

# AVENUES FOR JUSTICE

Andrew Glover Youth Program

Annual Progress Report  
2016



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## Executive Summary

Avenues for Justice (AFJ) is a non-profit, community-based program. The program focuses on youthful offenders and at-risk youth from the Lower East Side and East Harlem. During 2016, Avenues for Justice worked with 628 youth. Two-hundred-thirty-nine offender clients were enrolled in AFJ's intensive crime prevention and court advocacy program designed to prevent further involvement with the criminal justice system (116 from the Lower East Side area, 123 from the East Harlem area). These offenders are the focus of this report. One-hundred-sixty-seven at-risk clients from the Lower East Side (92) and East Harlem (75) participated in crime prevention programs at AFJ's two community centers. Another 222 youth from outside the program's two service areas received referrals through the community center or court advocacy components during 2016.

### Characteristics of the 2016 Clients

- About half of the participants were Hispanic (49%), 76% were male, and almost all were under age 21 at intake (93%).
- The program enrolled 40 new clients in 2016.

### Participation

- There were over 15,000 client encounters during 2016.
- The 239 youthful offenders had an average of 63 encounters during the year; for the 40 new clients that number was 83.
- Four-hundred-fifty-seven referrals were provided to AFJ clients in 2016.

### Program Outcomes

- Of the cases that had court outcomes during 2016, most were adjourned and almost half received deferred sentences.
- Among active clients with follow-up data, there were increases in those who were successfully engaged in work or school or both from enrollment to follow-up.
- Only 16% of all AFJ clients were re-arrested in New York State within three years after enrolling in the program, compared to a 76% re-arrest rate among prisoners released in 2004 across 30 states who were under 25 at the time of release. The three-year recidivism rate for successful graduates of AFJ was very low at 10%.
- Only 6% of the AFJ clients have been incarcerated in the three years since intake, compared to 40% of New York prisoners released in 2004 who returned to prison within three years of release, 52% of prisoners ages 18-24 and 57% of minor age prisoners across 15 states who returned to prison within three years of release, and 80% who returned to detention or prison within three years of leaving a New York juvenile facility.

## Introduction

Avenues for Justice (AFJ) is a non-profit, community-based program. The program focuses on youthful offenders and at-risk youth from the Lower East Side and East Harlem. During 2016, Avenues for Justice worked with 628 youth. Two-hundred-thirty-nine offender clients were enrolled in AFJ's intensive crime prevention and court advocacy program designed to prevent further involvement with the criminal justice system (116 from the Lower East Side area, 123 from the East Harlem area). These offenders are the focus of this report. One-hundred-sixty-seven at-risk clients from the Lower East Side (92) and East Harlem (75) participated in crime prevention programs at AFJ's two community centers. Another 222 youth from outside the program's two service areas received referrals through the community center or court advocacy components during 2016.<sup>1,2</sup>

The first section of this report, **Characteristics of AFJ Clients – 2016**, presents a demographic profile of the 239 clients served in the more intensive program. It also provides information about new enrollments.

The second section, **Participation**, shows how long current clients have been participating in AFJ, how long clients are retained in the program, and encounter information. A summary of referrals made by AFJ is also presented.

The **Program Outcomes** section presents court outcome data and the number of clients successfully engaged in work or school, or both, since enrolling in the program. Since a new recidivism study is being planned, data from the previous recidivism study are included in this progress report.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a NYC judge may call the Executive Director (ED) of AFJ saying there is a teenager from the Bronx who needs some form of community service. The ED will then refer this teenager to an agency that provides the needed service.

<sup>2</sup> Based on available data.

## Characteristics of AFJ Clients – 2016

A demographic profile of the 239 youthful offenders served during 2016 is provided in Table 1. Most clients were male (76%), about half identified as Hispanic (49%), and 93% were under 21 at intake.

