

# ***NORTH CAROLINA SENTENCING AND POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION***

## **JUVENILE DELINQUENT POPULATION PROJECTIONS *FISCAL YEAR 2006/07 to FISCAL YEAR 2010/11***

**Prepared in Conjunction with  
The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

North Carolina General Statutes 164-40(b) and 164-42.1(b) direct the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission (NCSPAC) to prepare annual projections of the juvenile delinquent population and help assess North Carolina's long-term resource needs for juvenile dispositions. The following analysis is based on 7,874 FY 2005/06 juvenile delinquent dispositions extracted from NC-JOIN, the management information system of the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP).

### **ASSUMPTIONS**

- The projections assume a one percent annual growth in the rate of delinquent adjudications over the five-year projection period. This estimate is based on projections for North Carolina's youth population and several juvenile justice indicators. Population projections prepared by North Carolina's State Demographics unit show that the juvenile population (age 6 – 15) in North Carolina is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 1.6% over the next six years.<sup>1</sup> Although the youth population has been growing and is projected to continue to grow, recent data show declining trends in juvenile crime and delinquent complaints.<sup>2</sup>
- The five-year projections assume no change in judicial or prosecutorial behavior.
- Over the projection period, the rates of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 dispositions for juveniles adjudicated delinquent are assumed to match the rates during FY 2005/06 (69.6%, 27.0%, and 3.4%, respectively).
- Youth development center (YDC) length of stay is assumed to match the average length of stay by offense level for juveniles released during FY 2005/06. All juveniles released in this period were adjudicated delinquent under the 1998 reform to North Carolina's Juvenile Code.<sup>3</sup> The average length of stay was 18 months for juveniles adjudicated

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.demog.state.nc.us](http://www.demog.state.nc.us)

<sup>2</sup> There has been a decline in the rate of delinquent complaints since the late 1990s. In FY 1996/97 the rate of delinquent complaints was 54 per 1,000 juveniles compared to a rate of 35.2 in FY 2005/06. Criminal complaints (Class A-I felonies and Class A1-3 misdemeanors) decreased 1.2% from CY 2004 to CY 2005. (Source: DJJDP.) In addition, the State Bureau of Investigation reports that from 2001 to 2005, there was a 21% drop in overall arrests for index crimes committed by juveniles under the age of 16. (Source: *Crime in North Carolina-2005 Annual Summary Report of Uniform Crime Reporting Data*, NC Department of Justice, State Bureau of Investigation, [www.sbi2.jus.state.nc.us/crp/public/default.htm](http://www.sbi2.jus.state.nc.us/crp/public/default.htm))

<sup>3</sup> The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1998 applies to all offenses committed on or after July 1, 1999.

delinquent for a violent offense, 12 months for juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a serious offense, and 11 months for juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a minor offense. The average length of stay for juveniles committed to YDC due to a technical violation of post-release supervision was 10 months.

- Over the projection period, the proportion of admissions to YDCs resulting from technical violations of probation will match the proportion found during FY 2005/06 (35.7%).

**PROJECTED JUVENILE DELINQUENT POPULATIONS**

Producing the final resource projections is a two-stage process: 1) the “reality check” stage and 2) the projection stage. In the “reality check” stage, the reliability of the data (*e.g.*, commitment rates, revocation rates, length of stay, etc.) is tested using the model to produce the current admissions to YDCs. In essence, the model is used to reproduce today’s reality. Once the model successfully approximates current YDC admissions, the second stage of the process begins. In the second stage, growth rates for the number of juvenile delinquent adjudications and stock population data are added to the model, producing the five-year population projection.

Table 1 shows the projected Level 3 resource needs over the five-year projection period.<sup>4</sup> Level 3 resource needs are projected to increase slightly over the projection period, with a projected need for 480 YDC beds by June 2007 and 518 YDC beds by June 2011. YDC population as of July 1, 2006, was 457. As of January 1, 2007, the YDC population was 458.<sup>5</sup>

**TABLE 1  
LEVEL 3 RESOURCE PROJECTIONS: FY 2006/07 – 2010/11  
JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

<b>Fiscal Year Ending</b>	<b>CURRENT Level 3: Commitment</b>	<b>PREVIOUS Level 3: Commitment</b>
<b>2007</b>	480	461
<b>2008</b>	492	470
<b>2009</b>	496	472
<b>2010</b>	503	480
<b>2011</b>	518	N/A

SOURCE: FY 2004/05 and FY 2005/06 Disposition Simulation Data, NC-JOIN/NCSPAC

<sup>4</sup> Table 1 does not present available capacity for Level 3 dispositional resources.

