

AVENUES FOR JUSTICE

Andrew Glover Youth Program

Annual Report
2022

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Executive Summary

Avenues for Justice (AFJ) is a non-profit community-based program which diverts young people across New York City, ages 13-24, from the criminal justice system to supportive services to help them build successful lives. AFJ operates programs for two main groups of participants: 1) "Court-Involved" participants who are in the criminal justice system; and 2) "At-Risk" participants who are at-risk of involvement with the criminal justice system. Court-Involved includes three sub-groups of participants: a) AFJ's signature long-term Court Advocacy program ("Court Advocacy"), b) a short-term diversion program for younger participants whose cases are in the NYC Family Court ("Family Court Diversion"), and c) a program for re-entry participants who have been recently released from a detention center ("Re-entry").

Services for the Court-Involved and At-Risk programs are provided online and onsite at AFJ's two community centers in Harlem and the Lower East Side, and at AFJ's headquarters inside the Manhattan Criminal Courthouse. All participants receive HIRE UP services for job training, communications/civics, life skills, mental and physical health wellness, case management, and educational support. In addition, Court-Involved participants receive court advocacy services with intensive mentoring. AFJ also provides referrals to third party specialists for all participants when needed.

During 2022, AFJ served 262 participants in the Court-Involved program: 155 were in the long-term Court Advocacy program, 86 were in the Family Court Diversion program, and 21 were Re-entry. One hundred forty-one were served through the Lower East Side site and 121 were served through the Harlem site. This report focuses on the 262 Court-Involved participants.

During 2022, 102 young people entered the Court-Involved program. That is by far the largest intake of new participants in the history of AFJ.

During 2022, AFJ also served 72 At-Risk participants online and at its Lower East Side (50) and Harlem (22) locations. Additionally, AFJ provided 52 participants with referrals and other short-term assistance.

Characteristics of the Participants

- 87% of the participants were African American or Hispanic.
- 81% were male, and the majority (71%) were between the ages of 16 and 21 at intake.
- The program enrolled 102 new Court-Involved participants in 2022.

Participation

- In 2022, AFJ offered over 200 workshops, classes, and training sessions focused on digital literacy, construction safety, videography, mental health, entrepreneurship, job readiness, interpersonal relationships, educational tutoring, communication skills/civics, and legal rights and responsibilities.
- There were 19,742 encounters between AFJ staff and Court-Involved participants in 2022. On average, each participant received 10.9 encounters per month. The monthly median number of encounters was 4.7. On average, each participant who entered the Court-Involved program in 2022 (a "new participant") received 10.8 encounters per month. The monthly median number of encounters for new participants was 7.8. By design, AFJ has more intense involvement with Court-Involved participants in their first year in the program.
- 198 referrals were provided to Court-Involved participants.

Program Outcomes/Recidivism

- Of the cases that had court outcomes during 2022, 62% were adjourned and 15% were dismissed.
- In 2022, 101 Court-Involved participants exited the program; 91 completed the program, with 78 achieving all goals.
- 6% (n=14) of AFJ participants in the recidivism study (n=244) were convicted in New York State within three years after enrolling in the program, compared to 59% of New York City parolees from a 2010 study. The three-year conviction rate among successful graduates of AFJ was 7% (n=11).
- Within six years of enrollment, 13% (n=19) of participants who were enrolled in 2013, 2014, or 2015 (n=141) were convicted. Among successful program completers, 12% (n=12) were convicted within six years of enrollment; 9% (n=9) were convicted of a misdemeanor crime and 3% (n=3) were convicted of a felony crime.

Participant Satisfaction

- In 2022, AFJ continued to collect participant satisfaction surveys to assess the impact of the program services beyond recidivism and to obtain participant feedback. Respondents reported that AFJ had given them hope, increased their self-esteem, improved their decision-making, and exposed them to new experiences and opportunities. Respondents rated the program highly; all but one respondent said they would recommend the program to peers involved with the criminal justice system.

Introduction

Avenues for Justice (AFJ) is a non-profit community-based program which diverts young people across New York City, ages 13-24, from the criminal justice system to supportive services to help them build successful lives. AFJ operates programs for two main groups of participants: 1) "Court-Involved" participants who are in the criminal justice system; and 2) "At-Risk" participants who are at-risk of involvement with the criminal justice system. Court-Involved includes three sub-groups of participants: a) AFJ's signature long-term Court Advocacy program ("Court Advocacy"), b) a short-term diversion program for younger participants whose cases are in the NYC Family Court ("Family Court Diversion"), and c) a program for re-entry participants who have been recently released from a detention center ("Re-entry").

