stakeholder collaboration	The role of external stakeholders in AIM, including collaboration and coordination between DOP, NYC Opportunity, Corporation Counsel, Legal Aid, and the Family Courts
Program strengths/successes	Respondent-identified positive program characteristics
Program weaknesses/challenges	Respondent-identified program characteristics that need additional consideration
Recommendations	Respondent-identified recommendations for program modifications

Quantitative Data Sources and Study Sample

In addition to collecting qualitative information, Urban and DOP researchers conducted an evaluation of participant outcomes. To measure participants' outcomes, Urban focused its quantitative data analysis on the following subset of research questions:

- **Out-of-home placements:** How does the AIM program seem to influence the use of out-of-home placements for high-risk youth on probation?
- **Intermediate outcomes:** What types of outcomes does the AIM program seem to help participants achieve (e.g., out-of-home placement, arrests, adjudications, reconvictions, and goal attainment)?
- **In-program:** What are participants' outcomes related to goal-attainment in the program (e.g., prosocial activities, education/employment, family relationships)?

- **Demographics:** How do age, gender, and risk-level affect AIM participants' justice-related outcomes (e.g., arrests, adjudications, reconvictions)?

Data Sources

Urban collected demographic and outcome data from four sources: DOP Connect—DOP's program data management system; Caseload Explorer—DOP's probation supervision case management system; the ATP Database—additional data collected outside the case management system; and the JJDB. Specifically, Urban focused on three primary data types, including: administrative data from DOP sources on AIM participants; Family and Criminal Court arrest and disposition outcomes; and data collected by DOP on the nature of AIM participants' goal attainment from AIM court reports, transition plans, investigation reports, and individual service plans.

Study Sample

From January 2012 through May 2016, 229 participants were enrolled in AIM. This group of participants constitutes the full study sample from which Urban and DOP analyzed outcomes. To be included in the outcome analyses, a youth must have been enrolled in AIM during that date range, indicating the youth was being supervised on juvenile probation, was at-risk of being placed in a residential facility, was facing a violation of their probation sentence, was sentenced by a Family Court judge to probation with the condition to participate in an ATP program, or was rearrested for committing a class 1 or 2 felony offense; the youth also must have lived in one of the five geographic catchment locations in the five boroughs. However, youth living outside the catchment area could have been enrolled in AIM, with conditions, and if it did not create difficulties for the youth to report to their probation officer. Based on the demographic data on this group of participants, Urban found the study sample was mostly African American and male, and most participants lived in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. Table 4 break downs AIM participants by demographics including age, gender, race/ethnicity, borough, and AIM provider.

TABLE 4

AIM Participant Demographics

Percent, except where noted

Mean age (years)	**15.06**
Male	**76.9**
Race/Ethnicity	
White (non-Hispanic)	0.9
Black	80.7
Hispanic	16.2
Other	2.2
Borough	
Bronx	34.5
Brooklyn	21.4
Manhattan	11.8
Queens	17.5
Staten Island	14.8
Provider	
Community Mediation Services	17.9
Fund for the City of New York/Center for Court Innovation	14.0
Good Shepherd Services	19.2
Union Settlement Association	13.1
Youth Advocacy Programs	35.8

Note: *N*= 229; Valid percentages are reported.

Table 5A contains administrative program data on the amount of time spent in the program and the completion status of all 229 program participants. Nearly 43 percent of AIM participants successfully completed the program, which is defined as staying in AIM for at least six to nine months and actively participating in activities and engaging with their mentor. Successful program completion also includes AIM participants achieving or making progress on their goals related to education, leisure/recreation, family connections, peer relations, and other prosocial skills and activities. The family team has a discussion to determine when a participant will complete AIM within the six- to nine-month time frame. Once the participant has reached their completion date, a transition meeting is held with the family team where they discuss the achievement or progress made toward the participant's identified goals. Typically, the participant will subsequently remain on probation supervision with an assigned AIM probation officer to foster continuity for the young person. While the standard program duration is six to nine months, AIM providers continue to serve youth beyond nine months, if needed, to help them achieve successful completion. This is done case by case. DOP approval is required for extensions.

Urban examined successful completion of the AIM program by time spent in the program (number of months). The largest category (51.5 percent) of AIM participants spent between seven and nine months in the program. Of this group, the majority (61 percent) successfully completed the program.

For the limited number of participants (5.2 percent) who continued services beyond the official nine-month program end date, the majority (66.7 percent) were successful.

TABLE 5A

AIM Participant Program Experiences

Percent

	All participants		
AIM completion status			
Successful	42.8		
Unsuccessful	13.1		
Other (e.g., warranted,[a] out-of-state transfer)	39.3		
Transferred to another alternative-to-placement program	4.8		
Time in AIM*		**Successfully completed AIM**	**Unsuccessfully completed AIM**
1–3 months	9.6	13.6	50.0
4–6 months	33.6	19.5	13.0
7–9 months	51.5	61.0	8.5
10+ months	5.2	66.7	8.3

Notes: N= 229; Valid percentages are reported.

[a] A warrant is issued by the court when the youth does not appear for a court hearing (i.e., bench warrant). Typically, this occurs at the beginning of the youth's sentence and precludes both the probation officer and AIM provider from engaging with him/her. When a certain amount of time has passed during which the provider is unable to connect with the participant, he/she will be unenrolled from the program to allow for other potential youth to enroll.

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$

Urban researchers, in partnership with the DOP researchers, also analyzed goal attainment data for a subgroup of participants (see appendix B for more information). This subgroup included 202 AIM participants enrolled in AIM from 2012 to 2015. This time horizon is shorter than the time horizon referenced above owing to the availability of data (e.g., court reports and participant transition plans). DOP reviewed case files in spring 2017 to collect data on each participant's engagement with the program and the nature of the goals participants identified in their individual service plans. The purpose of this data collection was to determine whether participants' goals matched their identified needs and risk areas, and to identify program factors that led to completion of the program.

Based on the goal attainment data, table 5B contains program experience data including the number of hours spent with the AIM mentors, and involvement with the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) for prior and/or current juvenile justice cases. Urban also examined successful completion of the AIM program by time spent with mentors (number of hours a week). Making up nearly 30 percent of all AIM participants, those who spent between 7 and 10 hours with their mentors per week had higher rates of successful completion of the AIM program than those who spent between 3 and 6 hours. Participants who spent more than 10 hours with their mentors—32.7 percent of all AIM participants—had higher rates of successful (57.6 percent) than unsuccessful (28.8 percent) completion.

TABLE 5B

AIM Participant (Subsample) Program Experiences

Percent

	All participants	Successfully completed AIM	Unsuccessfully completed AIM
Time with mentor per week			
1–2 hours	2.0	100.0	0.0
3–4 hours	5.9	25.0	58.3
5–6 hours	6.9	57.1	35.7
7–8 hours	14.9	76.7	10.0
9–10 hours	14.4	72.4	24.1
Over 10 hours[a]	32.7	57.6	28.8
Unknown[b]	23.3	46.8	40.4
Involvement with ACS[c]			
Both prior and current case(s)	14.4	65.5	27.6
Current case(s) only	11.4	43.5	43.5
Prior case(s) only	39.1	60.8	30.4
Unknown or no involvement	35.1	59.2	25.4

Notes: N= 202; Valid percentages are reported.

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$

[a] The number of hours spent with a mentor reflects an average time spent with a youth's mentor per week; the exact number of hours was not available for AIM participants.

[b] Time with mentor for 23.3 percent of participants was unknown due to a lack of available data in participants' case files.

[c] Involvement with ACS signals a child welfare issue (e.g., foster care, suspected child abuse or neglect).

Quantitative Data Analysis

For the outcome evaluation, Urban measured within-group change to determine if AIM reduced out-of-home placements, reduced justice involvement, and helped participants achieve their goals identified in their individual service plans. Urban and DOP researchers assessed these outcomes using the data collected on the 229 participants enrolled in AIM from 2012 to May 2016. Descriptive analyses and within-group significance tests were conducted to examine how youth fared when enrolled in the AIM program on several key outcome measures (see appendix A for the complete outcome tables and significance levels).

Key Outcomes

Based on the information gleaned from the quantitative data analyses, Urban describes below the key participant outcomes related to participants' out-of-home placement, justice involvement, and personal goal attainment.

It is important to note that before AIM was implemented, DOP defined aggregate performance targets for the program. While these targets captured the program's broadest goals—change in participants' justice involvement and achievement of personal goals—ultimately, they did not reflect the individual activities and services AIM provided. Therefore, during the evaluation period, DOP developed and used a data collection tool to retrospectively record participants' program engagement (e.g., time spent with mentor, time in the program) and the types of personal goals participants set and met (e.g., prosocial activities, education, employment). While the outcome analyses below draw on the participant-level data, they do not directly align with the program's pre-implementation performance targets. However, Urban lists the targets below to provide additional context to the broad goals of the AIM program.

Out-of-Home Placement

Urban examined a diverse set of justice-related outcomes, including out-of-home placement, arrests, adjudications, and (re)convictions to assess how the program influenced participants. Some out-of-home placement outcomes are a result of noncriminal behavior, like a technical violation of the conditions of their probation, as opposed to new justice-system involvement; Urban reports on these outcomes separately to clearly assess the program's objectives in turn. Urban first describes in-program outcomes followed by post-program outcomes (final two rows of table 7 below). This order represents the logic of AIM's program goals; primarily to keep youth out of placement/justice system while they are in the program, with a longer-term goal to reduce future criminal behavior.

The first outcome—out-of-home placement—aligns with AIM's primary goal: to keep youth from being placed in a juvenile residential facility after a Family Court disposition. Urban defines out-of-home placement as whether a participant remained out of placement after enrollment in AIM.

As shown in table 6, 67 percent of AIM participants remained "placement free"—meaning they were not resentenced to out-of-home placement because of reconvictions or adjudications—at the end of the program.[7] When technical violations of probation are excluded from the analyses, that number

increases to 80.2 percent. Placements made as a result of technical violations have declined since the start of AIM. DOP found that Family Court judges required the filing of fewer technical violations from 2012 through 2016, which are ordered at the direction of the court for various reasons (including truancy) and do not involve rearrests or jeopardize public safety. Table A.1 in appendix A shows no significant differences in this outcome by social and demographic characteristics. Box 3 describes the financial and nonfinancial benefits of youth remaining placement free.

TABLE 6

Out-of-Home Placement for AIM Participants

Youth remaining placement-free	67.0%
Youth remaining placement-free (when excluding technical violations)	80.2%

Notes: N=229; the share remaining placement-free includes dispositions based on technical violations of probation not as part of rearrests. Two youth who aged out of Family Court jurisdiction while in AIM were convicted and sentenced to either jail or prison in Criminal Court within one year of their program end date; one additional youth's conviction is still pending disposition.

BOX 3

A Note on Costs

Based on ACS and DOP contractual estimates, the costs for AIM programming are significantly less than would otherwise be accrued if youth were in out-of-home placement. As calculated by DOP, AIM participants included in this evaluation spent a total of 52,663 days in the community, supervised under AIM, with the contractual program costs at $60 per day per person.[a] According to the 2012 ACS Non-Secure Placement Negotiated Acquisition Solicitation, the base rate of nonsecure placement was $400 with three potential options for additional funding: $34 per day add-on rate if agencies provide their own aftercare services, $68 per day add-in rate if agencies are located in New York City, and up to $50 per day for additional facility costs (ACS 2012). Based on projected FY 2018 citywide estimates reported in the 2016 report to the Manhattan ACS, if these youth had been sentenced to placement, the per person cost would have been estimated at $478 per day for nonsecure placement and $756 per day for limited-secure placement (ACS 2016).

