



North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission

December 2016

Youth Development Center Population Projections: Fiscal Year 2017 to Fiscal Year 2021

Introduction

North Carolina General Statutes §§ 164-40(b) and 164-42.1(b) direct the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission to develop a computerized simulation model to be used to prepare Youth Development Center (YDC) population projections and to help assess North Carolina's long-term resource needs for juvenile dispositions. The projections are prepared in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety's Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice (DACJJ). The computer simulation model used to project the juvenile population relies on empirical information about how juveniles are processed through the juvenile justice system using data extracted from the North Carolina Juvenile Online Information Network (NC-JOIN), DACJJ's juvenile management information system.

Two juvenile populations are used to complete the YDC population projections.¹ The Sentencing Commission prepares YDC population projections for all juveniles adjudicated delinquent and disposed on or after July 1, 2016 (new population) and for all juveniles committed to a YDC as of June 30, 2016 (YDC stock population), the beginning of the current projection period. The final combined projections take into account the decline of the committed stock population and the buildup of the new YDC population (new YDC commitments that occur through the imposition of a Level 3 disposition or as a result of revocations of probation or post-release supervision).

Changes in the juvenile justice system that affect the number of YDC admissions, the number of YDC releases, or the YDC length of stay (LOS) – all critical factors in projecting the YDC population – directly impact the accuracy of the projections. Shifts in policy and/or practice with regard to the use of dispositional resources may also impact the accuracy of the projections.

Youth Development Center Population Projections and Capacity

Table 1 shows the projected YDC population and capacity over the five-year projection period. YDC capacity for the next five years was provided by DACJJ. Resource needs are expected to increase over the period with a projected need for 249 YDC beds by June 2017 and 266 YDC beds by June 2021.² A comparison of the projections with YDC capacity indicates that the projected YDC population will be above available YDC capacity for all five years of the projection period. The YDC stock population was 251 on June 30, 2016. The YDC population on December 1, 2016 was 202.³

¹ Throughout this document, any reference to the YDC population includes juveniles on-campus and off-campus (e.g., home visit, community commitment, hospitalization, escape).

² Separate housing units are required for male and female juveniles. Of the projected YDC beds needed for each year of the five-year projections, 90% are for males.

³ DACJJ's *Committed Youth Report*.

NORTH CAROLINA SENTENCING AND POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

**Table 1
Youth Development Center Population Projections
December 2016**

**Prepared in Conjunction with the Department of Public Safety's
Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice**

Fiscal Year End	YDC Population as of June 30^a		YDC Capacity^b	Difference between Current Projection and Capacity^c
	Previous Projection	Current Projection		
2017	243	249	246	-3
2018	249	260	246	-14
2019	251	261	246	-15
2020	251	263	246	-17
2021	N/A	266	246	-20

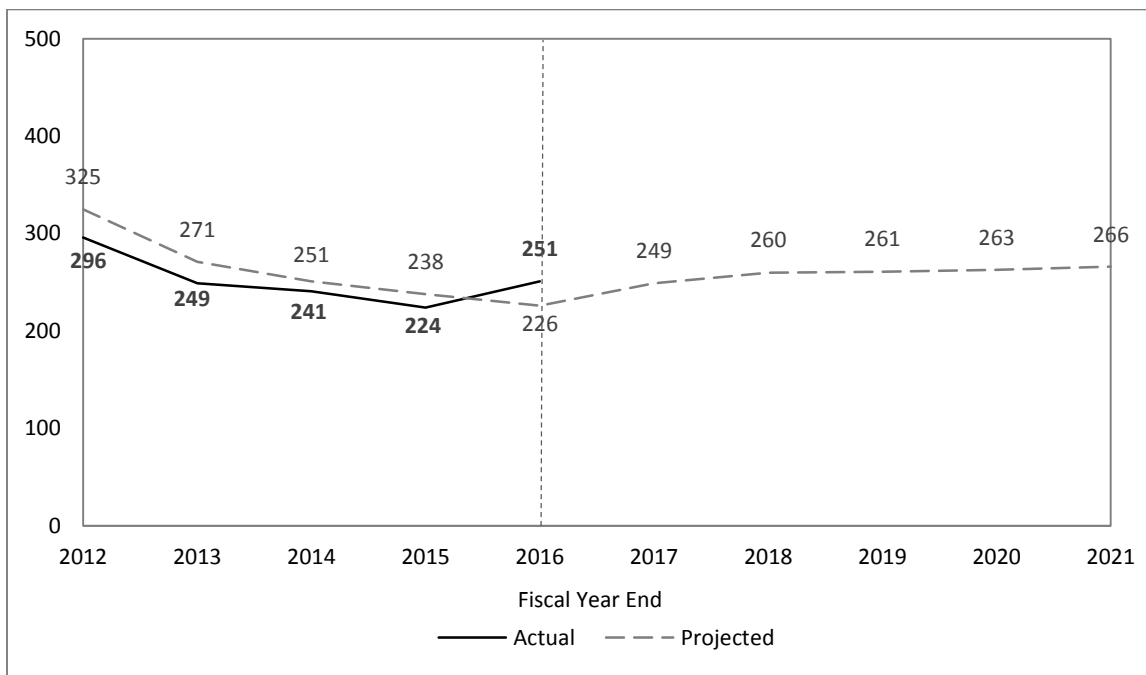
^a These projections include juveniles on-campus and off-campus (e.g., home visit, community commitment, hospitalization, escape).

