
Highlands Youth Academy
*TrueCore Behavioral Solutions*
(Contract Provider)
242 South Boulevard
Avon Park, Florida 33825

*Primary Service: Vocational Instruction*
*SPEP Review Date(s): May 22-25, 2018*

Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

*Report Date(s): May 30, 2018*
Introduction

The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) is an assessment tool derived from meta-analytic research on the effectiveness of juvenile justice interventions. The tool is designed to compare existing intervention services, as implemented in the field, to the characteristics of the most effective intervention services found in the research.

The SPEP scoring system allows service providers to identify specific areas in which program improvements can be made to their existing Primary Services. These improvements can be expected to increase the effectiveness of those Primary Services in the reduction of recidivism for youth receiving the Primary Service. A separate SPEP evaluation is conducted, at the time of the program’s Quality Improvement Review, for each Primary Service provided by the program.

This report provides two types of SPEP scores: a Basic Score, equivalent to the number of points received, and a Program Optimization Score (POS) that is equivalent to the maximum number of possible points that could be received based on the SPEP domains under the control of the program. The Basic Score compares the Primary Service being evaluated to other intervention services found in the research to be effective, regardless of service type. It is meant as a reference to the expected overall recidivism reduction when compared to other Primary Services of any Type.

A Program Optimization Percentage (POP) rate is derived from the Basic Score and Program Optimization Score. The POP rate is a percentage score that indicates where the rate of effectiveness of the Primary Service is when compared to its potential effectiveness if optimized to match the characteristics of similar Primary Services found to be most effective in the research. The POP rate is likely more meaningful to service providers as it represents how close the program’s Primary Service is to its potential for that Primary Service Type. For example, a POP rate of 55% would indicate that the program’s Primary Service is operating at 55% of its potential effectiveness for recidivism reduction that has been found for a similar Primary Service Type with research evidence of effectiveness.
Program Name: Highlands Youth Academy
Provider Name: TrueCore Behavioral Solutions
Location: Polk County / Circuit: 10
Review Date(s): May 22 - 25, 2018

**Persons Interviewed**

- Program Director
- DJJ Monitor
- DHA or designee
- DMHCA or designee
- Corporate QI/QA staff
- # Case Managers
- # Clinical Staff
- # Healthcare Staff
- # Program Supervisors
- # Youth
- # Other (listed by title): Security Chief

**Documents Reviewed**

- Written Protocol/Manual
- Fidelity Monitoring Documents
- Internal Corrective Action Reports
- Staff Evaluations
- Accreditation Reports
- Contract Monitoring Reports
- Contract Scope of Services
- Logbooks
- Program Schedules
- Supplemental Contracts
- Table of Organization
- Youth Handbook
- # Health Records
- # MH/SA Records
- # Personnel Records
- # Training Records/CORE
- # Youth Records (Closed)
- # Youth Records (Open)
- # Other: _______

**Observations During Review**

- Group/Session of Primary Service(s)
- Program Activities
- Recreation
- Social Skill Modeling by Staff
- Staff Interactions with Youth
- Staff Supervision of Youth
- Transition/Exit Conferences
- Treatment Team Meetings
There are five Primary Service Types that have been classified into Groups with a maximum number of points possible for rating purposes. Some Primary Service Types may also have qualifying Supplemental Service Types that could earn a program an additional 5 points.

The Primary Service for this program is Vocational Instruction. The program was awarded 5 points because the Primary Service is identified as a Group 1 Service. The specific Sub-Component Service Type identified is Job-Related Training (Job Training). The Primary Service was identified as this type of service as it includes vocational counseling, job training arranged to provide work experience. The overall emphasis is on preparing the juveniles to enter the work force.

An additional 5 points was awarded based on a Qualifying Supplemental Service. The Qualifying Supplemental Service was identified as None (automatic 5 points added to score), which was not demonstrated to have been implemented.

The Primary and Supplemental Service Raw Score is equal to the sum of the Primary Service points plus the Qualifying Supplemental Service points.