There are also nonfinancial implications of placement. Research has shown placement can have detrimental effects on a youth's development and can lead to an increase in criminal behavior and recidivism (Mulvey and Schubert 2014; Pew 2015). Further, placement disrupts a youth's education, limiting their ability to achieve educational success and reducing their opportunities to engage in school activities with their peers (Mulvey and Schubert 2014). Also, youth are often placed far away from their families, adding stress to family relationships and potentially decreasing family members' involvement in the youth's placement and reentry process (Mulvey and Schubert 2014).

[a] Corresponds to a total cost of approximately $2.4 million for AIM participants remaining "out of out-of-home placement."

Justice Involvement

A second set of outcomes examined AIM participants' recidivism, specifically rearrests, adjudications, and reconvictions in Criminal Court. These outcomes speak to the secondary goals of AIM: to improve youths' attitude and behavior so they reduce their criminal activity and become less involved with the justice system. Specifically, AIM had two contractual goals for these outcomes:

- Eighty percent of participants will not be arrested for a felony while in AIM program.
- Sixty percent of AIM program completers will remain felony arrest–free for three months after program completion.

In the following analyses, recidivism is characterized as any rearrests (felony or not) within 6 and 12 months of enrolling in AIM, Family Court (FC) adjudications (felony or not) within 6 and 12 months of enrolling in AIM, and Criminal Court (CC) reconvictions or youthful offender (YO) adjudications within 6 and 12 months of enrolling in AIM and within 6 and 12 months of the program end date.

Table 7 provides findings from the analysis of 6- and 12-month justice-related outcomes for AIM participants. Approximately 23 percent of AIM participants were rearrested within a year of enrolling, and approximately 11 percent were rearrested for a felony. With regards to Family Court adjudications, 18.7 percent of AIM participants received an adjudication within 12 months of enrollment, and less than 10 percent received a felony adjudication (equivalent to being convicted in the adult context) in the same time frame. In Criminal Court, the rates of reconvictions at both 6 months and 12 months after enrollment were even lower: 1 percent and less than 6 percent, respectively. When follow-up data collection is extended to within 12 months of the program end date, only 3 percent of AIM participants had a felony offense adjudicated in Criminal Court. Table A.1 in appendix A shows there were limited differences in these outcomes by social and demographic characteristics; namely, risk level.

TABLE 7

Justice-Related Outcomes for AIM Participants

	Percent
All courts	
Any arrest within 6 months	22.9
Any felony arrest within 6 months	10.9
Any arrest within 12 months	25.8
Any felony arrest within 12 months	9.8
Family Court	
Any Family Court adjudication within 6 months*	13.0
Any Family Court felony adjudication within 6 months	6.5
Any Family Court adjudication within 12 months*	18.7
Any Family Court felony adjudication within 12 months*	9.1
Criminal Court	
Any CC reconviction/YO adjudication within 6 months	1.0
Any CC felony reconviction/YO adjudication within 6 months	0.0
Any CC reconviction/YO adjudication within 12 months	5.7
Any CC felony reconviction/YO adjudication within 12 months**	1.6
Any CC reconviction/YO adjudication within 12 months of program end date	7.7
Any CC felony reconviction/YO adjudication within 12 months of program end date**	3.0

Notes: CC = Criminal Court; YO = youthful offender. Except where noted, all follow-up times are from date of AIM disposition. All arrests include all new arrests through age 19. Criminal Court outcomes exclude any youth under the age of 16 at the time of data pull (i.e., not under the jurisdiction of Adult Criminal Court). Currently, in New York State, if youth are 16 years old, they are tried as an adult and, if eligible, designated (adjudicated) with YO status. The Family Court adjudication analysis is based on the full sample of 229 participants. The CC reconviction analysis is based on a subsample of participants (192 for reconvictions within 6 or 12 months, 168 for reconvictions within 12 months of program end date) because only youth over age 16 were processed in Criminal Court.

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$

Drawing on this analysis, figures 1–3 below present the justice-related outcomes for AIM participants by the percentage of participants who successfully completed the program and the percentage of participants who did not successfully complete the program. Though Urban did not assess whether successful completion of AIM did or did not lead to the justice-related outcomes, the figures below are intended to provide additional context around the outcomes and how they differed for participants who successfully completed the program and those who did not.

FIGURE 1

Family Court Adjudications by Program Outcome

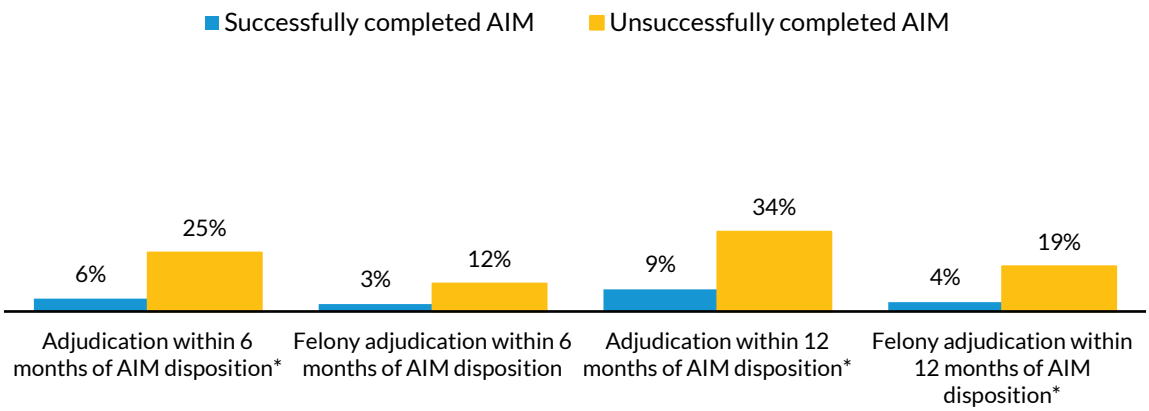


FIGURE 2

Criminal Court Reconvictions by Program Outcome

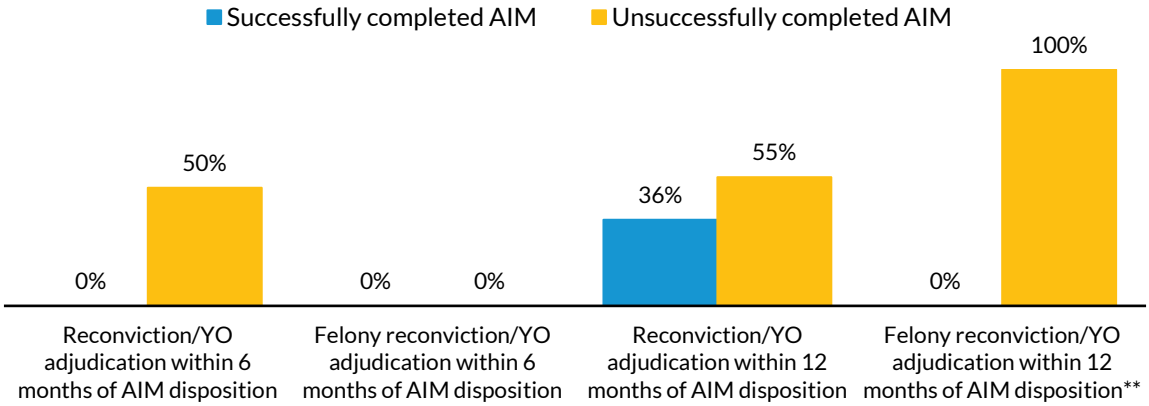
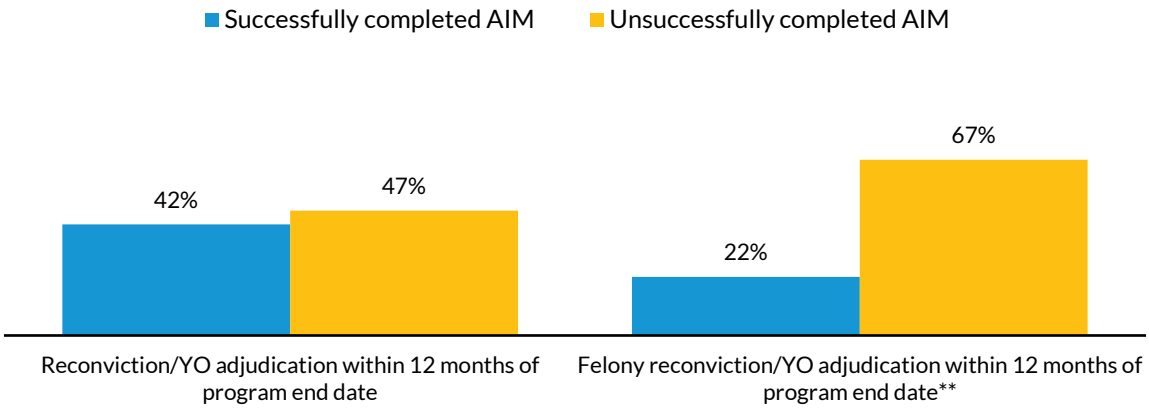


FIGURE 3

Criminal Court Reconvictions after Program Completion by Program Outcome



Since this evaluation did not use a comparison group, it is not possible to say that the levels of recidivism are lower than they would have been without the program. Urban looked to provide a benchmark for AIM, and a 2011 Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) report found that for a 2008 placement release cohort (youth who were in placement before the launch of AIM), 49 percent of youth were rearrested within 12 months; 27 percent for felony rearrests; and 25 percent were reconvicted within 12 months (OCFS 2011). In comparison, AIM youth had lower rates across all three recidivism outcomes (see table 7). Since the OCFS report drew on data that predate AIM, it is unclear whether changes in the criminal justice policy environment altered placement practices from 2008 onward, therefore potentially resulting in significant differences between the report's 2008 placement cohort and the participants included in this evaluation. While AIM participants represent a group that would have otherwise been sentenced to placement (since AIM was not available in 2008), it is possible that others would have been in alternative programming or placements.

Goal Attainment

Simply evaluating AIM, a program focused on individual goal setting and case management, in terms of the number of rearrests and adjudications is inadequate. For the outcome evaluation to be informative for improving or replicating the program, additional information is needed on the individualized aspects of the program. The evaluation had two contractual targets related to goal setting:

- Eighty-five percent of program completers will have an identifiable positive social support system outside the family unit when they complete the program (e.g., school/education or employment networks).
- Eighty-five percent of program completers will be reconnected to their family support system.

Therefore, Urban assessed a third set of outcomes based on the goal attainment data collected by DOP to examine the personal goals that AIM participants set in their individual service plans upon enrolling in the program (see appendix B for the goal attainment data collection methodology). The goal attainment data were collected on all AIM participants enrolled between 2012 and 2015 (n = 202).[8] The goal attainment data were also analyzed to examine the percentage of participants who successfully completed AIM and the percentage of participants who did not successfully complete the program. The data tables in this section present the breakdown for each risk or goal area.

As part of the goal setting process, AIM providers drew on the results of the YLS/CMI, as described above. The risk/needs areas identified by the YLS/CMI include prior and current offenses, family

circumstances, education/employment, peer relations, substance abuse, leisure/recreation, personality/behavior, and attitudes/orientation (See appendix D for additional information about the YLS/CMI risk areas). Table 8 shows the distribution of the AIM participants' risk areas according to the YLS/CMI. The three most common risk areas were leisure/recreation, peer relations, and education/employment. Based on those results, mentors worked with participants to identify goals related to the seven key goal areas listed in table 9.