^b YDC capacity is contingent on staffing patterns in order to meet required ratios. YDC bed capacity does not include community commitment placements or transition step down beds, which are alternatives to YDC placement for some juveniles in this population, for all or part of commitment. Greene Cottage on the Dobbs campus will be available in 2017, which will provide continuity of operations beds in cases of emergency whereby facility staff would relocate with evacuating juveniles.

^c Positive numbers indicate that the current projected population is lower than capacity, while negative numbers indicate that the current projected population is higher than capacity.

Figure 1 illustrates the historical accuracy of the first year of the juvenile resource projections for the previous five projections. The difference between the projected YDC population and the actual YDC population ranged between 10 and 29 beds. The figure also includes the current five-year projections.

Figure 1
Actual and Projected Youth Development Center (YDC) Population



SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission and NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

Assumptions

The projections are based on the following assumptions that were determined using empirical data from the most recent fiscal year (FY 2016):

- Growth Rates:** The projections assume no growth in delinquent dispositions for the first two years and one percent growth for remaining three years of the five-year projection period. The growth rates are based on census projections for North Carolina’s youth population and several juvenile justice indicators. Population projections show that the juvenile population (age 10-15) is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 0.3% over the next five years.⁴ Slow growth in the youth population coupled with recent data showing declining trends in juvenile crime help to inform the growth rate estimates.⁵

⁴ www.demog.state.nc.us (2016).

⁵ In FY 2012, the rate of delinquent complaints was 26 per 1,000 juveniles compared to a rate of 21 in FY 2016, with overall declines noted since the late 1990s (DACJJ). In addition, from CY 2011 to CY 2015 overall arrests for index crimes committed by juveniles under the age of 16 dropped 27%. (*Crime in North Carolina – 2015*, State Bureau of Investigation, <http://crimereporting.ncsbi.gov/>.) Criminal complaints (Class A-I felonies and Class A1-3 misdemeanors) have decreased 19% from FY 2012 to FY 2016 and 5% from FY 2015 to FY 2016 (DACJJ).

- *Level 3 Dispositions:* In FY 2016, 3% of juveniles adjudicated delinquent received a Level 3 disposition (or YDC commitment). Over the projection period, the rate of Level 3 dispositions for juveniles adjudicated delinquent is assumed to match the rate from FY 2016.
- *YDC Length of Stay:* The YDC average LOS was 14 months for all adjudicated juveniles, including juveniles committed to a YDC for a new adjudication or for a technical revocation of probation or post-release supervision. The YDC average LOS for the projection period is assumed to match the average LOS by offense classification for juveniles released during FY 2016.
- *YDC Admission Type:* In FY 2016, 47% of all YDC admissions resulted from a delinquent complaint, 39% from a technical revocation of probation, and 14% from a technical revocation of post-release supervision. The distribution of YDC admissions is assumed to match the distribution from FY 2016. The median lag-time between the imposition of a probation disposition and revocation to a YDC for a technical violation was 10 months. The median lag-time between release from a YDC onto post-release supervision and revocation to a YDC for a technical violation was 4 months.
- *Court Practices and Policy Changes:* The five-year projections assume no change in judicial or prosecutorial behavior. In addition, the projections do not incorporate any potential increases or decreases in the YDC population due to budgetary or policy-driven changes implemented by DACJJ and/or other agencies that provide services for juveniles.