Forty of the 239 clients were newly enrolled during 2016 (21 from the Lower East Side site and 19 from the East Harlem site). Over two-thirds (69%) of the new enrollees were placed in the Intensive Phase of the program and 31% were enrolled in the Supportive Phase.<sup>3</sup> The more recent referrals came from sources like the courts, attorneys, and probation officers – five were from other clients or friends. The demographic profile of this subgroup is also provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographics at intake <sup>4</sup>	All Youth Offenders	Newly Enrolled Clients
<b>Gender</b>	(n = 234)	(n = 40)
Male	76%	67%
Female	24%	33%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	(n = 230)	(n = 40)
Hispanic/Latino	49%	42%
Black/African-American	37%	40%
White/Caucasian	1%	3%
Other/Multiethnic	13%	15%
<b>Age</b>	(n = 239)	(n = 40)
15 years and younger	18%	13%
16-20 years	75%	82%
21-24 years	6%	5%
25 years and older	1%	0%
<b>Living Situation</b>	(n = 167)	(n = 38)
Two parents	22%	18%
One parent	61%	58%
Guardian(s), relative(s), foster care	6%	8%
Intimate partner or sibling (no parent)	7%	10%
Self and their child(ren)	1%	3%
Alone	2%	0%
Other, unspecified	1%	3%
<b>Percentage who said they or their family receives benefit<sup>5</sup></b>	(n = 125-130)	(n = 30-33)
Public Assistance/Welfare	26%	20%
Food Stamps	50%	52%
<b>Intake Source</b>	(n = 153)	(n = 38)
Self-referred	9%	8%
Family	17%	8%
Court	40%	37%
School	1%	0%
Other	33%	47%
<b>Program Phase</b>	(n = 169)	(n = 39)
Intensive	77%	69%
Supportive	23%	31%

<sup>3</sup> Intensive Phase client services include court appearances, school visits, regular counseling, mandatory check-in at centers, and monitoring of individualized services (e.g., substance abuse programming, support services at community sites, and other mandated activities). Supportive Phase client services are a step down from the Intensive Phase and, as such, require less court reporting and reduced frequency of in-person contacts while continuing to provide tutoring and support counseling according to individual need.

<sup>4</sup> Sample size fluctuates as some items were not included on older intake forms and/or data were not provided on newer forms.

<sup>5</sup> Older intake forms asked about client receipt of benefits; forms used from 2013 forward asked about benefit receipt by a client and/or the client's family.

Although most of the AFJ clients come to the program involved in criminal proceedings – 75% of all clients and 72% of newly enrolled clients – for many, this was their first arrest. Most AFJ clients were enrolled in school or other educational program at intake, and a few had their high school diploma or GED. Over two-fifths of all clients had recently used marijuana and 22% used alcohol during the month prior to intake. Very few of these clients used cocaine or other drugs in the month prior to their intake. Seven in ten AFJ clients were sexually active and most used condoms at last intercourse.

Table 2: Client Risk History at Intake	All Youth Offenders	Newly Enrolled Clients
<b>Prior criminal history<sup>6</sup></b>		
Arrests (average number)	1.6 (n = 70)	2.1 (n = 15)
Convictions	0.2 (n = 38)	0.3 (n = 6)
Misdemeanors	0.9 (n = 50)	1.5 (n = 10)
Felonies	0.5 (n = 42)	0.7 (n = 9)
<b>Education and Employment Status</b>		
In school/educational program	86% (n = 211)	76% (n = 38)
Have high school diploma	12% (n = 153)	8% (n = 39)
Have GED	3% (n = 133)	3% (n = 38)
Currently employed	14% (n = 205)	22% (n = 37)
<b>Substance use</b>		
(In the past month, have used...)		
alcohol	22% (n = 146)	14% (n = 37)
marijuana	43% (n = 153)	42% (n = 38)
cocaine	3% (n = 145)	0% (n = 36)
other drug(s)	3% (n = 131)	0% (n = 32)
<b>Sexual behavior</b>		
Sexually active	70% (n = 217)	57% (n = 40)
<b>At last intercourse:</b>		
Used condom	83% (n = 107)	59% (n = 22)
Used another form of birth control	15% (n = 79)	6% (n = 17)
<b>Been pregnant or caused a pregnancy</b>	20% (n = 202)	29% (n = 38)
<b>Have a child/children</b>	10% (n = 165)	17% (n = 36)

Intake forms were replaced with Assessment Forms in 2013. For this reason, the sample sizes on the above items vary, as not all items were on the older forms nor were all items completed on newer forms. Part of the intention behind the form change was to collect periodic follow-up data while a client was active in Avenues for Justice, as well as at program completion. This would provide some information about behavioral changes during program involvement. However, change data are not presented here as not enough follow-up data have been received yet.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Some assessments were missing data for prior criminal history; future data should be more complete.