TABLE 8

AIM Participant YLS/CMI Risk Areas

Percent

YLS/CMI risk areas	Rated moderate to high risk in this area	Successfully completed AIM	Unsuccessfully completed AIM
Leisure/recreation (prosocial activities)	50.0	45.4	60.0
Peer relations	45.0	45.4	45.0
Education/employment	44.1	38.7	55.0
Personality/behavior	25.7	28.6	20.0
Substance abuse	23.3	22.7	28.3
Attitudes/orientation	14.9	15.1	16.7
Family circumstances	14.4	15.1	15.0
Prior and current offenses	8.9	10.1	8.3

Notes: N= 202; Valid percentages are reported.

TABLE 9

YLS/CMI Goal Areas and Examples of Goals

Goal areas	Examples of goals
Education	▪ Attend school regularly ▪ Reevaluate individualized education plan ▪ Change school setting
Legal compliance	▪ Comply with conditions of probation
Employment	▪ Complete job training ▪ Attend work program (e.g., summer youth employment program)
Family	▪ Improve family dynamics ▪ Improve communication
Mental health/substance abuse	▪ Evaluate mental health/substance abuse needs ▪ Refrain from using drugs ▪ Attend programs
Prosocial activities	▪ Attend recreational programs (e.g., PAL)
Volunteer or community service	▪ Complete community service projects (e.g., volunteering at food banks, church events)

Consistent with the AIM program model, participants' risk areas (as identified by the YLS/CMI) helped inform participants' goals development. Table 10 and figure 4 present the distribution of the types of goals participants identified in their ISP or the types of goals identified in the AIM court reports or transition plans. Virtually all participants who exhibited risk in education and employment had a

personal goal in that area. Similarly, well over half of youth who exhibited high risk in family, substance abuse, or leisure/recreation had family, substance abuse, or prosocial/recreation goals.

TABLE 10

AIM Participant Goals Set

Percent

Goal area	Set goals	Successfully completed AIM	Unsuccessfully completed AIM
Education	90.1	95.0	85.0
Legal compliance	77.2	82.4	66.7
Family	68.8	78.2	55.0
Prosocial	65.3	73.9	48.3
Substance abuse	39.6	42.0	40.0
Mental health	31.2	34.5	20.0
Employment	24.8	31.1	15.0
Volunteer/community service	8.4	10.9	3.3

Notes: N= 202; Valid percentages are reported.

FIGURE 4

AIM Participant Goals Set

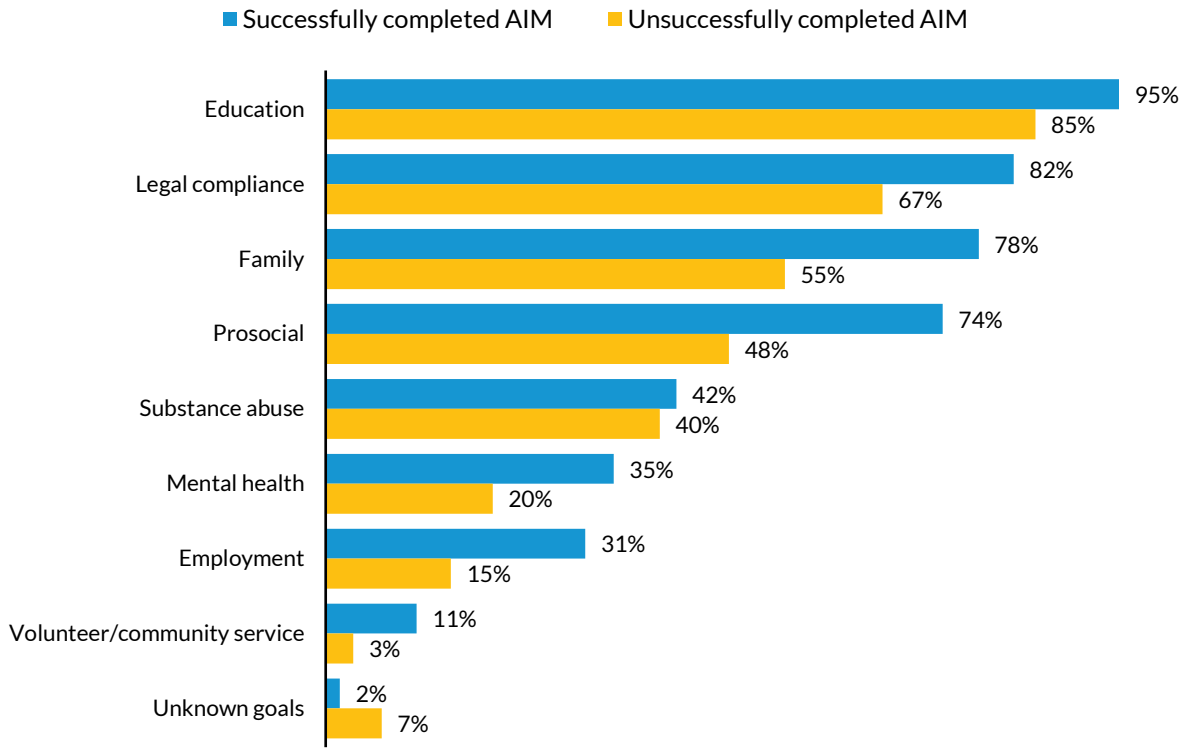


Table 11 presents the percentage of participants who attained goals in the key areas. Table 12 presents the distribution of the types of goals that were in process[9] at the time of participants' AIM exit. The tables also show the percentage breakdown of successful and unsuccessful participants who attained goals in each goal area, as well as the goals that were in process at the time of program exit.

TABLE 11

AIM Participant Goals Attained

Percent

Goal area	Attained goals	Successfully completed AIM	Unsuccessfully completed AIM
Prosocial	28.2	43.7	6.7
Education	22.3	31.9	1.7
Family	19.8	37.0	1.7
Legal compliance	13.9	22.7	0.0
Substance abuse	13.9	21.0	3.3
Employment	10.4	16.8	1.7
Volunteer/community service	7.4	10.9	1.7
Mental health	6.9	10.1	3.3

Notes: N= 202; Valid percentages are reported. The percentage of attained goals is based on the number of participants who reported setting the respective goal.

TABLE 12

AIM Participant Goals in Process when Exiting AIM

Percent

Goal area	Goals in process	Successfully completed AIM	Unsuccessfully completed AIM
Education	57.1	63.0	33.3
Legal compliance	55.7	58.0	26.7
Mental health	54.7	26.1	6.7
Family	54.3	45.4	31.7
Substance abuse	45.0	21.8	16.7
Employment	44.0	16.8	5.0
Prosocial	39.8	30.3	16.7
Volunteer/community service	17.6	2.5	1.7

Notes: *N*= 202; Valid percentages are reported. The percentage of Goals in Process was based on the number of participants who reported setting the respective goal.

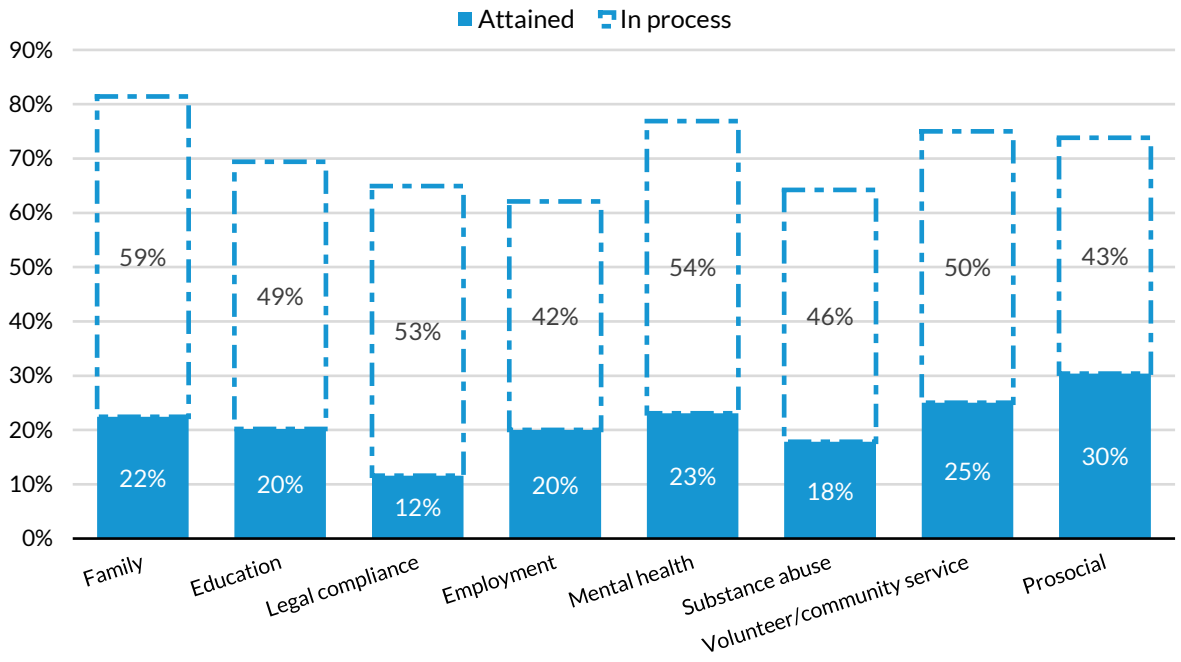
Figure 5 below presents data on goals attained and goals in progress for AIM participants who completed the program at six or nine months, where the percentage of participants who attained goals and the percentage of participants with goals in progress at the six- and nine-month timeframes are categorized by goal area. The percentage of goals attained and the percentage of goals in progress do not sum to 100 for each goal area, for a few reasons: not all goals were attained, AIM providers may not have recorded whether the identified goals were in progress at six and nine months, or goal attainment

data could not be collected from the AIM court reports, transition plans, investigation reports, and individual service plans. As shown in figure 5, AIM participants who completed the program attained or made material progress toward achieving the goals set. The fact that participants' goals were in progress at either six or nine months is also a notable finding, indicating that the goals participants set were substantial and staff only coded goals as "in progress" when participants completed meaningful progress toward accomplishing them. This also speaks to the importance of the AIM program in helping participants set goals and gain momentum toward attaining them. Drawing on the goal attainment data DOP collected and analyzed, figure 5 shows that a greater share of participants attained goals in all areas—except mental health—at the nine-month mark than at the six-month mark. This was particularly true for participants who attained goals related to family, employment, substance abuse, volunteer/community service, and prosocial activities. Further, a lower percentage of participants had goals in progress in those goal areas at the nine-month completion mark than at six months, signaling that participants were capitalizing on their momentum and making strides toward achieving their goals by the end of their time in the program.