FY 2016 Juvenile Delinquent Dispositions

The Juvenile Disposition Chart (see Table 2) and the empirical data from the latest available fiscal year, in conjunction with the June 30, 2016 stock population, form the basis of the five-year resource projections. This section details information on the 4,614 juveniles with a delinquent disposition in FY 2016, including their offense classification, delinquency history level, and disposition level.⁶

The court's selection of dispositional alternatives is governed by statute through a graduated sanctions chart that classifies juvenile offenders according to the seriousness of their adjudicated offense and the degree and extent of their delinquent history. A Level 1 or community disposition offers the court less restrictive dispositional alternatives (i.e., probation, community-based programs). A Level 2 or intermediate disposition is generally more restrictive than a Level 1 disposition and includes options such as intensive probation, group home placements (e.g., multipurpose group homes), regimented training programs, and house arrest. A Level 3 or commitment disposition provides the most restrictive sanction available to a juvenile court judge – commitment to the DACJJ for placement in a YDC.

⁶ A delinquent disposition is identified from NC-JOIN records as the disposition imposed for the most serious adjudicated offense for a given disposition hearing date during a fiscal year. Using this definition, 10% of the juveniles with a delinquent disposition in FY 2016 were represented in the sample more than once.

**Table 2
Juvenile Disposition Chart**

Offense Classification	Delinquency History Level		
	Low 0-1 Points	Medium 2-3 Points	High 4 or More Points
Violent Class A-E Felonies	Level 2 or 3	Level 3	Level 3
Serious Class F-I Felonies Class A1 Misdemeanors	Level 1 or 2	Level 2	Level 2 or 3
Minor Class 1, 2, 3 Misdemeanors	Level 1	Level 1 or 2	Level 2

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the 4,614 delinquent dispositions by offense classification and delinquency history level. Of the juveniles adjudicated delinquent in FY 2016, 3% were adjudicated for a violent offense, 25% for a serious offense, and 72% for a minor offense.⁷ Further, 71% of the dispositions involved a juvenile with a low delinquency history level, 16% involved a juvenile with a medium delinquency history level, and 13% involved a juvenile with a high delinquency history level.