<sup>5</sup> YDC population figures include juveniles on-campus and off-campus (*e.g.*, home visit, community commitment, hospitalization, escape).

### *Changes from Previous Projections*

The simulation model used to produce resource projections relies on historical data and other empirical information about how juveniles are processed through the juvenile justice system. Changes in the system that affect the number of YDC admissions, the number of YDC releases, or the YDC length of stay – all critical factors in projecting YDC population – directly impact the accuracy of the projections. While current data indicate that there continue to be fluctuations in these three factors, there are early indications that the system is reaching a post-reform point of stabilization. It is important to note, however, that the system is largely policy-driven and any change in policy and/or practice with regard to the use of dispositional resources greatly influences the accuracy of the resource projections.

The following section highlights YDC statistics showing the year-to-year variations in several key components used in the simulation model.

- ***YDC Admissions*** – From CY 2002 to CY 2005, there has been a 29% decrease in the number of YDC admissions. (See Table 2.) As intended by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1998, much of the initial decrease in YDC admissions can be attributed to the fact that juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a Class 1, Class 2 or Class 3 misdemeanor, except under certain rare conditions, cannot be committed to a YDC. Pre-reform, misdemeanor offenders accounted for about 40% of annual admissions to YDCs. By 2006, they accounted for 6% of annual admissions. There has been a 14% increase in the number of YDC admissions in CY 2006 when compared to CY 2005.
- ***YDC Terminations*** – From CY 2002 to CY 2005, terminations decreased by 35%. (See Table 2.) Terminations have also exceeded admissions for each of those years. CY 2006 is the first year with more admissions than terminations, an average of 41 admissions and 38 terminations per month.

While recent data appear to show that there may be some stabilization between admissions and terminations, it is important to note that the number of admissions and terminations is extremely sensitive to changes in policies and practices. These trends will continue to be monitored to help assess the accuracy of the resource projections.

**TABLE 2**  
**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER (YDC) ADMISSIONS AND TERMINATIONS**  
**JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

Calendar Year	YDC Admissions	Average Number of Admissions Per Month	YDC Terminations	Average Number of Terminations Per Month
2002	605	50	683	57
2003	479	40	549	46
2004	489	41	526	44
2005	428	36	441	37
2006	486	41	459	38

SOURCE: North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- YDC Length of Stay** – In FY 2004/05, there appeared to be indications that length of stay may be stabilizing for the largest group of juveniles entering YDCs – those adjudicated delinquent for a serious offense. (See Table 3.) However, that trend did not continue in FY 2005/06. For juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a serious offense, who represented 66% of YDC admissions in FY 2005/06, the average length of stay has increased almost two months when compared to FY 2004/05. The average length of stay for juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a violent offense steadily decreased from FY 2001/02 through FY 2004/05 with an additional decrease of almost four months in FY 2005/06. For juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a minor offense, the average length of stay has fluctuated with slight increases and decreases over time with an increase of almost 3 months from FY 2004/05 to FY 2005/06.

**TABLE 3**  
**AVERAGE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER (YDC) LENGTH OF STAY FOR**  
**RELEASED JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