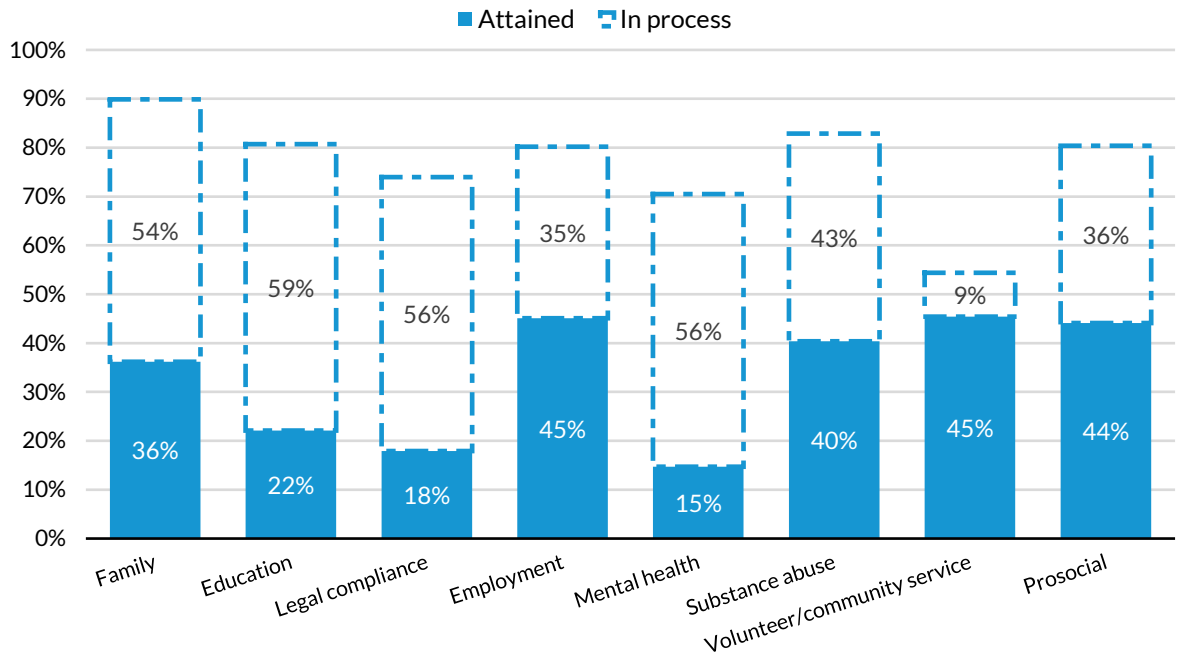
FIGURE 5

Percentage of Goals in Process and Attained at Six and Nine Months in AIM

At six months



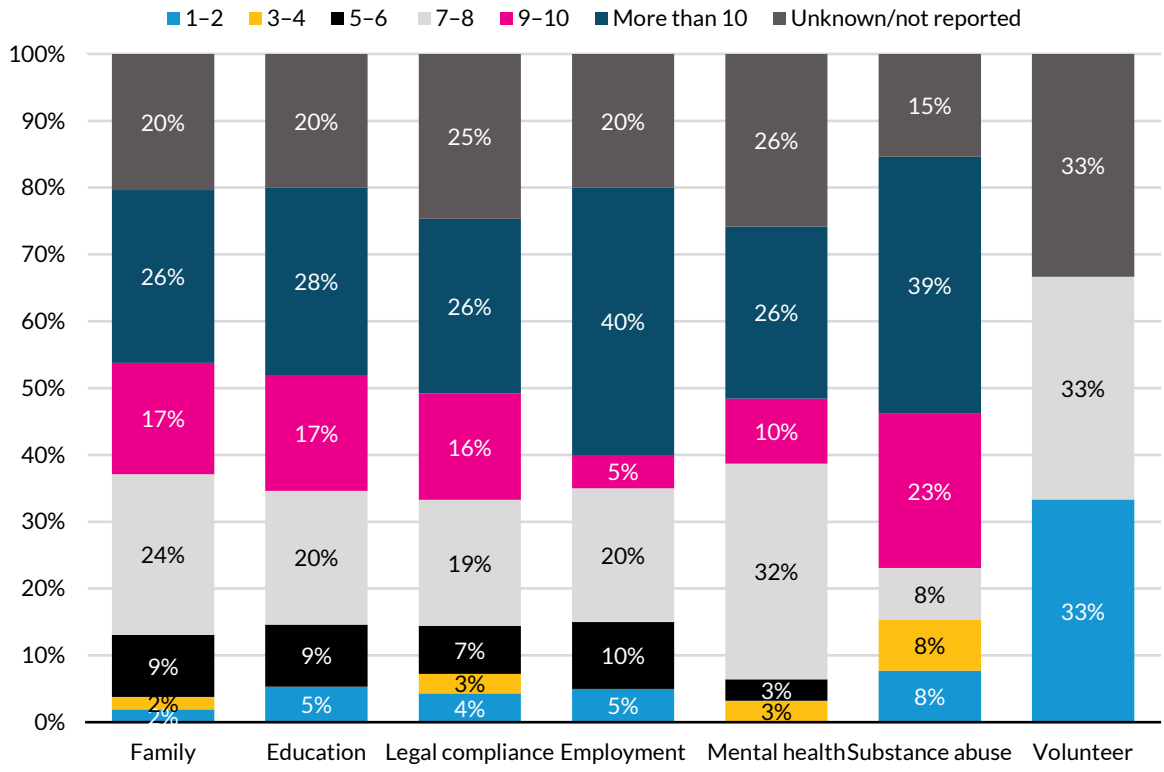
At nine months



Youth spending more than 10 hours with their mentors represented the group with the highest level of goal attainment overall (figure 6). It must be mentioned that a small number of AIM youth who were ultimately unsuccessful in completing AIM, but still attained goals, also spent more than 10 hours a week with their mentor(s) (see figure C.1 in appendix C).

FIGURE 6

Percentage of All Goals Attained by Number of Hours per week Spent with Mentor



Summary

Generally, AIM achieved its main goal of keeping participants out of placement; two-thirds of participants remained in the community after enrolling in AIM. Similarly, recidivism rates—both rearrest and reconviction/adjudication after program completion—were relatively low compared with NYC youth in placement before the implementation of AIM (OCFS 2011). In conjunction with their mentors, the AIM participants set personal goals that corresponded to their identified areas of risk. Participants who were more engaged in AIM, as measured by spending more time with their mentors or staying in the program longer, generally fulfilled more of their goals.

Intrinsic differences across groups (e.g., motivation, familial differences, socioeconomic status) may be present and unaccounted for in these analyses. However, while time with one's mentor appears to be a factor for goal attainment related to successful completion of the program, for participants who did not complete AIM, goal attainment also aligned with increased hours (>10 hours) spent with their mentor(s) (see figure C.1 in appendix C). Overall, while participant success seems linked to the amount of time youth spent in the program and the amount of time they spent with their mentor(s), evidence suggests that a more rigorous evaluation is warranted to disentangle how program components relate to AIM goal attainment and formal recidivism outcomes.

Implementation Findings

Drawing on the qualitative information collected from AIM program staff and stakeholders, as well as focus groups with current and past participants, parents, and probation officers, Urban describes below stakeholders' perspectives on the AIM program. These findings represent what stakeholders deemed as strengths and challenges associated with implementing the AIM program. The following section lists each key finding in bold, followed by summary bullets to guide each finding's description.

Despite Some Challenges, Program Staff and Participants Reported Positive Views of the AIM Mentoring Activities

- One-on-one conversations and activities between participants and their mentors were viewed as the most impactful part of the program.
- Though some tension among program staff emerged about the appropriate types of mentors, participants were invested in the program.
- The responsiveness required of mentors presented challenges for managing their time and caseloads.

The AIM program model was founded on the principle of adult advocate-mentors providing individual mentoring services to youth participants. The AIM program strove to use "credible messengers" as advocate-mentors. In addition to credible messengers, AIM providers hired staff with clinical backgrounds. When asked whether AIM should use credible messengers as mentors, the mentors lauded the ways lived experiences helped them connect with the participants. One mentor said that because he grew up in similar living circumstances as participants and was viewed as a credible messenger, he was able to work with participants with the mentality that "I'm from the hood like you, but I didn't do this, I didn't do that." Some probation officers also valued credible messengers as mentors since it helped mentors recognize risky situations that someone outside the community may not understand: "They understand that in certain neighborhoods, the store is not really a store. And if your mentor sees you standing in front of that store, your mentor can say 'Hey, come with me, let's do something else.'"

However, several staff noted some tension, or differences of opinion, as to whether the best mentor was (1) a credible messenger, who was sensitive to youth's needs because they had similar lived experiences; or (2) a person trained in social work with a clinical background who could bring the "right"

type of professional—trauma-informed and cognitive behavioral therapy—expertise to their mentoring and relationships with the youth.

Mentors—both credible messengers and those trained in social work—explained that some youth were hard to engage with when first assigned to the program. Several program directors and mentors noted that at first, youth typically only wanted to know the minimal requirements of the program to stay in compliance with the conditions of their probation. After several months, youth began to realize that their mentors understood their situation, cared about their success, respected their goals, and wanted to listen to them instead of reprimand them. Once mentors proved that they were not going to give up easily, youth began to trust that their mentors were truly invested and not simply reaching out to fulfill a job requirement. Once youth began to accept the program, most participants met regularly with their mentors for one-on-one conversations and attended group activities or trips. While some youth felt that group activities detracted from their ability to confide in their mentor, others felt that going on trips and interacting with other AIM youth was a positive experience.

I enjoyed the trips to learn about impact of my negative behaviors through talking to people who have also been through the same issues to see the range of outcomes.
—AIM participant

Most participants felt that the one-on-one conversations with their mentors were the most impactful part of the program. One youth said of the mentor, "We sit down and talk to each other, if I have a problem they help me get through. They'll talk to me." Another youth reinforced the way her mentor allowed her to express emotions: "I was more comfortable to emotionally share myself with her. I would share my problems, or the way I felt, family issues or just anything I was going through we talked about more personal things in life. I was more easygoing in public. We would talk about many things."

Mentors also felt the one-on-one model was successful: "I felt like a personal trainer, we were showing them all these techniques or helping them handle things if they were having an issue or problem. A lot of times I felt like we were their personal cheerleaders and help them out as they were transitioning going through juvenile justice as they transition out of the system." After regularly engaging with the AIM program, many youth appreciated that they could go to their mentors at any time of

the day or night for help with many aspects of their life. One mentor explained his job schedule, saying "You've got to bend for these kids, meet them where they're at. It could be 9 at night, 11 in the morning."

Mentors regularly took youth to school or appointments and enrolled them in programs such as athletic leagues, gyms, drug treatment, internships, and art. Mentors also provided youth and their families support during Family Court hearings, referred youth to therapists, provided youth with food donations or clean clothes, connected families to housing opportunities, and referred youth to occupational certification and licensure programs. Sometimes mentors provided in-kind goods to participants out of pocket, while other times mentors used AIM program or provider resources or other funding streams. One stakeholder observed how mentors regularly exceeded their formal job roles. "I've had AIM mentors in the beginning bring kids to school every day and pick them up which is so out of the bounds of their job but so amazing to help kids figure out and understand their schedule and stuff and accompany them to appointments. I think I've seen that they go out of their way to help our clients." While many mentors worked diligently to provide youth with wraparound services and prosocial extracurricular activities, they noted that this was a challenge as they were living in resource-poor neighborhoods and not many services were available.

Program directors and mentors noted another challenge related to staffing resources and capacity, especially when all the mentors were not employed full time. Mentors' engagement with participants ranged from 7 to 30 hours a week, and anecdotal evidence pointed to mentors spending a median of 8 to 10 hours a week with participants. Mentors found it challenging to manage their caseloads when participants were new to the program or high-risk, given the need for mentors to always be available. For mentors working with multiple participants, this range of hours was difficult to manage and burdensome, even if the program employed the mentors full time. Conversely, full-time mentors who worked with only one youth could have a lot of free time and, as a result, not fully engage with the program.

Program Staff Expressed Concerns about the Eligibility Criteria and the Enrollment and Matching Processes

- The eligibility criteria, particularly the youth's age and location of residence, made it difficult for mentors to fully engage with their mentees.
- The enrollment process, including deciding whom to refer to the ATP unit and assessing the youth's suitability for AIM, may not have yielded candidates suitable for the program.
- Matching participants to mentors was inconsistent across providers.

Interviews with program staff indicated that the AIM program eligibility criteria made it difficult for participants to consistently achieve their goals and outcomes. AIM's age range for program participants—13 to 18 years old—was a large difference in ages and made it difficult to provide the same program activities to all participants. Program staff explained that the issues facing 13-year-old youth often differ from those facing older youth. Staff also noted that older youth were more likely to engage in the program than younger youth because they were more mature. What makes AIM unique, however, is that its focus on individual participants' needs allowed mentors to serve younger participants differently than older youth. It was recommended that program services be tailored for both age ranges, providing mentor training specific to age and child development issues.