**Figure 2
Dispositions by Offense Classification and Delinquency History Level
Juveniles Adjudicated Delinquent**

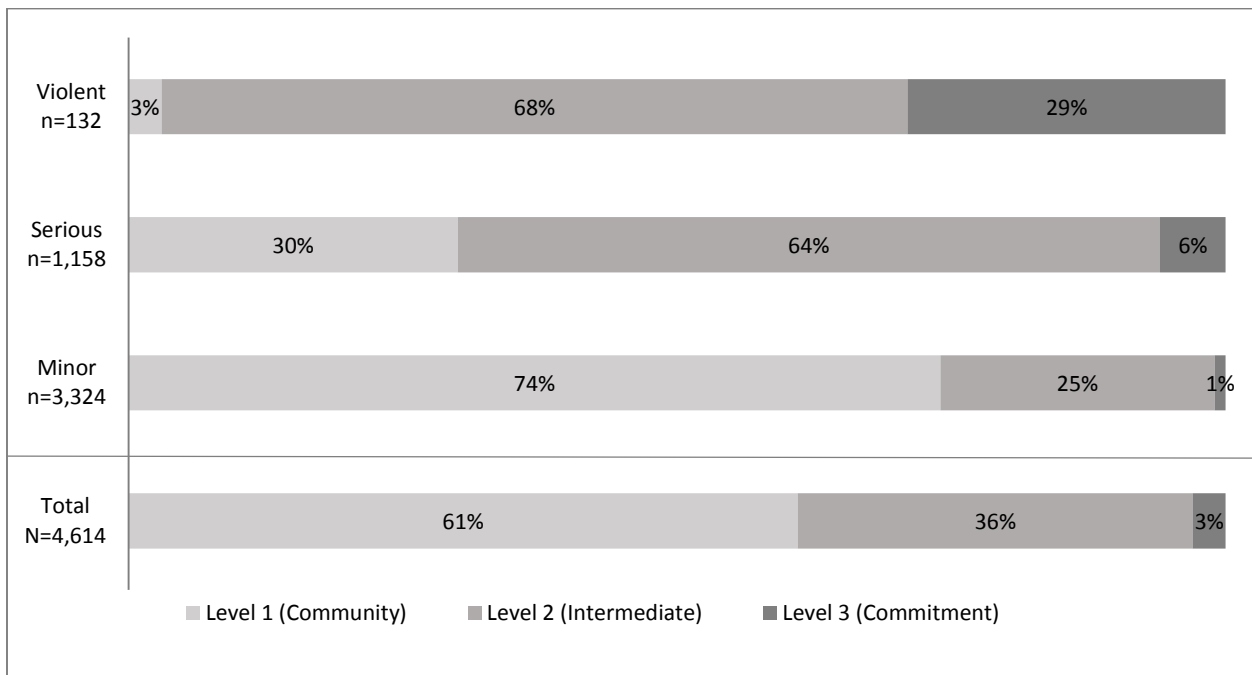


SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2016 Disposition Simulation Data

⁷ Overall, 81% (or n=3,729) of the 4,614 dispositions were for misdemeanor offenses. Of the 1,158 adjudications for a serious offense, 35% (or n=405) were for Class A1 misdemeanor offenses. The remainder were for Class F-I felony offenses.

Figure 3 summarizes dispositions imposed in FY 2016 by offense classification and disposition level. Overall, the court ordered Level 1 dispositions for 61% of the juveniles adjudicated delinquent, Level 2 dispositions for 36% of the juveniles adjudicated delinquent, and Level 3 dispositions for 3% of the juveniles adjudicated delinquent. Juveniles adjudicated for a minor offense were more likely than juveniles adjudicated for a violent offense to receive a Level 1 disposition (74% and 3% respectively), while juveniles adjudicated for a violent offense were more likely than juveniles adjudicated for a minor offense to receive a Level 3 disposition (29% and 1% respectively). Juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a violent or serious offense were nearly equally likely to receive a Level 2 disposition (68% and 64% respectively); juveniles adjudicated for a minor offense were most likely to receive a Level 1 disposition.

Figure 3
Dispositions by Offense Classification and Disposition Level
Juveniles Adjudicated Delinquent



SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2016 Disposition Simulation Data

Table 3 shows how judges used dispositional resources given each combination of offense classification and delinquency history level. As indicated by the vertical “Total” column, the likelihood of the imposition of a Level 3 disposition increased as the seriousness of the offense classification increased (also see Figure 3). Similarly, the likelihood of the imposition of a Level 3 disposition increased as the delinquency history level increased.⁸ Overall, more than half (n=2,452) of the 4,614 juveniles with a delinquent disposition involved a juvenile with a low delinquency history level who was adjudicated for a minor offense (Class 1 – Class 3 misdemeanor).

⁸ There were 152 juveniles (3%) with a disposition not specified by the dispositional chart. These dispositions were used in the projections, as imposed, to ensure the accuracy of the projections.

Table 3
Dispositions by the Dispositional Chart for Juveniles Adjudicated Delinquent

Offense Classification	Delinquency History Level			Total
	Low 0-1 Point	Medium 2-3 Points	High 4+ Points	
Violent Class A-E Felonies	Level 2/Level 3 Level 1: 4 (5%) Level 2: 73 (84%) Level 3: 10 (11%) n = 87	Level 3 Level 2: 12 (63%) Level 3: 7 (37%) n = 19	Level 3 Level 2: 5 (19%) Level 3: 21 (81%) n = 26	Level 2/Level 3 Level 1: 4 (3%) Level 2: 90 (68%) Level 3: 38 (29%) n = 132 (3%)
Serious Class F-I Felonies Class A1 Misdemeanors	Level 1/Level 2 Level 1: 326 (45%) Level 2: 405 (55%) n = 731	Level 2 Level 1: 19 (9%) Level 2: 185 (90%) Level 3: 2 (1%) n = 206	Level 2/Level 3 Level 1: 1 (1%) Level 2: 153 (69%) Level 3: 67 (30%) n = 221	Level 1/Level 2/Level 3 Level 1: 346 (30%) Level 2: 743 (64%) Level 3: 69 (6%) n = 1,158 (25%)
Minor Class 1, 2, 3 Misdemeanors	Level 1 Level 1: 2,376 (97%) Level 2: 76 (3%) n = 2,452	Level 1/Level 2 Level 1: 91 (17%) Level 2: 446 (83%) Level 3: 1 (0%) n = 538	Level 2 Level 1: 7 (2%) Level 2: 302 (90%) Level 3: 25 (8%) n = 334	Level 1/Level 2 Level 1: 2,474 (74%) Level 2: 824 (25%) Level 3: 26 (1%) n = 3,324 (72%)
Total	Level 1/Level 2/Level 3 Level 1: 2,706 (83%) Level 2: 554 (17%) Level 3: 10 (0%) n = 3,270 (71%)	Level 1/Level 2/Level 3 Level 1: 110 (15%) Level 2: 643 (84%) Level 3: 10 (1%) n = 763 (16%)	Level 2/Level 3 Level 1: 8 (1%) Level 2: 460 (79%) Level 3: 113 (20%) n = 581 (13%)	Level 1/Level 2/Level 3 Level 1: 2,824 (61%) Level 2: 1,657 (36%) Level 3: 133 (3%) N = 4,614 (100%)