<sup>7</sup> Some education and employment data are presented on page 6.

## Participation

### Participation and retention

Figure 1 illustrates the length of participation for AFJ clients seen in 2016. A fifth of clients had been in the program for less than one year and over a third had been in for one or two years. Nearly a fifth had been coming to AFJ for five or more years. On average, clients had been with the program for 3.2 years.

Of the 40 members who enrolled during 2015 and were eligible to be active (did not graduate the program) one year later, the program retained 85%. Of the 43 members who enrolled during 2013 and were eligible to be active three years later, the program retained 75%.

### Client encounters

There were over 15,000 client encounters during 2016 – including telephone and face-to-face contacts which may involve counseling, tutoring, or workshop attendance. Overall, the 239 clients had an average of 63 encounters with staff during 2016; the median number of encounters was 14.<sup>9</sup> The 40 new clients had a total of 3,319 encounters during 2016, for an average of 83 encounters with staff; the median number of encounters was 66. Due to differing needs and enrollment dates, new clients were seen from one to 318 times. Table 3 illustrates the differences in encounters between all clients and those newly enrolled in AFJ.

As in previous reports, Figure 2 compares the total number of encounters for past five years. It is likely that the recent increase in encounters is, in large part, due to a new data collection system.

**Figure 1**  
**Length of Participation**  
n = 239

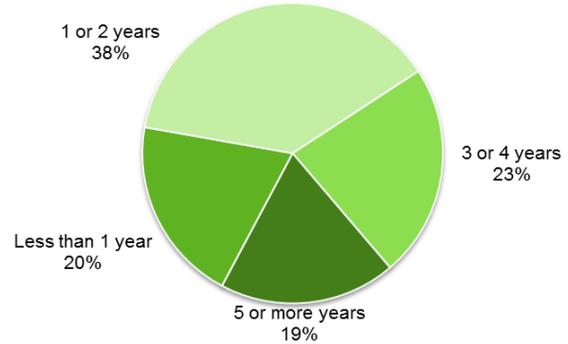
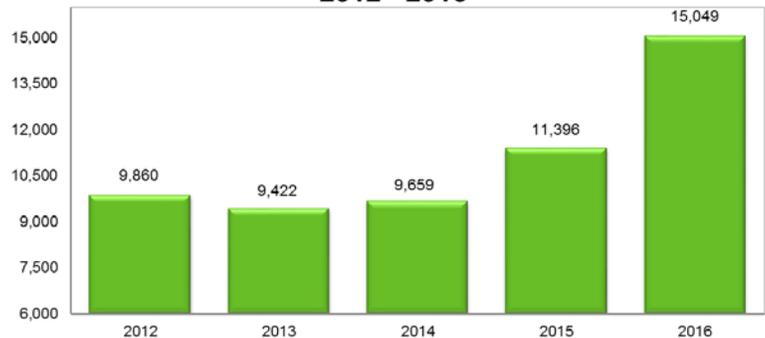


Table 3: Encounters (2016)	Overall (n = 239)	New clients (n = 40)
<b>Total</b>	15,049	3,319
Mean	63	83
Median	14	66
Range	1 to 549	1 to 318
Monthly mean <sup>8</sup>	6.9	14.3

**Figure 2**  
**Number of Client Encounters**  
2012 - 2016



<sup>8</sup> Average monthly encounters are calculated by the number of encounters during the report period, divided by the number of months a client was active during the report period.

<sup>9</sup> The mean number of encounters is much higher than the median number of encounters because individual clients ranged from one to as many as 549 encounters during 2016. The median is the more accurate way to consider a typical case.

### Summary of referrals made by AFJ

Table 4 shows the number of employment, education, mental health, and substance abuse referrals during 2016. During the year, there were 457 total referrals.<sup>10</sup> Referrals are used to help prevent further involvement in the juvenile justice system and have become a substantial part of AFJ's work.