When youth are 16–17 years of age, we do better with them in terms of engagement. The younger youth, 13 or 14, they don't understand. They're not as mature. They don't understand the severity of [their] circumstances. They don't understand why they have to be here. [It is] more difficult to get them engaged because they don't take it seriously.
—Program staff member

Another issue affecting youth who would be otherwise eligible for the AIM program was the limited geographic catchment area in which youth had to live.[10] In many instances, youth in the program identified friends and family members who would benefit from AIM mentoring services, but they did not have access to the program because they lived in Far Rockaway or North Brooklyn. Relatedly, some participants faced transportation challenges traveling to and from an AIM provider location. In some instances, smaller providers did not have vans for transporting youth or participants' travel was restricted because of gang involvement or activity in the community.

A youth's fit for the program was determined after a Family Court judge sentenced him or her to ATP programming and the ATP unit—based in DOP—assessed the youth's needs. Program staff reported that not all youth who were sentenced to AIM were appropriate for the program for various reasons, despite meeting the official eligibility criteria. The process of sentencing and assessing youth for AIM was cited as a reason for inappropriate program matches because, like most other ATP programs,[11] AIM providers were unable to speak with the youth until they were assigned to the program. AIM staff therefore felt they could not play a role in the decisionmaking around whether a

particular youth would be well-suited for AIM. This resulted in some challenges around the sentencing and enrollment processes when assessing youth's suitability for AIM.

Once a youth was referred to an AIM provider, program staff matched participants to mentors. Interviews with program staff revealed that the providers engaged in the matching process differently; some matched mentors and participants deliberately (i.e., based on background, lived experiences, gender, preferences), while others depended on the mentors' current caseloads and availability. According to staff, the best matches were made deliberately—based on various factors described earlier and the availability of mentors based on their caseload sizes. If a best-match mentor has a full caseload, the next-best match is made. Stakeholders suggested that more attention could be paid to the matching process as the relationships between youth and their mentors are strong indicators of goal attainment and program success.

Program Staff Indicated That Participants Would Benefit from a Longer Program

- Six to nine months did not allow enough time for participants to become fully engaged in the program.

Program directors and mentors across all providers consistently revealed that the six- to nine-month program was often too short; AIM was established as a six-month program, and a three-month extension of services had to be approved by DOP. Interviews with program staff indicated that the typical pattern for AIM participants followed a "honeymoon phase," in which youth would engage with the program consistently, followed by a drop-off in participation. Youth would then slowly begin to trust their mentor, taking a more active role in their programming. Mentors achieved heightened levels of engagement and trust with the participants often by the fourth to seventh month, at which point the youth was nearing the end of the program.

I don't think that it's enough time. It should be the whole time [they are in probation]. If it's 24 months it should be the whole time; I don't know what that 6–9 months is about, you're talking about juveniles, it takes more than 6 to 9 months to make a lifestyle change.
—Probation officer

Families Appreciated the Program and the Mentors' Role

- Family team meetings were an opportunity for participants, family members, mentors, and other stakeholders such as probation officers to discuss the youth's progress.
- Parents commended the support and responsiveness of the mentors.

The AIM program model included family team meetings for all program participants. At the initial family team meeting, the mentor met with the youth participant, members of their family, and other external program stakeholders (probation officer, ACS case manager, etc.) to develop an individual service plan for the youth. The initial family team meeting was to be followed by monthly check-ins with the same group to discuss the youth's needs, progress toward achieving goals, and barriers impacting participation in the program. Participants and program staff explained that this process did not always occur in a consistent and organized manner; sometimes they did not happen at all.

While working on gaining trust with the participants, mentors engaged families to reinforce positive incremental changes. "We teach mom don't knock him three steps back when he's moving forward. So it's like I know he's still doing these things but he's also doing things he's never done before. Like he went to school two weeks straight. Let's make it seem like the biggest thing ever." Regardless of whether their children continued to engage in criminal activities, participants' parents felt that the mentors' unconditional support was an incredible help to their children. "One of the kids got locked up—they went running to help them. You don't get that too often. To give them encouragement. Try to get them back on the right path." Parents appreciated that AIM provided their children with a safety net when they needed it. One parent noted the constant follow-up and support they received from mentors: "For me it would be them still being in touch with me and my daughter and asking me do I need any help with her. Follow up stuff with her and the mentors. Nobody told me after you complete the program it was still going to be in your corner."

My son wouldn't open up to me. Always so angry. I didn't know why. After the program, he opens up now. He comes to me now.
—AIM participant's parent

While family members reported positive views of the AIM program, some parents suggested that providers offer activities and services to participants' parents to engage them in the program. Parents

suggested this include offering recreational activities or various programming intended for parents separate from the youth. Further, parents explained that AIM providers may consider identifying a staff person whose role is to coordinate opportunities for parent engagement.[12] While these strategies could improve parent engagement in the program, they would require additional funding from the providers or external sources.

Although Implemented Differently, AIM Providers Continued to Provide Program Alumni Services and Opportunities to Engage with Their Mentors

- All providers and mentors invited youth to continue to engage with them after completing the program; however, providers varied in how they provided services to program alumni.
- Alumni expressed positive views of the program.

The AIM service providers engaged AIM alumni differently. Some providers had funding outside of the AIM program budget to provide continued services to youth after their period of formal AIM engagement ended. Mentors and participants appreciated these after-care programs. Mentors noted that when current participants saw alumni voluntarily come back and greet everyone in the office, it helped them trust the program and willingly participate. One mentor noted that "The director of the program has an open-door policy so alumni comes back and is like leaders to the next influx of AIM kids so it creates a community and I think it works." Other providers did not have funding for alumni services, but mentors still provided support and encouragement on their own time. Many alumni noted that they did not realize the benefits of AIM until they were no longer in the program, and then they wanted to take advantage of all the services it offered, contacting their mentors regularly for support. One mentor commented, "We're mentors but they continue to call you after they are done with the program. They see you in the street, give you the biggest hugs."

AIM alumni felt that the program supported prosocial behavior and reduced criminal behavior. "If it wasn't for this program I'd probably be locked up again. This program keeps you out of trouble. It gave me something to do every day after school so I couldn't get in trouble." Families also noticed positive changes in their children's behavior after participation in the program. "My son wouldn't open up to me. Always so angry. I didn't know why. After the program, he opens up now. He comes to me now."

If it wasn't for this program I'd probably be locked up again. This program keeps you out of trouble. It gave me something to do every day after school so I couldn't get in trouble.
—Former AIM participant

Program Staff and Probation Officers Cited a Lack of Consistency in Communicating and Coordinating with Each Other

- Probation officers engaged with the program to varying degrees, due to a lack of transparency between program staff and probation officers and unclear roles and responsibilities.

Interviews with program staff and focus groups with probation officers and supervising probation officers revealed limited consistency with how probation officers engaged with the AIM program and its staff, including mentors and program directors. The strength of the relationships between program staff and probation officers seemed to drive the level of collaboration and coordination. In some instances, probation officers felt as though they were part of the larger AIM team and regularly engaged with the program, attending activities and frequently communicating with mentors and directors throughout a youth's tenure in AIM. However, other probation officers had little engagement with the program, citing confusion around roles and responsibilities and a lack of transparency between the program staff and officers. According to some probation officers, AIM program staff were not forthcoming when officers inquired about participants' progress and status in the program. Relatedly, AIM staff often refused to act as an extension of DOP and rather advocated on behalf of participants in an effort to shield youth from any negative repercussions from their probation officers. AIM staff were cognizant of how separating themselves from DOP could help build trust and relationships with youth.

Despite Commitment to Cooperation by All Program Stakeholders, They Expressed Confusion about Roles and Responsibilities

- The delineation of roles and responsibilities among stakeholders was unclear.

The AIM program relied on significant collaboration between program stakeholders (e.g., program directors, mentors, Family Court judges and attorneys, probation officers, and family members) in coordinating the services for youth in the program. Assignment into the AIM program, development of individual service plans, coordination of wraparound services, and engagement with Family Court actors and probation officers all required substantial cross-stakeholder planning. Interviews across stakeholder groups, however, revealed that relationships were often strained, with no cohesive partnership founded in the shared vision or goals of the program. This may be attributed, in part, to the decentralized structure of the AIM program, where five different local service providers are charged with implementing the program. While one entity (DOP) is responsible for managing AIM, roles and responsibilities may be unclear due to the localized nature of the program.

It started feeling more top down, not so collaborative, more so probation deciding the policy and what it was going to be. In any model when it's folks [are] not on the ground doing direct work and just pushing orders down, something's lost there. It's not as thoughtful or insightful as it could be. Probation tried to and they brought the directors together every other month, so it's not that they weren't trying to be inclusive. But the idea is like, let's develop this policy together. It felt different, like we had lost influence over how to make AIM as great as possible. —Program staff member

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Program Stakeholders Reported There Was Limited Communication and Opportunities to Report on Participants' Progress and Outcomes

- All stakeholders recognized the importance of sharing information to help ensure participants were successful in the program, but explained communication across stakeholders was limited.
- AIM providers did not receive ample information on youth when they were enrolled in the program.
- Opportunities to report on participant outcomes were limited across stakeholders.

Effective communication and reporting between AIM program stakeholders was often cited as essential to implementing the program and maximizing the success of participants. However, stakeholders

revealed that communication among program staff, and communication with external stakeholders such as probation officers, Family Court judges, and attorneys, was limited. This led to feelings of distrust and a perceived lack of transparency between stakeholder groups, for two reported reasons:

First, mentors and program directors explained they received limited information from the ATP unit and Family Court when a youth was enrolled in AIM. Incomplete information failed to provide mentors with the full picture of a youth's background or history. To help fill this information gap, mentors contacted youth's attorneys to obtain additional information on their backgrounds, but they were unsuccessful. Therefore, program staff explained it would be helpful to have additional information about youth—to the extent it is permissible to share information across agencies and service providers—such as their previous involvement with probation or their family background, before their enrollment in the program.

Second, there were no formal reporting mechanisms between program staff, probation officers, and Family Court stakeholders. Several probation and court stakeholders expressed difficulty around obtaining information on participants' goal attainment, engagement with their mentors, and program status. Probation officers revealed that they received reports with limited information on participants' program status, and often only after a rearrest was reported. Further, some mentors would not always keep records of a youth's missed appointments, making it difficult for probation officers to substantiate violations. Similarly, several Family Court judges revealed they did not receive updates unless a youth returned to court for a violation. Some judges were skeptical if AIM mentors were spending the prescribed time with participants since they did not receive reports. Generally, Family Court judges would prefer more consistent reports on AIM youth throughout their program participation. Family Court stakeholders also explained that mentors and program directors rarely provided the court with updates on how youth were engaging and progressing with the program. Some mentors indicated that they had a difficult time addressing the courts and advocating on behalf of the AIM-involved youth; in some instances, mentors were not allowed to attend court hearings for program participants.