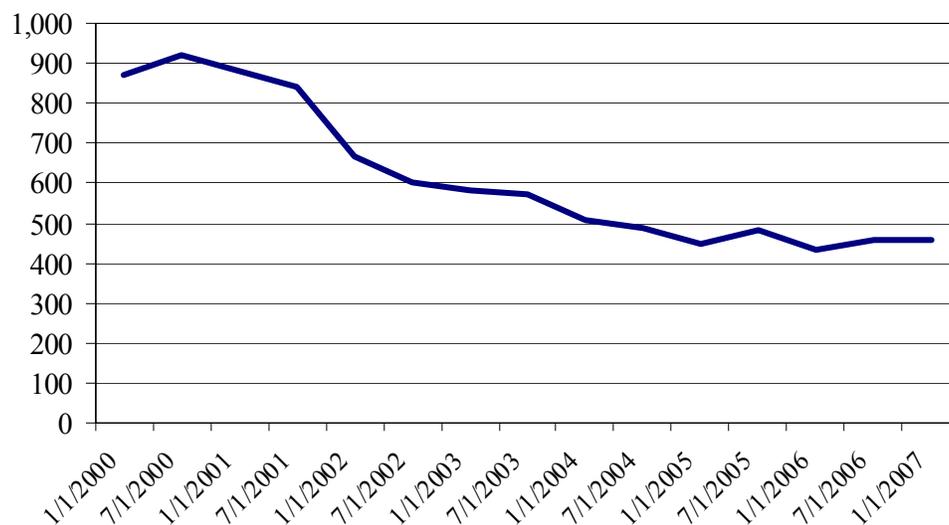
Year	Average YDC Length of Stay (Months) for Juveniles Adjudicated of a:			
	Violent Offense	Serious Offense	Minor Offense	Overall
FY 2001/02	24.9	12.1	7.0	N/A
FY 2002/03	23.3	10.4	9.1	N/A
CY 2004	21.0	10.0	7.0	13.3
FY 2004/05	21.4	10.2	8.3	12.9
FY 2005/06	17.6	11.8	11.2	13.2

NOTE: Beginning in CY 2004, the first complete year of data was available on DJJDP's NC-JOIN permitting methodological changes that enhanced the quality and reliability of the data.

SOURCE: North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, Disposition Simulation Data and North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- **YDC Resident Population**– The resident population or “stock” is the number of juveniles residing in YDCs at the beginning of the projection period, which is July 1, 2006, for the current projection. “Stock” population is an important component of the model as it represents the starting point of the projection. The model simulates releases for the “stock” population while simultaneously processing YDC admissions to ultimately produce the population projections. As a result of the recent trend showing terminations outpacing admissions, the YDC population has generally declined since July 2000. (See Figure 1.)

**FIGURE 1**  
**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER (YDC) POPULATION TRENDS**  
**JANUARY 2000 – JANUARY 2007**



SOURCE: North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

## DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Table 4 shows the distribution of the 7,874 delinquent cases by the offense level of the most serious adjudicated offense and the delinquency history level of the juvenile adjudicated. The majority of cases (n=3,956 or 50%) involved a juvenile with a low delinquency history level adjudicated for a minor offense (Class 1, 2, or 3 misdemeanor).

In applying the dispositional chart, the court imposed commitment to a YDC in 3.4% of the cases, ordered Level 2 (Intermediate) dispositions in 27.0% of the cases, and ordered the remaining 69.6% of the cases to Level 1 (Community) dispositions. (See Table 5.) Table 6 combines the information contained in Table 4 and Table 5, showing how judges used dispositional resources given each combination of offense level and delinquency history level. These data form the basis of the five-year resource projections. As a special note related to the use of dispositional resources by the chart, and to the accuracy of the projections in general, there were 682 cases (8.7%) involving a disposition not specified by the dispositional chart. However, it must be noted that certain provisions of the juvenile code allow a judge to impose a disposition

other than those specified by the chart. Under G.S. 7B-2508(e), judges may find “extraordinary needs” and impose a lower level disposition. Under G.S. 7B-2508(g), juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a Minor offense with four or more prior adjudications may be committed to a YDC. Finally, under G.S. 7B-2508(d), juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a Minor offense with a previous Level 3 disposition may be committed to a YDC.

**TABLE 4  
DISTRIBUTION OF CASES BY OFFENSE LEVEL AND  
DELINQUENCY HISTORY LEVEL  
JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

OFFENSE LEVEL	DELINQUENCY HISTORY LEVEL			TOTAL
	Low 0 – 1 pt	Medium 2 – 3 pts	High 4+ pts	
<b>Violent</b>	166 (66.2%)	36 (14.3%)	49 (19.5%)	251 (3.2%)
<b>Serious</b>	1,540 (61.6%)	496 (19.9%)	463 (18.5%)	2,499 (31.7%)
<b>Minor</b>	3,956 (77.2%)	734 (14.3%)	434 (8.5%)	5,124 (65.1%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	5,662 (71.9%)	1,266 (16.1%)	946 (12.0%)	7,874 (100.0%)

SOURCE: FY 2005/06 Disposition Simulation Data, NC-JOIN/NCSPAC

**TABLE 5  
DISTRIBUTION OF CASES BY OFFENSE LEVEL AND DISPOSITION LEVEL  
JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