Table 4: Client referrals	
Employment	29
Education	26
Substance abuse – inpatient	118
Substance abuse – outpatient	135
Mental health – inpatient	28
Mental health – outpatient	121
<i>Total referrals</i>	<i>457</i>

## Program Outcomes

### Court outcomes – 2016

Table 5 shows the clients who had at least one court outcome during 2016. Some client cases may have more than one outcome (for example, a case might have been adjourned and later dismissed; or a conditional discharge might have resulted in a prison sentence later in the year). Most of the court outcomes were adjournments with deferred sentences.

Table 5: 2016 court outcomes (n = 69)	
Case adjourned	58 (84%)
Deferred sentence	32 (46%)
Adjudicated youth offender	9 (13%)
Sent to prison	7 (10%)
Paroled	6 (9%)
Sent to probation	5 (7%)
Conditional discharge/ACD	3 (4%)
Other	3 (4%)
Acquitted	2 (3%)
Assigned to AFJ	2 (3%)
Case dismissed	0 (0%)
Community service	0 (0%)
Plead	0 (0%)
Split sentence	0 (0%)

<sup>10</sup> It is likely that the increase in reported referrals from last year is, in large part, due to a new data collection system.

## Employment and education

As mentioned earlier in the report, AFJ has started collecting periodic follow-up data for active AFJ clients. Although not many follow-up assessment forms have been submitted, Table 6 to shows progress in employment and education outcomes among current clients for whom baseline and follow-up data are available. Eighty-eight percent of clients (n = 223) were either employed or in school based on their last available data (not shown).

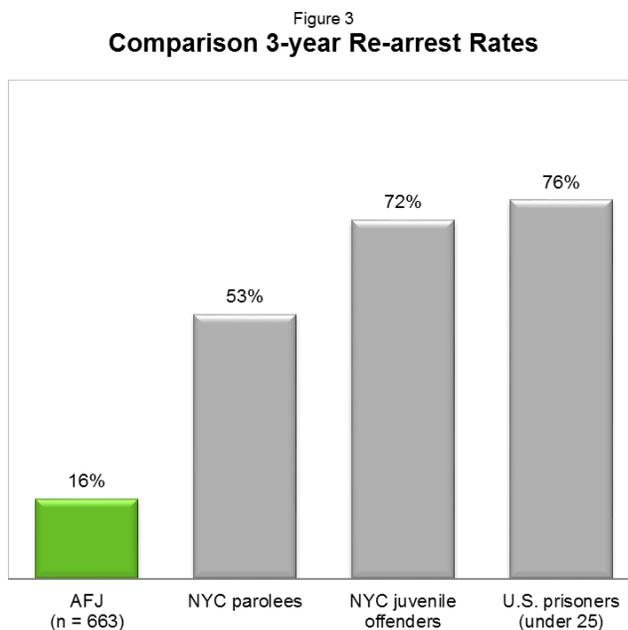
Table 6: Employment and Education				
Change from intake to last follow-up	Employment (n = 18)	Education (n = 18)	Diploma/GED (n = 16)	Employment and/or Education (n = 24)
Improvement/Advancement	28%	39%	44%	<b>42%</b>
No change	72%	44%	56%	<b>50%</b>
Decline	0%	17%	n/a	<b>8%</b>

## Recidivism

The recidivism study that examined clients enrolled since 1994 has ended. A new recidivism study is being considered and explored. Data from the prior study are presented below.

To examine recidivism among AFJ clients, clients enrolled since 1994 because of an arrest were checked three years after their enrollment date for any re-arrests and incarcerations.<sup>11</sup>

The study found that 84% of all AFJ clients avoided a re-arrest in New York State for three years after enrolling in the program. Thus, the three-year recidivism rate was 16% (Figure 3). That was based on all clients, graduates and others. For graduates only, the rate was very low at 10% (Figure 4). Based on a study of 2001-2008 New York City parolees, 53% were re-arrested within three years.<sup>12</sup> This rate was 72% for juvenile offenders processed in the Supreme Courts across the five boroughs of New York City between 1997 and 2000.<sup>13</sup> To further the contrast, a study of prisoners released in 2005 found that 76% of those under age 25 were re-arrested within three years of their release (Figure 3).<sup>14</sup> The AFJ re-arrest rates were 25% at 6-years and 34% at 9-years post-enrollment for all clients.