At my site, [there is] a lack of communication, and if a youth is not compliant, the mentor doesn't keep a record, so there are no exact dates. So if the youth has a history of missing appointments, there is no record, which doesn't substantiate [a] violation, so I would like the director to keep [the PO] in sync of whether the youth is compliant.
—Probation officer

Recommendations

The key program outcomes, as well as implementation successes and challenges, present opportunities for further refinement of the program. Drawing on these findings, Urban proposes the following recommendations for strengthening the implementation of AIM:

Educate Family Court Stakeholders on Assessment and Assignment

Frequently educating Family Court actors and program staff on the assessment and assignment process for youth recommended for AIM will help ensure stakeholders fully understand the target population, eligibility criteria, and the process for assigning youth to the program. Building on the initial education campaign that occurred at the onset of AIM, continuous education can happen through informational meetings with court actors or providing them with printed materials such as a description of AIM or guidelines for the assessment process for them to reference when needed. Several judges commented that they did not fully understand the assessment process, and because they were not involved, they often questioned whether AIM was truly a "good fit" for the youth in the program. Therefore, continuously reeducating judges and other court stakeholders on the assessment process can help reduce confusion and help judges feel more confident that AIM matches youth's needs.

Involve Program Staff and Family Court Actors in Assessments

Consider allowing AIM program staff, such as mentors or program directors, interview prospective participants before they are assigned to AIM to ensure they are a good fit for the program and the respective provider can offer the necessary services to meet youth's needs. While the program's "no eject, no reject" policy may limit the feasibility of involving provider staff in the assessment process or allowing staff to make decisions about participants' suitability for AIM, allowing program staff to help assess youth or meet with them prior to their enrollment in the program could lead to more appropriate and consistent placements in the program. In addition to including mentors or program directors in the assessment process, it may be worth considering eliciting input from additional Family Court

stakeholders such as Corporation Counsel, Legal Aid, or defense attorneys on the readiness or suitability of the youth for AIM.

Expand Staff Training to Include Additional Evidence-Based Practices

A number of AIM staff expressed a need for additional, evidence-based training, especially around youth's emotion regulation and conflict management skills; youth development; methods for addressing the differing needs of the youngest participants; and staff self-care. Staff also suggested that the AIM providers share ideas and lessons learned about training, as well as leverage resources across providers to ensure all staff have opportunities to receive additional training. For instance, this can happen through cross-site communication, meetings, or training opportunities open to AIM staff from all boroughs. This would create a learning community among the AIM providers and a collaborative environment in which program staff can acquire new skills for engaging with AIM youth.

Review the Staffing Structure to Help Effectively Manage Mentors' Time and Responsibilities

Because mentors worked with multiple participants at any given time and for a wide range of hours a week, program staff found it difficult to manage their time and not feel burdened. Potential solutions to this include, to the extent resources are available, recruiting volunteer or part-time mentors to supplement the current staff, and routinely assessing the number of incoming participants and staff's caseload size to ensure AIM providers are adequately staffed to maintain the intended mentor-to-mentee ratio. This assessment may also identify opportunities for staff to prioritize or triage participants based on their needs, potentially allowing mentors to be more efficient and effective with their time.

Expand Activities and Services Offered to Participants

Although the program staff and participants reported positive views of the AIM program, there are several areas where they identified services could be expanded or added. This could include connecting youth to employment opportunities, helping youth obtain their driver's licenses, and increased

educational support for participants by coordinating regular meetings between the mentors and school staff such as teachers, guidance counselors, or principals. Additionally, consider expanding the program's mental health services and employing a staff member who has a professional mental health background. This could be a mentor, another staff member at the organization, or a new position. This person would be responsible for providing and coordinating mental health services to help participants address the trauma and stress they are experiencing.

Offer Program Alumni Additional Services after They Complete the Core AIM Program

While careful not to formally extend the mandated AIM program, offering more voluntary services, and a continuum of support, to program alumni may help them accomplish the personal goals set in their individual service plans and reach stability after the six- to nine-month program. Several stakeholders, including AIM participants, parents, and DOP leadership recommended that additional engagement with program alumni would help support youth as they work toward accomplishing their goals after they finish the program. Consider surveying program alumni to identify the services or activities they prefer. These could include annual events, informal check-ins with their mentors, case management, supporting youth while working toward their goals, connecting program alumni and current program participants, or referring youth to other services in the community. To provide these services, AIM program staff indicated they would need additional funding and resources to cover the costs associated with these services, such as the provision of food, activities, transportation, and/or emergency services.

Implement Consistent and Transparent Reporting Mechanisms between AIM Stakeholders

Using and sharing frequent reports among the AIM program staff, DOP leadership, probation officers, and Family Court actors will help ensure program stakeholders are aware and understand whether participants are (or are not) meeting their program goals. Oftentimes, program stakeholders reported they do not receive information on how AIM participants are faring after they are enrolled in the program. Consider building on the existing coordination and meetings with the providers and stakeholders to report on and discuss participant outcomes; this will help reinforce the vision for AIM, clarify roles and responsibilities, and combat the perceived lack of transparency among stakeholders. The reports should be shared frequently and include both positive and negative participant outcomes to

ensure all stakeholders are informed about the progress of youth in the program, and provide the stakeholders opportunities to resolve any issues that arise when working with participants. Relatedly, it is important to carefully consider the metrics and targets used to monitor program performance. While program targets exist for AIM, they may not accurately reflect the program's individual-level activities and services. Therefore, it is important to revisit the performance targets and revise them as the program evolves over time. This will help ensure the targets speak to the participant outcomes AIM is designed to affect. These targets then should also be reported and shared with AIM stakeholders transparently and routinely to support ongoing performance monitoring.

Adopt and Routinely Report on Intermediate Participant Outcome Measures

While this evaluation is one attempt to synthesize and report on implementation and outcome findings related to the AIM program, stakeholders would benefit from measuring and reporting additional participant outcomes. In addition to justice-related outcomes such as recidivism, DOP should routinely examine intermediate outcomes such as engagement in school, connection to positive support systems, involvement with families, goal setting and attainment, and development of prosocial interaction and communication skills. Specifically, AIM program directors and Family Court stakeholders suggested DOP think critically and develop intermediate measures of success that are communicated clearly with all AIM program staff and stakeholders. Informed by the goal attainment analysis presented in this report, one such example of interim measures is goal attainment, including the identification of personal, educational, employment, or prosocial goals and systematically monitoring the progress participants make toward those goals on a routine basis. DOP should also be transparent about the types of data they use and how they calculate outcomes. DOP, in partnership with the AIM providers, could gather data through fielding participant surveys (e.g., pre- and post-assessments, program satisfaction surveys), conducting interviews with participants and their families, systematically reviewing participant case files, or collecting administrative data from other agencies or organizations serving the participants (e.g., academic performance data from schools, data from employers). This would allow the AIM providers and DOP to capture and report on more robust data on AIM participants and their incremental outcomes from multiple sources.

Conclusion

Through Urban's evaluation of the AIM program, the research team documented the implementation of the program and assessed participant outcomes. Drawing on the qualitative and quantitative data collected, Urban drew conclusions regarding key participant outcomes and program implementation strengths and challenges:

- When examining outcomes for AIM participants, the program demonstrated promising results related to youth remaining in the community (and not being placed in a residential facility). Specifically, the majority (67 percent) of AIM participants remained out of out-of-home placement by the end of their time in the program.
- AIM participants also experienced positive justice-related outcomes. Within 12 months of enrollment, fewer than 20 percent (18.7 percent) of participants were ultimately adjudicated in Family Court and fewer than 6 percent (5.7 percent) were reconvicted in Criminal Court. Within 12 months of program end, only 3 percent of participants had any felony reconviction in Criminal Court.
- Participants' most frequently identified goal areas were education, legal compliance, family, and prosocial skills, which corresponded with the areas in which they exhibited high risk. Greater participant goal completion was associated with more time spent in the program and increased hours spent with mentors.
- Participants and parents appreciated the individualized mentoring services and explained AIM as helpful in deterring youths' criminal behavior and meeting their conditions of probation. Additionally, participants' parents appreciated the family team meetings, the mentors' responsiveness to youth's needs, and the mentors' ongoing support such as transporting youth to appointments and accompanying participants to Family Court hearings.
- Program stakeholders also noted challenges they encountered while implementing the program. These challenges spoke to concerns with the program's eligibility criteria and enrollment process, the length of the program, the inconsistencies in how probation officers engaged with program participants, uncertainty around staff and stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, and limited reporting and information sharing among program stakeholders.

Based on these key evaluation findings, Urban identified recommendations intended to inform program refinements and improve the operations and management of AIM. By illuminating these implementation lessons and program outcomes, Urban hopes to not only strengthen the implementation of AIM moving forward, but also contribute to New York City's comprehensive efforts to serve justice-involved youth.

Appendix A. Data Analysis Tables

TABLE A.1

Justice-Related Outcomes for AIM Participants: Arrests

	Any arrest within 6 months	Any felony arrest within 6 months	Any arrest within 12 months	Any felony arrest within 12 months
Gender				
Male	24.5	11.6	26.6	9.7
Female	17.8	8.9	23.1	10.3
Race/ethnicity*				
Black	22.6	**9.8**	27.4	8.5
Hispanic	23.2	**12.5**	22.7	13.6
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Seriousness of offense				
Most serious	22.4	12.1	22.9	6.3
More serious	43.5	17.4	47.4	21.1
Less serious	20.0	10.0	25.0	9.4
Least serious	17.9	10.7	19.0	14.3
Missing	0.0	7.0	0.0	7.0
Risk level				
Low	**16.7**	**16.7**	**33.3**	**16.7**
Medium	**25.5**	**10.9**	**24.7**	**8.2**
High	**21.2**	**15.2**	**31.0**	**17.2**
Missing	18.6	0.0	18.6	0.0
Borough				
Bronx	25.0	7.4	28.1	5.3
Brooklyn	22.0	14.6	26.5	17.6
Manhattan	14.3	9.5	21.1	5.3
Queens	26.5	11.8	26.7	6.7
Staten Island	21.4	14.3	21.7	17.4
Time in AIM				
Less than 6 months	**38.6**	**20.5**	**40.9**	**20.5**
6 to 9 months	**17.3**	9.2	**22.0**	9.2
10 months or more	33.3	0.0	41.7	0.0
Time with mentor (hours per week)				
Less than 9 hours	Data not available			
9 hours or more				

Notes: *N* = 229. Criminal Court findings only for those with a NYSID (34.5 percent of the sample). Therefore, some conditional discharges and lower-level offenses may be unknowingly excluded. ACDs are not counted as a conviction or adjudication. Several cells have a sample size of less than 5; interpret statistical significance with caution. The time with mentor findings were not available because the information could not be matched to deidentified JJDB data.

* Percentages in bold are significant at $p < .1$. Percentages in bold and underlined are significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE A.2

Justice-Related Outcomes for AIM Participants: Adjudications

	Any FC adjudication within 6 months	Any FC felony adjudication within 6 months	Any FC adjudication within 12 months	Any FC felony adjudication within 12 months	Youth remaining placement-free
Gender					
Male	13.1	7.4	19.9	10.8	64.2
Female	11.3	3.8	13.2	3.8	75.5
Race/ethnicity					
Black	14.1	7.0	20.5	10.3	33.5
Hispanic	8.1	5.4	8.1	5.4	27.0
Other	20.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	40.0
Seriousness of offense					
Most serious	14.0	7.5	22.6	12.9	39.8
More serious	20.0	13.3	23.3	13.3	23.3
Less serious	8.9	3.6	16.1	5.4	26.8
Least serious	11.8	3.9	11.8	3.9	33.3
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Risk level					
Low	**0.0**	0.0	**12.5**	**0.0**	75.0
Medium	**18.4**	10.3	**24.3**	**14.0**	64.0
High	**4.8**	2.4	**7.1**	**2.4**	71.4
Missing	6.8	0.0	13.6	2.3	70.4
Borough					
Bronx	18.1	8.3	22.2	**8.3**	72.2
Brooklyn	7.0	4.6	18.6	**11.6**	67.4
Manhattan	18.4	10.5	15.8	**13.2**	57.9
Queens	10.9	4.3	19.6	**6.5**	65.2
Staten Island	6.5	3.2	12.9	**6.5**	67.7
Time in AIM					
Less than 9 months	17.2	9.2	**24.1**	12.6	**54.0**
9 months or more	9.1	4.5	**14.5**	6.4	**80.0**
Time with mentor (hours per week)					
Less than 9 hours	**3.4**	3.4	**8.6**	5.2	25.9
9 hours or more	**15.4**	7.3	**20.8**	8.3	30.2

Notes: *N* = 229. FC = Family Court. Criminal Court findings only for those with a NYSID (34.5 percent of the sample). Therefore, some conditional discharges and lower-level offenses may be unknowingly excluded. ACDs are not counted as a conviction or adjudication. Several cells have a sample size of less than 5; interpret statistical significance with caution.