OFFENSE LEVEL	DISPOSITION LEVEL			TOTAL
	Level 1: Community	Level 2: Intermediate	Level 3: Commitment	
<b>Violent</b>	61 (24.3%)	122 (48.6%)	68 (27.1%)	251 (3.2%)
<b>Serious</b>	1,163 (46.5%)	1,162 (46.5%)	174 (7.0%)	2,499 (31.7%)
<b>Minor</b>	4,256 (83.1%)	845 (16.5%)	23 (0.4%)	5,124 (65.1%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	5,480 (69.6%)	2,129 (27.0%)	265 (3.4%)	7,874 (100.0%)

SOURCE: FY 2005/06 Disposition Simulation Data, NC-JOIN/NCSPAC

**TABLE 6  
DISTRIBUTION OF CASES BY THE DISPOSITIONAL CHART  
JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

OFFENSE LEVEL	DELINQUENCY HISTORY LEVEL			TOTAL
	Low 0-1 Point	Medium 2-3 Points	High 4+ Points	
<b>Violent</b> (Class A - Class E)	<u>Level 2/Level 3</u> Level 1: 51 (30.7%) Level 2: 95 (57.2%) Level 3: 20 (12.1%) n = 166	<u>Level 3</u> Level 1: 8 (22.2%) Level 2: 18 (50.0%) Level 3: 10 (27.8%) n = 36	<u>Level 3</u> Level 1: 2 (4.1%) Level 2: 9 (18.4%) Level 3: 38 (77.5%) n = 49	Level 1: 61 (24.3%) Level 2: 122 (48.6%) Level 3: 68 (27.1%) n = 251 (3.2%)
<b>Serious</b> (Class F - Class A1)	<u>Level 1/Level 2</u> Level 1: 914 (59.4%) Level 2: 624 (40.5%) Level 3: 2 (0.1%) n = 1,540	<u>Level 2</u> Level 1: 169 (34.1%) Level 2: 323 (65.1%) Level 3: 4 (0.8%) n = 496	<u>Level 2/Level 3</u> Level 1: 80 (17.3%) Level 2: 215 (46.4%) Level 3: 168 (36.3%) n = 463	Level 1: 1,163 (46.5%) Level 2: 1,162 (46.5%) Level 3: 174 (7.0%) n = 2,499 (31.7%)
<b>Minor</b> (Class 1 - Class 3)	<u>Level 1</u> Level 1: 3,764 (95.2%) Level 2: 192 (4.8%) Level 3: 0 (0.0%) n = 3,956	<u>Level 1/Level 2</u> Level 1: 368 (50.2%) Level 2: 365 (49.7%) Level 3: 1 (0.1%) n = 734	<u>Level 2</u> Level 1: 124 (28.6%) Level 2: 288 (66.3%) Level 3: 22 (5.1%) n = 434	Level 1: 4,256 (83.1%) Level 2: 845 (16.5%) Level 3: 23 (0.4%) n = 5,124 (65.1%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	Level 1: 4,729 (83.5%) Level 2: 911 (16.1%) Level 3: 22 (0.4%) n = 5,662 (71.9%)	Level 1: 545 (43.0%) Level 2: 706 (55.8%) Level 3: 15 (1.2%) n = 1,266 (16.1%)	Level 1: 206 (21.8%) Level 2: 512 (54.1%) Level 3: 228 (24.1%) n = 946 (12.0%)	Level 1: 5,480 (69.6%) Level 2: 2,129 (27.0%) Level 3: 265 (3.4%) n = 7,874 (100.0%)

SOURCE: FY 2005/06 Disposition Simulation Data, NC-JOIN/NCSPAC

**NOTE:** In FY 2005/06, there were 682 cases (8.7%) involving a disposition not specified by the dispositional chart. However, it must be noted that certain provisions of the juvenile code allow a judge to impose a disposition other than those specified by the chart. Under G.S. 7B-2508(e), judges may find “extraordinary needs” and impose a lower level disposition. Under G.S. 7B-2508(g), juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a Minor offense with four or more prior adjudications may be committed to a YDC. Finally, under G.S. 7B-2508(d), juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a Minor offense with a previous Level 3 disposition may be committed to a YDC.