*Note: Quality information is evaluated by the Bureau of Monitoring and Quality Improvement while on-site during the annual compliance review.*
2. Overall Quality of Service Delivery Score

| Basic Score: 10 Points |
| POS: 20 Points |
| POP: 50% |

The Quality of Service Delivery Score is the sum of the scores for the seven treatment quality indicators. The Program Optimization Percentage Rating determines the Overall Quality of Service Level:

- Indicator Sum Score 0-3 = Low;
- Sum Score 4-7 = Medium;
- Sum Score 8-10 = High.

Sum of all Indicator Scores (a – g below): 6 Points

Overall Quality of Service Delivery Level:

- Low (Raw Score = 5)
- Medium (Raw Score = 10)
- High (Raw Score = 20 Points)

a. Facilitator Training

| Basic Score: 1 Point(s) |
| Maximum Possible Score: 1 Point |

All facilitator(s) of the Primary Service must have received formal training specific to the intervention or model/protocol.

The program currently has two facilitators trained in the two vocational instruction curricula provided at the program. The two vocational instruction curricula provided are network cabling - copper based systems and home entertainment - residential audio and video systems. The program provided instructor certificates for both facilitators for all the vocational services provided at the program. The two facilitators were trained to facilitate the training by C-TECH, which is a hands-on technology education provider. The program provided sign-in sheets indicating both facilitators taught the network cabling and home entertainment curriculum since the last annual standardized program evaluation protocol (SPEP) review. One of the facilitators is the program's security chief and the other is a shift manager.

The youth who participate in the curricula can earn certification in one or both technical programs. The network cabling - copper based systems requires each youth to complete 40 hours of instruction and home entertainment - residential audio and video requires each youth to complete 30 hours of instruction.

b. Treatment Manual/Protocol

| Basic Score: 2 Point(s) |
| Maximum Possible Score: 2 Points |

There is a specific written manual/protocol detailing delivery of the Primary Service.

The program uses the facilitator guide entitled introduction to home entertainment residential audio/video systems, version 1.1. The guide has been developed by C-TECH associates as an instructor guide to teach youth how to develop and install home entertainment systems. The program also uses the facilitator guide entitled introduction to network cabling copper-based systems, version 3.3.1. The guide has been developed by C-TECH associates as an instructor guide to teach youth how to create and install network cabling systems. The program manuals are detail oriented and explain how specific sessions are to be delivered and provides the curriculum to be delivered to each youth. Each youth receives a student box, which contains all the tools and
instructional materials necessary to complete the curriculums. The facilitator manuals and student box contain hands-on activities the youth complete as part of the curriculum.

An interview with the security chief indicated all youth who enter the program have an opportunity to participate in either of the two vocational instruction classes. The vocational instructional classes are voluntary and each youth can ask to be placed into one or both classes. The program does ensure each youth placed into the vocational instruction classes are low risk on the program's risk assessment form, and have been in the program for at least thirty days. Each youth also must be trained in tool management and past a test for tool usage prior to entering either of the vocational classes.

Since the last standardized program evaluation protocol (SPEP) review the program has conducted five home entertainment - residential audio and video network cohorts and are currently conducting their sixth cohort. The program has also conducted four cabling - copper based systems cohorts and are currently conducting their fifth cohort. The SPEP missing dosage form was completed by the regional compliance manager and indicated seven youth did not receive vocational instruction curriculums because three of the youth escaped from the program, three were transferred to another program, and one youth's jurisdiction ended and they were released for the program prior to receiving either of the groups.

c. **Observed Adherence to the Manual/Protocol**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Score: 1 Point(s)</th>
<th>Maximum Possible Score: 1 Point</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upon observation of the Primary Service by the Quality Improvement reviewer, the facilitator of that service adhered to the written protocol/manual.</strong></td>
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</table>