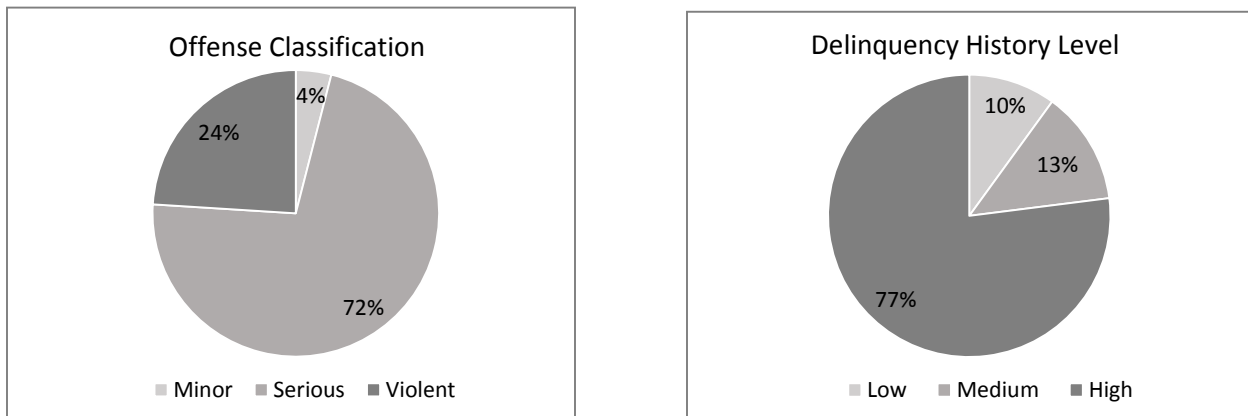
Note: In FY 2016, there were 152 juveniles (or 3%) with a disposition not specified by the dispositional chart. However, it must be noted that certain provisions of the juvenile code allow a judge to impose a disposition other than those specified by the chart. Under G.S. 7B-2508(e), judges may find “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.

SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2016 Disposition Simulation Data

YDC Stock Population on June 30, 2016

The committed population or stock population – which represents the starting point of the projection – is the number of juveniles committed to a YDC as of June 30, 2016, the beginning of the current projection period. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the 251 juveniles committed to a YDC on June 30, 2016 by offense classification and delinquency history level. The majority of the committed juveniles (87%) were adjudicated with a felony as their most serious offense; 24% were adjudicated for a violent offense, 72% for a serious offense, and 4% for a minor offense. Seventy-seven percent of the juveniles had a high delinquency history level, 13% had a medium delinquency history level, and 10% had a low delinquency history level. Overall, 50% were committed to a YDC due to a new delinquent complaint, 41% for a technical revocation of probation, and 9% for a technical revocation of post-release supervision.

Figure 4
YDC Stock Population



SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2016 Stock Simulation Data

YDC Population Trends

As previously mentioned, changes in the juvenile justice system that affect the number of YDC admissions, the number of YDC releases, or the YDC LOS directly impact the accuracy of the projections. This section highlights YDC statistics showing the year-to-year variations in several key components used to produce the projections.