*Percentages in bold are significant at $p < .1$. Percentages in bold and underlined are significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE A.3

Justice-Related Outcomes for AIM Participants: Reconvictions

	Any CC reconviction/ YO adjudication within 6 months	Any CC felony reconviction/ YO adjudication within 6 months	Any CC reconviction/ YO adjudication within 12 months	Any CC felony reconviction/ YO adjudication within 12 months
Gender				
Male	1.4	0.0	7.5	2.1
Female	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race/ethnicity				
White	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Black	0.7	0.0	5.9	2.0
Hispanic	3.0	0.0	3.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0
Seriousness of offense				
Most serious	0.0	0.0	6.8	1.4
More serious	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0
Less serious	2.1	0.0	4.2	2.1
Least serious	2.2	0.0	6.5	2.2
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Risk level				
Low	**0.0**	0.0	**25.0**	**25.0**
Medium	**0.0**	0.0	**4.7**	**0.9**
High	**5.6**	0.0	**5.6**	**0.0**
Missing	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0
Borough				
Bronx	1.8	0.0	8.8	0.0
Brooklyn	0.0	0.0	7.9	2.6
Manhattan	0.0	0.0	3.4	3.4
Queens	0.0	0.0	2.4	2.4
Staten Island	3.8	0.0	3.8	0
Time in AIM				
Less than 9 months	1.5	0.0	**10.4**	3.0
9 months or more	1.0	0.0	**3.0**	0.0
Time with mentor (hours per week)				
Less than 9 hours	1.8	0.0	9.1	**3.6**
9 hours or more	1.4	0.0	5.4	**0.0**

Notes: *N* = 192. Criminal Court findings only for those with a NYSID (34.5 percent of the sample). Therefore, some conditional discharges and lower-level offenses may be unknowingly excluded. ACDs are not counted as a conviction/adjudication. Several cells have a sample size of less than 5; interpret statistical significance with caution.

*Percentages in bold are significant at $p < .1$. Percentages in bold and underlined are significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE A.4

Justice-Related Outcomes for AIM Participants: Reconvictions after Program End Date

	Any CC reconviction/YO adjudication within 12 months of program end date	Any CC felony reconviction/YO adjudication within 12 months of program end date
Gender		
Male	10.2	3.9
Female	0.0	0.0
Race/ethnicity		
White	0.0	0.0
Black	8.3	3.0
Hispanic	3.3	0.0
Other	25.0	25.0
Seriousness of offense		
Most serious	9.5	4.1
More serious	4.2	0.0
Less serious	16.7	10.4
Least serious	6.5	2.2
Missing	0.0	0.0
Risk level		
Low	16.7	**16.7**
Medium	10.8	**4.3**
High	3.4	**0.0**
Missing	2.5	0.0
Borough		
Bronx	12.0	6.0
Brooklyn	14.3	2.9
Manhattan	0.0	0.0
Queens	0.0	0.0
Staten Island	8.3	4.2
Time in AIM		
Less than 9 months	15.2	7.6
9 months or more	6.1	2.0
Time with mentor (hours per week)		
Less than 9 hours	9.1	5.5
9 hours or more	13.5	5.4

Notes: *N* = 168. Criminal Court findings only for those with a NYSID (34.5 percent of the sample). Therefore, some conditional discharges and lower-level offenses may be unknowingly excluded. ACDs are not counted as a conviction or adjudication. Several cells have a sample size less than 5; interpret statistical significance with caution.

*Percentages in bold are significant at $p < .1$.

Appendix B. Goal Attainment Analysis Methodology

Data Collection Methodology[13]

The AIM goal attainment data collection tool was completed using all AIM participants enrolled between 2012 and 2015. It was developed in collaboration with DOP borough directors, supervising probation officers, and the DOP research team; Urban staff reviewed the tool before data collection but were not involved in its development. It was clear that many components of the AIM program are not currently being tracked by DOP's case management systems. For example, the individual service plan that is put in place by providers for every AIM youth, and the attainment of the goals set forth in that plan, are not captured. It was understood that these components are collected in various paper file sources, and DOP sought to compile this information into one database.

DOP researchers reviewed a representative sample of court reports and transition plans for AIM to identify the types of information and consistent with the research questions to be answered by the evaluation. Following completion of the document review, DOP researchers provided the site directors and probation officers with an initial draft of the data collection tool for their review and feedback.

After review of the initial draft of the tool, DOP researchers clarified definitions of variables with the site directors and probation officers. For example, successful completion of the AIM program was defined as an exit from the program within six to nine months **and** active participation in AIM activities and engagement with their mentor; this is consistent with the implementation findings. Additionally, the site directors requested the inclusion of certain variables, such as living circumstances of the youth, to examine how a youth's home situation affected their participation in AIM. In response to the new definitions and additional variables, and to fill any information gaps that court and transition reports could not provide, DOP researchers decided to use additional sources of information, including DOP's case management system, Caseload Explorer, and a system used directly by the providers, DOP Connect.

DOP researchers completed a final draft of the AIM data collection tool and submitted it to the working group for final review. Research staff developed steps for recoding information in the tool and trained other staff (n = 3), who assisted in entering data, to ensure uniformity in data entry. Data entry, recoding, and analysis, took approximately three months, between March and June 2017. Data for 202 participants were found and entered.

TABLE B.1

AIM Data Collection Variable List, Definitions, and Sources

Variable name	Definition	Source(s)
Last Name/First Name	Youth name	ATP database
RIN	Respondent Identifier Number	ATP database
Docket	Docket number	ATP database
Borough	Youth's borough	ATP database
Report status of youth	Type(s) of reports available for the youth	AIM report repository
Number of advocates	Number of AIM advocates with which youth was assigned	AIM court report(s)
Average number of hours with mentor	Number of hours youth was recorded as spending with their mentor	AIM court report(s)
Length of time on AIM	Number of months youth spent in the AIM program	AIM court reports and/or transition plan
Status of AIM completion	*Successful*: Youth exited program within 6–9 months AND was an active participant in activities *Unsuccessful:* Youth exited program due to a violation, being remanded, resentenced to different level of probation or placement, and/or removed from program due to lack of engagement *Ongoing:* Youth's participation has been lengthened, and/or was returned to AIM program *Other:* Outcome other than those above	AIM court reports, Caseload Explorer event notes
Prior or current ACS/Child Welfare case	Marked if youth has a prior case, current case, or both a prior and current case with ACS. If this information cannot be determined based on reports, unknown/NA was marked	AIM court reports, Investigation Report (I&R), Caseload Explorer event notes
Top YLS/CMI risk/needs	YLS/CMI risk and need categories were marked if the category was scored as high risk	AIM court reports, Caseload Explorer assessments
Goal areas	Goals were determined through review of the AIM court reports, the ISP, and the transition plan (where applicable)	AIM court reports, individual service plan (ISP), AIM transition plan
Individual service plan developed	Marked if the youth had an ISP completed for them	Caseload Explorer documents
Family marked as goal	Marked if family was checked as a goal for youth	AIM court reports, ISP
Living circumstances	Youth's current living circumstances: e.g., homeless, staying in shelter, staying with extended family or nonfamily members, living with their family; if this information is not known, unknown/NA was marked	AIM court reports

Variable name	Definition	Source(s)
Education marked as goal	Marked if education was checked as a goal for youth	AIM court reports, ISP
Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed/IEP completed when	Yes/No indicator if the youth had an IEP developed either before AIM, during AIM, or after AIM involvement Flag for when the IEP was completed: either before AIM, during AIM, post-AIM, or both pre-AIM and updated post-AIM * Not all youth needed an IEP created/updated	AIM court reports, I&R, ISP
Youth in special education/when special education designation made	Yes/No indicator if the youth has a special education designation Flag for when the youth was diagnosed for special education designation: pre-AIM, during AIM, after AIM, or if this information is not known	AIM court reports, I&R, ISP
Youth's current school	Youth's current school	AIM court reports, I&R, Caseload Explorer event notes
Number of schools attended	The total number of schools the youth has attended (determined through review of available documentation)	AIM court reports, I&R, Caseload Explorer event notes, AIM transition plan
School attendance before/during AIM	*Rarely/never attended:* Youth attended school 1–2 times a week (and stayed in school the whole time) *Occasionally attended:* Youth attended school 2–3 days and left early without reason at least once a week *Often attended:* Youth attended school most days of the week, and may have left early without reason once a week *Always attended:* Youth attended school every day of the week *Not enrolled before AIM:* Youth is not currently enrolled in school *Not currently enrolled in school:* Youth is not enrolled in school during AIM	AIM court reports, I&R, Caseload Explorer event notes

Variable name	Definition	Source(s)
Educational improvements	Multiple items can be checked for this question *Improved school attendance:* Frequency of youth's attendance increased and/or youth consistently attended and stayed in school *Improved school performance:* Youth demonstrated marked improvements in coursework *Positive interactions with teachers/administrators:* Noted improvements in behavior toward teachers/school officials *Positive interactions with students:* Noted improvements in behavior toward other students *No improvements:* No identifiable or verifiable improvements in any of the above areas	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan, other court documentation (e.g., letters from school/school administration)
Alternative plans for addressing school/education needs (multiple options)	*Obtain GED:* Documented goal of obtaining GED and/or documented enrollment in GED program *Refer youth to job training program:* Documented referral to job training program and/or documented enrollment in job training program *Refer youth to vocational school:* Documented referral to vocational school and/or documented enrollment in vocational school *Enroll in school:* Documented plan to enroll youth in school *Other:* Documented alternative plan other than the above options *Unknown/NA:* No documented plan for addressing school/education needs	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan
Participation in job training (multiple options)	*Referred to job training program:* Documented referral to job training program *Attends(ed) job training program(s):* Documented participation in job training program(s) *Successful completion of job training program:* Documented completion of job training program *Unsuccessful completion of job training program:* Documented unsuccessful completion of job training program *Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP):* Documented participation or enrollment in SYEP *YouthWrap:* Documented participation or enrollment in YouthWrap *No response:* No response or no involvement in employment activities during AIM	AIM court reports, Caseload Explorer event notes, AIM transition plan