The program conducts the vocational instruction classes Monday through Friday for one hour, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The regional monitor could observe half of a vocational instruction group being conducted for home entertainment - residential audio/video systems being conducted on a Wednesday evening. The group started at 5:33 p.m. and the group sat around a big work station with the instructor. Each youth had their work books and the instructor had their facilitator guide. The group was currently working on Module Five - audio system devices. The instructor reviewed what the group had learned in the previous group and then moved onto the new topic being covered. The instructor was knowledgeable on the material and did not read directly from the facilitators guide. The instructor followed the facilitators guide and had youth read the materials out of their books. The instructor helped the youth with the words they could not pronounce correctly and did so in a dignified manner, as to not shame the youth for not knowing the words. The youth were observed completing a hands-on activity creating a cable/wire system. The instructor helped guide the youth and answered each youth's questions so the other youth in the group could learn from the questions. All youth were observed to be actively participating in the class and activities.

d. **Facilitator Turnover**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Score: 1 Point(s)</th>
<th>Maximum Possible Score: 2 Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measures the extent to which facilitators of the specific intervention/service have changed as well as gaps in service of that Primary Service.</strong></td>
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</table>

The program has conducted five home entertainment - residential audio and video network cohorts and are currently conducting their sixth cohort. The program has also conducted four cabling - copper based systems cohorts, and are currently conducting a fifth. A review of the cohort sign-in sheets confirmed there was no facilitator turnover during any of the full cycles of the
vocational instructions, and the same facilitator conducted each cycle of with no change in facilitators. There has been no facilitator turnover in the current two cohorts being taught. The program did not provide either of the groups during the months of October 2017 and November 2017 due one of the facilitators having medical issues, and the other facilitator could not conduct groups at the time due to program staffing shortages.

The program has a policy which addresses facilitator turnover. If a facilitator is going to be leaving the program or will be on leave, the old instructor explains to the youth why another facilitator will be taking over and introduces the new instructor to the group. If possible, the new instructor will teach a group with the old instructor to ensure a smooth transition.

The program can earn 2 points if there are no unnecessary gaps in service.

At the time of the review, the program did not meet criteria to earn a score of 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e. Internal Fidelity Monitoring</th>
<th>Basic Score: 0 Point(s)</th>
<th>Maximum Possible Score: 2 Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>The program has a process to monitor the delivery of the intervention to examine how closely actual implementation matches the model protocol.</td>
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An interview with the program's security chief indicated the vocational instruction curricula entitled network cabling - copper based systems and home entertainment - residential audio and video systems are certified technical curricula which do not require fidelity monitoring; therefore, there was no internal fidelity monitoring to review for the primary services. An interview with the Department's program accountability technical assistance supervisor indicated the program is required to conduct fidelity monitoring of all their primary services and the program should have been doing monthly fidelity monitoring on all facilitators teaching the primary service.

The program can earn 2 points if fidelity monitoring is completed every month for each facilitator.

At the time of the review, the program did not meet criteria to earn a score of 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>f. Corrective Action based on Fidelity Monitoring</th>
<th>Basic Score: 0 Point</th>
<th>Maximum Possible Score: 1 Point</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The program has a process by which corrective action is applied and demonstrated based on the fidelity monitoring of the delinquency intervention/therapeutic service.</td>
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</table>

An interview with the program's security chief indicated the program is not required to conduct internal fidelity monitoring on the vocational instructional classes taught at the program; therefore, there is no corrective action based on fidelity monitoring necessary for review of the primary services. An interview with the Department's program accountability technical assistance supervisor indicated the program is required to conduct fidelity monitoring of all of their primary services, which should include the need for any corrective action based on the fidelity monitoring; therefore, the program should have been noting any corrective action needed for the two facilitators.

The program can earn 1 point if any corrective action needed is identified, applied, and demonstrated.
At the time of the review, the program did not meet criteria to earn a score of 1.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>g. Evaluation of Facilitator Skill Delivering the Intervention</th>
<th>Basic Score: 1 Point</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum Possible Score: 1 Point</td>
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</table>

Performance evaluations of the facilitators of the specific intervention/service include evaluation of skill in delivering the intervention/service.