<sup>11</sup> To obtain follow up data, the program was provided with a list of clients with intakes from a particular time period. Program staff searched the NYS Unified Court System's eCourts case tracking service and provided arrest and incarceration data to Philliber Research & Evaluation.

<sup>12</sup> Herrschaft, B.A., & Hamilton, Z. (2011). *Recidivism Among Parolees in New York City, 2001-2008*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.

<sup>13</sup> Gewirtz, Marian (2007). *Recidivism among juvenile offenders in New York City*. New York, NY: City Criminal Justice Agency, Inc.

<sup>14</sup> United States Department of Justice. (April, 2014). Recidivism of prisoners released in 30 states in 2005: Patterns from 2005 to 2010. NCJ 244205. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

The study found that recidivism rates varied by client characteristics (Figure 4). Clients who were using marijuana at intake had significantly higher rates of recidivism than those who were not, as did clients who were not in school at intake compared to those who were in school.

Recidivism was also examined in relationship to charge and offense at intake. Of the 430 clients who had a felony charge at intake, 19% had been re-arrested within three years. The rate was 11% for the 233 clients who had a misdemeanor or other charge at intake.<sup>15</sup> Of the 126 clients who had drug related offenses at intake, 25% were re-arrested compared to 17% of the 205 clients who committed robbery or burglary (including attempted robbery), and 10% of the 81 clients who were arrested for assault.

Figure 4  
Re-arrest Rates by Subgroup  
(3 years after enrollment)

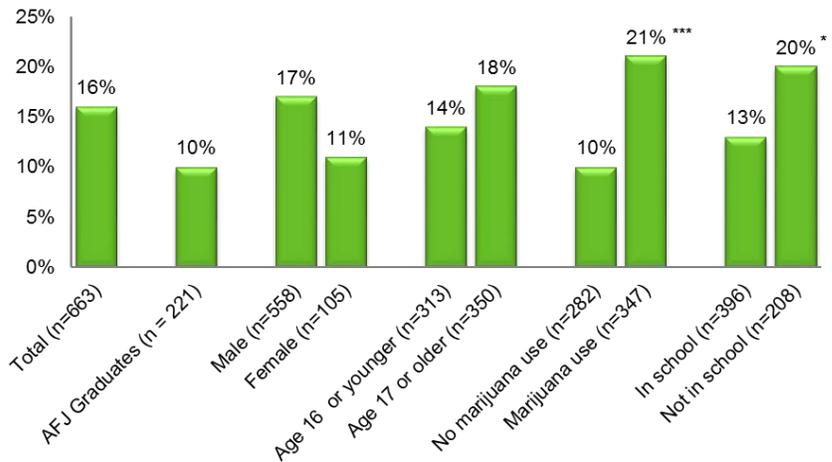
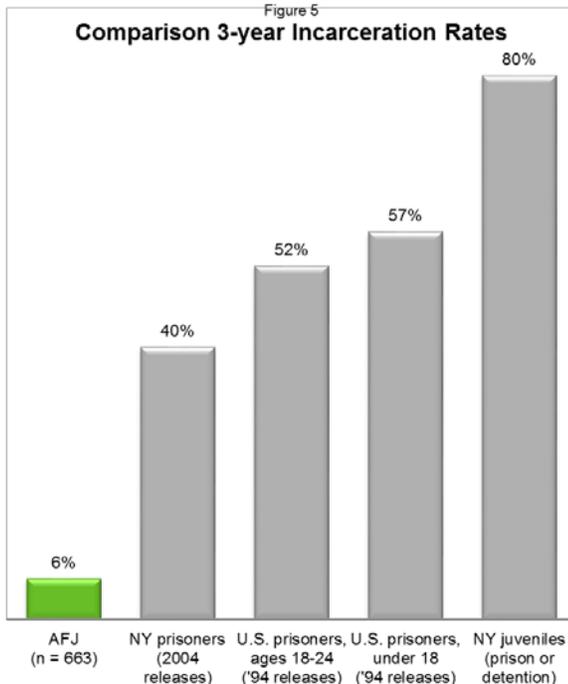