Variable name	Definition	Source(s)
Substance abuse marked as goal	Marked if substance abuse was checked as a goal for youth	AIM court reports, ISP
Youth participated in substance abuse awareness program	Marked if the youth has documented participation in a substance abuse awareness program	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan
Substance abuse awareness program	Name of the substance abuse awareness program	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan, Caseload Explorer event notes
Youth participated in substance abuse treatment/prevention program	Marked if youth has documented participation in a substance abuse prevention and/or treatment program	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan
Substance abuse treatment/prevention program	Name of substance abuse treatment/prevention program	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan, Caseload Explorer event notes
Mental health marked as goal	Marked if mental health was checked as a goal for youth	AIM court reports, ISP
Mental health diagnoses	List of any official mental health diagnoses	AIM court reports, I&R, ISP
Mental health treatment provider/program	Name of mental health treatment provider/program	AIM court reports, ISP
Youth involved in volunteer or public service work	Marked if youth has documented involvement in volunteer activities and/or public service projects/work	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan
Prosocial/recreational activities	List of up to five prosocial and/or recreational activities (e.g., basketball, church programs, after-school activities)	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan
Type of prosocial support (multiple options available)	People who are consistently present in the youth's life and actively engage with the youth and their activities	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan, Caseload Explorer event notes
Level of prosocial support	*No/Low:* Youth only has one support person, and/or is not engaged with their support network (e.g. mentor attempts to reach youth, and youth consistently ignores mentor, refuses to attend activities, and disengaged with family/peers) *Moderate:* Youth is actively engaged with at least two prosocial supports *High:* Youth is actively engaged with at least two to three prosocial supports (e.g., mother and mentor), and supports take an active role in the youth's programming, and ensuring youth attends program activities	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan, Caseload Explorer event notes

Variable name	Definition	Source(s)
Level of motivation to change	*Low:* Youth has minimal to no engagement with mentor and/or program activities *Moderate:* Youth attends some program activities, generally is an active participant in activities/programming, but may disengage at times (and later re-engages) *High:* Youth attends most program activities, is an active participant in activities, and actively engages with their mentor	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan, Caseload Explorer event notes
Outcome if not successful in AIM	Youth's outcome if they were removed from or exited the AIM program unsuccessfully	AIM court reports, Caseload Explorer event notes
Plan developed after completion of AIM	Yes/No flag for whether a youth has a plan following their completion of the AIM program[a]	AIM transition plan, Caseload Explorer documents
Goal attainment/goals in process	Goal attainment and goals in process are described in the AIM court reports and/or AIM transition plans as either being successfully completed or in progress/continuing (with action steps)	AIM court reports, AIM transition plan

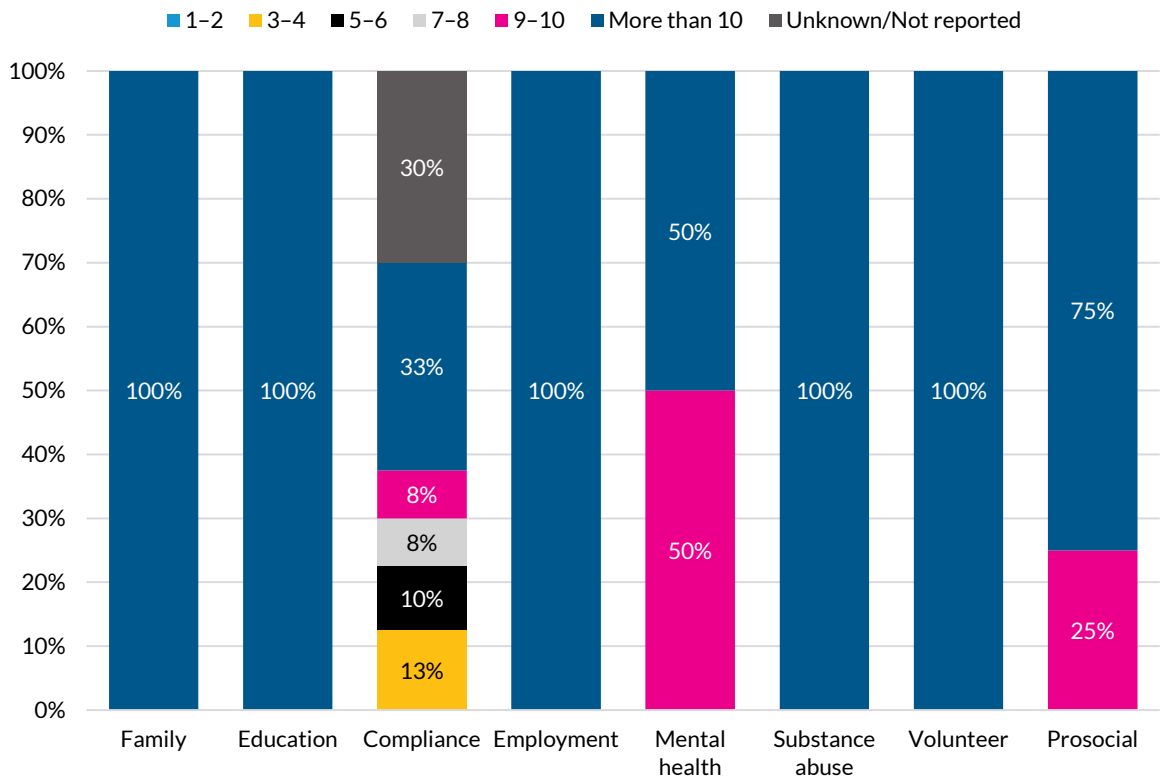
[a] All youth who successfully complete the program should have an AIM transition plan. Unsuccessful youth may have a plan in their documentation, but not always.

Appendix C. Goal Attainment for Unsuccessful Program Completers

FIGURE C.1

Goal Attainment by Number of Hours with AIM Mentor(s)

Unsuccessful program completers



Appendix D. Description of YLS/CMI Domains

Domain name	Definition
Attitudes and orientation	Offenders are more likely to recidivate if their attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs justify harmful behaviors that result in illegal activities. These attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs include minimizing the consequences of their actions, blaming others, desiring control and power over others, having a sense of entitlement, etc. Offenders with attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs that put them at risk for illegal behavior often view the world as being unfair, which can lead them to rationalize stealing or hurting others, or they may believe that the world is a place where only aggressive people survive. Offenders who do not engage in justifications or make excuses for their behavior, who try to act responsibly toward others, who respect society's laws and rules and think that they are mostly fair, and who regret their past illegal behavior are more likely to steer away from crime or delinquency.
Peer relations	Associates can have a considerable influence on offenders' behavior. Prosocial associates can discourage illegal behavior and reward prosocial conduct, while antisocial associates can both encourage criminal or delinquent conduct and reward it. Having meaningful relationships with prosocial associates reduces the likelihood that individuals will commit future illegal acts. Offenders with many antisocial associates are more likely to remain entrenched in a life of crime or delinquent behavior.
Personality/behavior	Many higher-risk offenders are impulsive and take risks, acting with little thought of the consequences. They can be impatient, easily bored, and easily angered. They typically have one or more significant skill deficits, such as problem solving, coping, or demonstrating appropriate social skills. As a result, their lives are frequently unstable, and they tend to make poor choices. Offenders who have self-management skills, who think before acting, who consider the consequences of their actions, and who are skilled problem solvers are at less risk to reoffend.
Family circumstances/parenting	Family members or intimate partner relationships can be risk factors for offenders if ▪ these relationships are marked by high levels and protracted periods of stress and conflict (e.g., tension; arguments; physical/sexual, or emotional abuse); ▪ there is neglect and avoidance (e.g., individuals do not feel cared for or supported); or ▪ family members and intimate partners engage in illegal or otherwise destabilizing behaviors or supportive of antisocial attitudes For youth, family can be additionally problematic if caregivers provide little supervision or are harsh or inconsistent in their discipline. On the other hand, family and intimate partners can be strengths if they are readily accessible, emotionally and physically supportive, warm, encouraging, interested in offenders' well-being, prosocial role models, and accountable to one other.

Domain name	Definition
Substance abuse	Offenders who have substance abuse disorders are at a higher risk to recidivate than offenders who do not. The instability that tends to result from substance abuse weakens ties with prosocial family members, intimate partners, and friends and often encourages ties with antisocial people. The instability also makes it difficult to pursue education or maintain employment. Without a legitimate source of income, offenders may turn to illegal behavior. The tendency of substance abusers to become impulsive and erratic and to do things under the influence of alcohol or drugs that they might not otherwise do increases the chances that they will reoffend. In addition, the use of drugs and the underage use of alcohol are illegal behaviors in and of themselves.
Education	Offenders who have successful educational experiences have the opportunity to develop social and life skills that can help them succeed and nurture relationships with prosocial others (e.g., teachers, classmates, coaches, tutors). On the other hand, offenders who lack educational success may find it difficult to obtain legitimate, satisfying work that provides a living wage. This may contribute to an inability to support themselves, a lack of self-efficacy, and other negative consequences.
Employment	Offenders who are gainfully employed recidivate less often than offenders who are not. If offenders have stable employment and take satisfaction in their work, they will have the opportunity to develop social and life skills that can help them succeed; nurture relationships with prosocial others (e.g., supervisors, coworkers); foster prosocial attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs; and garner the resources to support themselves and their families. On the other hand, offenders who lack stable, legitimate employment may not experience these benefits, often have a great deal of unscheduled and/or unproductive time, and may be vulnerable to antisocial or illegal activity.
Leisure/recreation	If offenders spend their free time engaged in rewarding activities with prosocial people, they are likely to have a positive sense of themselves and be exposed to prosocial ways of thinking and behaving, such as cooperating, demonstrating self-control, and problem solving effectively. Offenders who have a great deal of unstructured free time are more likely to be bored or drawn to antisocial people and/or illegal activities.

Source: Case Planning Handbook—YLS/CMI Version (April 2015). Handbook developed by the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the Carey Group under the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES), Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

Notes

[2] In the NYC Family Court system, if youth—between the ages of 7 and 15—are found guilty of a Juvenile Delinquent (JD) offense, they are adjudicated (found to be) a JD. In certain instances (e.g., violent felonies), a youth—either 13, 14, or 15 years of age—may be tried in Criminal Court, and if found guilty, is adjudicated as a Juvenile Offender (JO). Currently, in New York State, if a youth is 16 years of age, they are tried as an adult and, if eligible, designated (adjudicated) with Youthful Offender (YO) status.

[3] In April 2017, DOP revised the PEAK model to include a drop-in center component and during the transition is not accepting ATP enrollments.

[4] Originally, AIM was implemented in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens.

[5] NYC DOP and NYC Opportunity. 2011. AIM (Advocate, Intervene, Mentor) Program Concept Paper. http://www.nyc.gov/html/prob/downloads/pdf/aim_concept_paper.pdf.

[6] The Office of the Corporation Counsel is New York City's Law Department. The Family Court division of Corporation Counsel is responsible for identifying and prosecuting juvenile delinquency cases.

[7] Table 5 indicates that only 30 percent of participants were unsuccessful in completing AIM. However, table 6 indicates that 33 percent of participants were in placement at the completion of the program. The 3 percent discrepancy between out-of-home placement and unsuccessful completion can be explained through the "other" category in table 5 in which youth were warranted or awaiting out-of-state transfer.

[8] The goal attainment analysis used a shorter enrollment period to examine outcomes than was used for the out-of-home placement and justice involvement outcomes. As a result, the population is slightly smaller.

[9] Goals described as "in process" were marked as in progress or continuing and had accompanying action steps in the AIM court reports or transition plans.

[10] If it does not create a hardship for participants to report to their probation officer, youth living outside the catchment area may be enrolled in AIM, with conditions. There is no cross-borough assignment. The decision to recommend youth to AIM is made in consultation with the ATP assessor, AIM program manager, and program director in the designated borough.

[11] Two ATP programs, JJI and Esperanza, allow program clinicians to meet with prospective participants before their acceptance into the program. This is because parents or guardians must agree to open a preventive ACS case for the youth to participate in one of the programs.

[12] Through a partnership with Community Connections for Youth, a nonprofit in New York City, DOP implements the Parent Peer Support Program. The program provides parents of justice-involved youth peer mentors to help guide and support families while their children are involved in the juvenile justice system. The peer mentors connect parents to services such as support groups and family strengthening programming and are on call to help families if they experience any emergencies.

[13] Methodology developed by NYC DOP and reviewed by Urban.

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