A review of employee records for the two facilitators who conducted vocational instruction in network cabling copper based systems, and home entertainment residential audio and video systems groups since the last review, found both facilitators had an evaluation conducted by their supervisor. The evaluations contained an entry for the facilitator's supervisor to evaluate the facilitator's abilities to demonstrate the appropriate level of skills when delivering the primary service curricula.
3. Amount of Service - Duration

Basic Score: 6 Points  
Program Optimization Score: 10 Points  
Program Optimization Percentage: 60%

Research indicates the target duration of 25 weeks for this type of service. Of the 45 youth in the sample, 71% (32 of 45) reached at least the indicated target duration. Further explanation is detailed in the Summary and Recommendations below.

*Note: Dosage information (duration) is calculated from the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) Evidence-Based Services module. Duration is included for the youth in the SPEP sample.*

4. Amount of Service – Contact Hours

Basic Score: 8 Points  
Program Optimization Score: 10 Points  
Program Optimization Percentage: 80%

Research indicates a target of 400 contact hours for this type of service. Of the 45 youth in the sample, 93% (42 of 45) reached the indicated target contact hours. Further explanation is detailed in the Summary and Recommendations below.

*Note: Dosage information (contact hours) is calculated from the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) Evidence-Based Services module. Contact hours are included for the youth in the SPEP sample.*

5. Risk Level of Youth Served:

Basic Score: 25 Points  
Program Optimization Score: 25 Points  
Program Optimization Percentage: 100%

Percentage of Youth with Moderate, Moderate-High, and High-Risk Levels to Reoffend: 96%  
Moderate to High Score: 12 Points  
Program Optimization Score: 12 Points  
Program Optimization Percentage: 100%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate = 6 youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate-High = 16 youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High = 21 youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Youth in Sample = 45 youth</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Percentage of Youth with High-Risk Level to Reoffend: 47%
High Score: 13 Points
Program Optimization Score: 13 Points
Program Optimization Percentage: 100%

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<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High    = 21 youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Youth in Sample = 45 youth</td>
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</table>

The risk level score is compiled by calculating the total percent of the SPEP sample that score Moderate to High-Risk to reoffend and also the total percent of the SPEP sample that score High-Risk to reoffend.

Of the SPEP sample, 96% (43 of 45) youth scored Moderate to High-Risk to reoffend, for a score of 12 points.

Of the SPEP sample, 47% (21 of 45) youth scored High-Risk to reoffend, for a score of 13 points.

Note: The latest Community Positive Achievement Change Tool (C-PACT) prior to the placement date was used in the derivation of the risk level score. This C-PACT provides the best indication of the risk to re-offend level of the youth when the youth was first placed in the program.

### Summary and Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Basic Score</th>
<th>Program Optimization Score</th>
<th>Program Optimization Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary and Supplemental Service Type</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Service Delivery</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Service: Duration</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Service: Contact Hours</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Level of Youth Served</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>79%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This SPEP report evaluates Vocational Instruction, an intervention delivered at Highlands Youth Academy.

The program scored Medium for Quality of Service Delivery.

The program earned 6 points for Amount of Service: Duration. Of the 45 total youth sampled, only 37 included dosage with end dates in the EBS Module. Of those youth with correct dosage, 32 received at least the recommended weeks of service. Youth in the sample completed between 11 and 52 weeks of service, with an average of 29 weeks.

The program earned 8 points for Amount of Service: Contact Hours. Of the 45 total youth sampled, all 45 included dosage in the EBS Module. Of those youth, 42 received at least the recommended hours of service. Youth in the sample completed between 360 and 640 hours of service, with an average of 508 hours.
The program was awarded 25 available points for Risk Level of Youth Served. This is calculated using data from the Community - Positive Achievement Change Tool (C-PACT) assessment. This score reflects youths' most recent C-PACT score prior to placement at the program. The program itself has no control over youths' C-PACT risk level because the scored assessment was administered just prior to the youths' admission.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Highlands Youth Academy can optimize their SPEP Quality of Service Delivery score by ensuring there are no unnecessary gaps in service, by ensuring fidelity monitoring is completed every month for each facilitator, and by ensuring any corrective action needed is identified, applied, and demonstrated.

Highlands Youth Academy can optimize their SPEP Amount of Service score by ensuring that dosage for all youth is recorded accurately in EBS and by ensuring that youth receive the full targeted dosage of service.