



Briefing Report: Civil Citation Effectiveness Review

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Research and Planning

Issue:

The purpose of this analysis is to examine the effectiveness of Civil Citation relative to the effectiveness of post-arrest diversion for Civil Citation-eligible youth.

Highlighted Results:

- Civil Citation youth had significantly better outcomes than youth who were eligible for Civil Citation but were arrested and diverted;
- Civil Citation youth recidivated at a rate of 4% compared to a recidivism rate of 9% for youth who completed diversion programs;
- When comparing the recidivism rate for different offense categories, the youth who completed Civil Citation for petit theft, assault and battery, drug offenses, loitering and prowling, trespassing, obstruction of justice, and vandalism had significantly better outcomes than youth who were arrested for these offenses and completed a diversion program.

Background:

Florida State Statute 985.12 provides law enforcement with an alternative to arrest for youth who commit first-time, non-serious delinquent acts. Beginning July 1, 2011, the Department (DJJ) began to record data on these youth in DJJ's Prevention Web. This database allows DJJ to gather information and report success rates while keeping the Civil Citation records "hidden," as the information is not included on the youth's delinquency record, should they incur one in the future. For youth who complete Civil Citation, there is no official delinquency record and future background checks reveal a "clean" record. The Department tracks the rate of eligible youth who receive Civil Citation at the statewide level, and county participation is tracked by taking total youth eligible and comparing the percentage of youth that received Civil Citation to those that did not. Eligible arrests that did not result in the issuance of a Civil Citation are referred to as "Civil Citation eligible arrests." This analysis compares recidivism by offense category for these two groups of youth: (1) first-time misdemeanor youth who received and completed a Civil Citation, and (2) youth who had a Civil Citation eligible arrest that did not receive a Civil Citation and completed a delinquency diversion program instead.

Methodology/ Analysis:

A file containing all youth issued Civil Citations on or after July 1, 2011 was matched to the 2013 Comprehensive Accountability Report (CAR) file to identify the youth that completed a Civil Citation program during FY 2011-12 with an issuance date on or after July 1, 2011, and of those youth, which ones recidivated¹ during the year following their completion of the program. The CAR file contained 3,888 Civil Citation completers, and the remaining total after the match was 3,778. A total of 110 youth from the CAR file were dropped due to Civil Citation issuance being prior to July 1, 2011, or for having an offense category not in the diversion sample.

¹DJJ defines recidivism as all adjudications, adjudications withheld, and convictions for any new violation of law within twelve months of program completion.

Comparatively, a file containing all youth with eligible first-time misdemeanor arrest dates on or after July 1, 2011 was matched to the 2013 CAR file to identify the youth that completed a diversion program during FY 2011-12, and of those youth, which ones recidivated during the year following their completion of the program. Of the total diversion completers (21,248 youth), 10,743 completed for a Civil Citation eligible arrest. An additional 86 youth were dropped due to completing diversion for felony offenses that came in after their eligible misdemeanor offenses, or for having a felony in their history. The final sample of eligible Civil Citation youth that completed diversion was 10,657.

Of the youth issued Civil Citations on or after July 1, 2011, 3,778 completed a Civil Citation program during FY 2011-12 with an overall recidivism rate of 4%. Of the youth who had Civil Citation eligible arrests on or after July 1, 2011, 10,657 completed delinquency diversion programs with an overall recidivism rate of 9%. The difference in the recidivism rate of these two groups was significantly different² ($p < .001$).

When comparing recidivism rates by offense type for youth that completed Civil Citation with those that completed diversion, the difference was significant for the following offense categories: petit theft, assault and battery, drug offenses, loitering and prowling, trespassing, obstruction of justice, and vandalism. There was no significant difference between the two groups for the following offense categories: disorderly conduct, alcohol, other misdemeanors, weapon and firearm offenses, and hunting and fishing violations. For these categories, the independent samples t-tests conclude that we cannot say the difference in recidivism is real and are rather resulting from chance.

Recidivism for Civil Citation and Diversion Completers During FY 2011-12

Offense Category (all Misdemeanors) ⁴	Civil Citation Completers		Diversion Completers ²	
	Recidivism Rate	Total Completers	Recidivism Rate	Total Completers
Petit Theft***	3%	1,594	7%	4,020
Assault and or Battery (not aggravated)***	5%	631	12%	2,309
Drug Offenses***	5%	562	10%	2,025
Loitering and Prowling***	5%	56	21%	194
Trespassing***	6%	144	16%	398
Obstruction of Justice**	7%	91	15%	395
Vandalism**	3%	131	9%	300
<i>Disorderly Conduct</i>	5% ¹	389	8% ¹	666
<i>Alcohol Offenses</i>	2% ¹	136	3% ¹	265
<i>Other</i>	15% ¹	20	9% ¹	43
<i>Weapon-Firearm Offense</i>	10% ¹	21	14% ¹	21
<i>Violation of Hunt, Fish, Boat Laws</i>	0% ¹	3	14% ¹	21
Total***	4%	3,778	9%	10,657
Domestic Violence***	0%	10 ³	12%	1,112 ³

¹ Italics indicate there was no significant difference in the recidivism rate of the two groups. ($p > .05$)

² Only includes youth who completed diversion for a Civil Citation eligible arrest.

³ Domestic Violence category is a subcategory of the Assault and Battery offense category and therefore is already included in the Total above for the completers.

⁴ The offense category represents the most serious offense the youth completed the civil citation or diversion program for.

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, Two-tailed Independent Samples T-test. Difference is significant where $p < .05$.

² Independent samples t-tests assess whether the difference between two means (in this case recidivism rates) are significantly different statistically. The difference is significant when the probability is less than .05 and we are more certain the difference is real. The difference is not significant when probability is over .05, meaning we aren't certain the differences are real and are rather resulting from chance.