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During 2022, AFJ served 262 participants in the Court-Involved program: 155 were in the long-term Court Advocacy program, 86 were in the Family Court Diversion program, and 21 were Re-entry. One hundred forty-one (141) were served through the Lower East Side site and 121 were served through the Harlem site. This report focuses on the 262 Court-Involved participants.

During 2022, AFJ also served 72 At-Risk participants online and onsite at its Lower East Side (50) and Harlem (22) community centers. Additionally, AFJ provided 52 participants with referrals and other short-term assistance.

The first section of this report, **Characteristics of the Participants**, presents a demographic profile of the 262 participants served in the Court-Involved program in 2022. It also provides information about new enrollments.

The second section, **Participation**, presents attendance data and shows length of participation at AFJ, overall program retention, and encounter information. A summary of referrals made by AFJ is also presented.

The **Program Outcomes** section presents court outcome data, the number of participants successfully engaged in work and/or school, and graduation outcomes. A summary of the annual recidivism study is included, as well as participant satisfaction data from a small group of AFJ graduates.

Characteristics of the Participants

As seen in Table 1, most of the 262 Court-Involved participants served during 2022 were male (81%), identified as African American (51%) or Hispanic (36%), and were 16 to 21 years of age at intake (71%). A majority lived with at least one parent (78%) and about half of these families received Medicaid (52%) and 41% received food stamps. Half of the participants were referred from the court. One hundred two of these participants were newly enrolled during 2022.

Table 1: Demographics at intake	All youth (n=262)	Newly enrolled participants (n=102)
Gender:		
Male	81%	88%
Female	19%	12%
Race/ethnicity:		
Hispanic	36%	32%
African American	51%	54%
Other/Multiethnic	13%	14%
Not reported	<1%	0%
Age:		
15 years and younger	16%	25%
16-18 years	50%	55%
19-21 years	21%	12%
22-24 years	11%	5%
25 years and older	2%	3%
Living situation:		
Two parents	18%	17%
One parent	60%	65%
Guardian(s), relative(s), foster care	10%	5%
Intimate partner or sibling (no parent)	7%	7%
Self and their child(ren)	<1%	0%
Alone	2%	2%
Other, unspecified (not reported)	3%	4%
Participant or family receives:¹		
Food stamps	41%	43%
Public assistance/welfare	26%	26%
Medicaid	52%	54%
Private health insurance	12%	17%
Intake source:		
Self-referred	5%	0%
Family	11%	8%
Court	50%	69%
Other	33%	22%
Not reported	1%	1%

¹ Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents could check more than one response.

A substantial majority of all Court-Involved participants enter the program in the Intensive Phase (Table 2). Intensive Phase services include court appearances, school visits, regular counseling, curfews, mandatory check-in at centers, and monitoring of individualized services (e.g., substance abuse programming, support services at community centers, and other mandated activities). Supportive Phase services are a step down in the level of intervention from the Intensive Phase and, as such, require less court reporting and reduced frequency of in-person contacts while continuing to provide supportive services according to individual need. Participants in both phases receive online and onsite HIRE UP services.

Toward the end of 2020, AFJ began working with young people in the New York City Law Department's [new] Family Court Division's "Diversion" program. Young people assigned to the Family Court Diversion program are mandated to community-based Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) organizations, such as AFJ, for a specific number of sessions or workshops---typically 4 to 16. Diversion youth must also complete their mandate within a 60-day period. The program targets youth up to the age of 18. Determining whether a youth is eligible for Diversion is at the judge's discretion, with consideration of several factors such as age, criminal offense, criminal history, and personal situation. Diversion participants receive the same services as other AFJ participants but generally have a much shorter stay. A third of the 2022 Court-Involved participants were Diversion participants; 53% of the new Court-Involved enrollees in 2022 were Diversion participants. After the 60-day mandate, AFJ encourages Diversion participants to continue to receive supportive services in the same manner as other Court-Involved participants. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the Diversion participants active in 2022 stayed in the program after the 60-day mandate. The length of stay ranged from less than one month to 2.4 years, with a median length of stay of 8 months.