Figure 5  
Comparison 3-year Incarceration Rates



An important outcome is the avoidance of prison. Only 6% of all AFJ clients were incarcerated within three years of intake.<sup>16</sup> This is substantially lower than the 40% of New York prisoners released in 2004 who returned to prison within three years of release,<sup>17</sup> the 52% of prisoners ages 18-24 and the 57% of minor age prisoners across 15 states who returned to prison within three years of release,<sup>18</sup> and the 80% who returned to detention or prison within three years of leaving a New York juvenile facility (Figure 3).<sup>19</sup>

(See Appendix for further comparison data.)

<sup>15</sup> This was a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between the rates of re-arrest by charge at intake (felony vs. misdemeanor).

<sup>16</sup> Arrest outcome data were available for 101 of the 106 arrested within three years of AFJ enrollment. Of those 101 who were arrested and for whom arrest outcome data were available, 42% were re-incarcerated (42 participants). Calculating the incarceration rate based on the sample of 663 participants with three-year follow-up data results in the 6% incarceration rate.

<sup>17</sup> Pew Center on the States. (April, 2011). State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons. Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trust.

<sup>18</sup> United States Department of Justice. (June, 2002). *Recidivism of prisoners released in 1994: Special Report NCJ 193427*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>19</sup> Commissioner of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services Gladys Carrión, Esq. Testimony to the New York State Legislature's Joint Budget Committee. Press release February 5, 2008; accessed at [www.ocfs.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.ny.us).

## Appendix

Although sampling techniques, sample characteristics, and definitions of recidivism and incarceration vary, published recidivism data suggest AFJ clients have re-arrest and incarceration rates considerably lower than comparison samples. Though most of these data were mentioned in this report, the following are more detailed and may be used *with caution* when considering the recidivism rates among AFJ clients:

- Based on a 2009 data set, the citywide re-arrest rate within one year was 33.4%, or 37.3% among those who were 16-24 years old at time of arrest.<sup>20</sup>
- Of New York City probationers sentenced in 2006, 30.8% were arrested for a felony offense within three years of being sentenced to probation.<sup>21</sup>
- Based on a study of 2001-2008 New York City parolees, 53% were re-arrested within three years, 42% were reconvicted, and 29% returned to prison (23% on a technical violation, 6% due to a new felony conviction).<sup>22</sup>
- A survey study found that 39.9% of New York prisoners released in 2004 returned to prison within three years.<sup>23</sup>
- Another recidivism study of prisoners released in 30 states found that 67.8% of prisoners released in 2005 were arrested within three years of release and 76.6% were arrested within 5 years of release. That same study showed a 3-year re-arrest rate of 75.9% among prisoners who were 24 years old or younger at the time of release and an 84.1% 5-year arrest rate.<sup>24</sup>
- Yet others have found that 52% of prisoners ages 18-24 and the 57% of minor age prisoners across 15 states returned to prison within three years of release,<sup>25</sup> and 80% returned to detention or prison within three years of leaving a New York juvenile facility.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> New York City's Data Analytics Recidivism Tool (DART), v1.0. <http://recidivism.cityofnewyork.us>. Accessed February 3, 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Division of Criminal Justice Services Crimestat Report (November 22, 2010). *Probationer Felony Re-Arrest Rates Following Sentence*, <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/opca/pdfs/99-08probationerfelonyrearrests.pdf>. Accessed on February 3, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Herrschaft, B.A., & Hamilton, Z. (2011). *Recidivism Among Parolees in New York City, 2001-2008*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.

<sup>23</sup> Pew Center on the States. (April, 2011). *State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons*. Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trust.

<sup>24</sup> United States Department of Justice. (April, 2014). *Recidivism of prisoners released in 30 states in 2005: Patterns from 2005 to 2010*. NCJ 244205. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>25</sup> United States Department of Justice. (June, 2002). *Recidivism of prisoners released in 1994: Special Report NCJ 193427*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>26</sup> Commissioner of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services Gladys Carrión, Esq. Testimony to the New York State Legislature's Joint Budget Committee. Press release February 5, 2008; accessed at [www.ocfs.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.ny.us).