From FY 2012 to FY 2016, admissions to YDCs, and correspondingly, releases from YDCs have generally decreased (see Table 4). Although YDC admissions increased 12% from FY 2015 to FY 2016, the number of YDC admissions is 19% lower than it was in FY 2012. Similarly, YDC releases also decreased over the past five years (by 33%) with a 2% decrease from FY 2015 to FY 2016. In FY 2016, the average number of admissions per month was 19 and the average number of releases was 17. These trends will continue to be monitored given their influence on the resource projections.

**Table 4
Youth Development Center (YDC) Admissions and Releases**

Fiscal Year	YDC Admissions			YDC Releases		
	Total Number	Percent Change	Average Number Per Month	Total Number	Percent Change	Average Number Per Month
2012	285	--	24	303	--	25
2013	229	-20	19	255	-16	21
2014	219	-4	18	227	-11	19
2015	206	-6	17	207	-9	17
2016	231	12	19	203	-2	17

SOURCE: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

In FY 2016, the overall average LOS was 14 months, with little change noted over the past five fiscal years (see Table 5). The average LOS for juveniles adjudicated for a violent offense has generally remained stable at 17 months from FY 2012 to FY 2016, with slight increases noted in FY 2013 and FY 2015. For juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a serious offense, the average LOS was 13 months. For juveniles adjudicated delinquent of a minor offense, the average LOS remained relatively stable from FY 2012 to FY 2015, with an increase from 8 months in FY 2015 to 10 months in FY 2016.

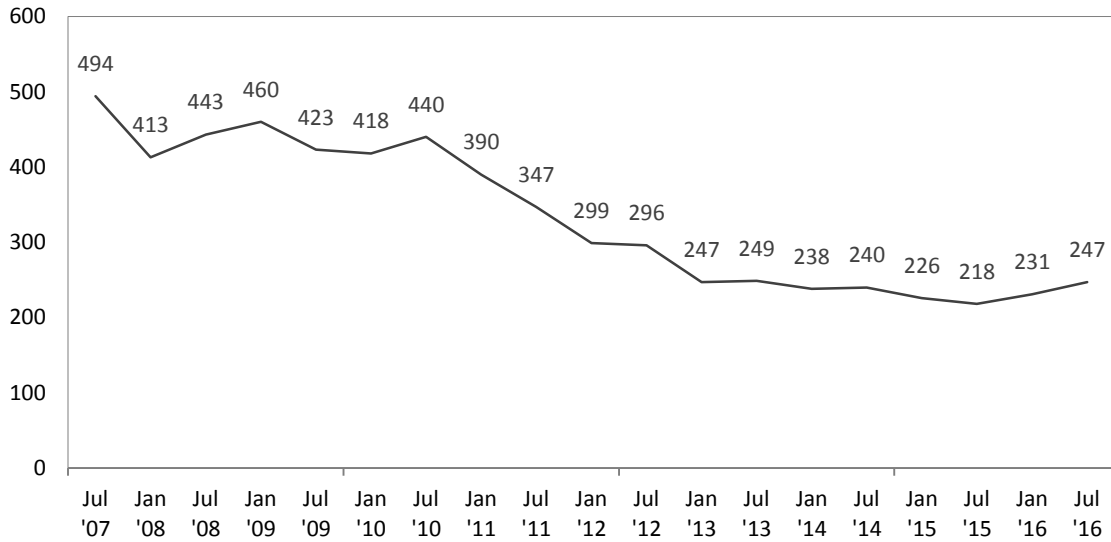
**Table 5
Average Length of Stay for Youth Development Center (YDC) Releases**

Juveniles Adjudicated of a:	Length of Stay (in months) by Fiscal Year					% Change	
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	FY 2015 to FY 2016	FY 2012 to FY 2016
Violent Offense	17	18	17	19	17	-11	0
Serious Offense	12	13	13	13	13	0	8
Minor Offense	7	7	7	8	10	25	43
Overall	13	14	13	14	14	0	8

SOURCE: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

Figure 5 provides a historical examination of North Carolina’s YDC population. Although the YDC population has decreased 50% over the past ten years, it has leveled off over the last four years, with the 2016 fiscal year end population nearly equal to the 2013 fiscal year end population (247 and 249 respectively). In FY 2016, the YDC population ranged from a low of 225 to a high of 257. The most important factors contributing to YDC population trends include youth population trends, juvenile justice trends, and policy changes that affect YDC admissions, releases, and length of stay.

Figure 5
Youth Development Center (YDC) Population Trends: July 2007 - July 2016



SOURCE: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, *Committed Youth Report*