Table 2: Program phase and diversion status at intake	All youth (n=262)	Newly enrolled participants (n=102)
Program phase:		
Intensive Phase	86%	98%
Supportive Phase	13%	2%
Not reported	1%	0%
% who were Family Court Diversion participants:	33%	53%

In 2022, AFJ entered into a new partnership with the NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and Center for Community Alternatives for the period July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 to serve 50 youth who are re-entering from having recently been incarcerated. Between July 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022, 21 youth were served. These participants are included in the Court-Involved count and information.

Over the last several years, AFJ's participant population has become much more geographically dispersed. In 2019, more than three-quarters (77%) of all Court-Involved participants lived in Manhattan and about a quarter (23%) lived in the outer boroughs. By 2022, less than half (44%) of all Court-Involved participants lived in Manhattan and 56% lived in the outer boroughs. Among new participants in 2022, only 32% lived in Manhattan and 68% lived in the outer boroughs. AFJ's development of a hybrid platform of digital programs in response to COVID-19 was a major factor for AFJ's expansion into the outer boroughs. In 2022, Court-Involved participants lived in 42 of New York City's 51 Council Districts. This increased reach has raised AFJ's profile throughout New York City and has likely been a factor in AFJ's increased participation in City-sponsored initiatives.

Table 3: Neighborhood at Intake	All youth (n=262)	Newly enrolled participants (n=102)
Neighborhood:		
Lower East Side	15%	7%
Harlem/Upper Manhattan (Harlem, E. Harlem, Central Harlem, Wash. Heights, Inwood)	23%	21%
Other parts of Manhattan	6%	4%
Outside of Manhattan		
Bronx	21%	27%
Brooklyn	15%	21%
Queens	10%	6%
Staten Island	3%	2%
Other	7%	12%

Most participants come to the program involved in criminal proceedings (86% of all participants and 93% of newly enrolled participants). Sixty-three percent of the participants were enrolled in school or some other educational program at intake and about one quarter had a high school diploma or GED. Nine percent (9%) of all participants started the program with a need to re-enter school or a GED program and 2% needed help with a college search. Among newly enrolled participants, 13% needed educational assistance. Similar to past years, 13% of all participants were employed at intake.

Table 4: Participant criminal history, education, and employment status at intake	All youth (n=262)	Newly enrolled participants (n=102)
Prior criminal history (average numbers):		
Arrests	2.3 (n=239)	2.3 (n=101)
Convictions	0.4 (n=126)	0.4 (n=54)
Misdemeanors	0.7 (n=114)	0.5 (n=44)
Felonies	0.5 (n=108)	0.1 (n=41)
Education and employment status:		
In school/educational program	63%	70%
Have high school diploma	20%	19%
Have GED	3%	0%
Need to re-enter high school or start GED	9%	12%
Need help with college or trade school search	2%	1%
Currently employed	13%	12%

Note: Education and employment percentages add to more than 100% because respondents could check more than one response.

Participation

Workshop Attendance

In 2022, AFJ's HIRE UP program included a wide roster of job training, educational, life skills training, and mental and physical health wellness programs, both online and onsite at the Harlem and Lower East Side community centers. The table below lists the 15 typical workshops offered, the number of sessions and the total attendance at each. The workshops with the greatest attendance included Legal Rights & Responsibilities, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 40 training and certification, and the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) 150-hour media camp.

Table 5: Topical workshops offered	Number of Sessions	Total Attendance
Legal Rights & Responsibilities - includes 1 legal panel	25	336
Careers - OSHA 40 training, including scaffolding, flagging	16	336
Careers - SYEP 150-hour media camp - video, podcast, music	24	249
Digital Literacy - group instruction and self-paced	89	170
Mental health - group sessions	22	168
Careers - podcasting and civics	15	159
Mental health - physical fitness and socialization	12	69
Job readiness - for employment-aged Participants	9	62
Job readiness - for underaged Participants	8	43
Careers - civics and public speaking	3	37
Careers - blog writing	2	28
Career panels - small business owners	2	25
Financial literacy	2	19
Careers - cooking, restaurant industry	2	15
Careers - videography	1	1

Forty-three (43) active At-Risk Participants participated in the HIRE UP program. The workshops with the greatest attendance included Legal Rights & Responsibilities, the SYEP 150-hour media camp, and Digital Literacy.

Table 6: At-Risk Participants Only Topical workshops offered	Number of Sessions Attended	Total Attendance	Number of Individuals
Legal Rights & Responsibilities	16	58	6
Careers - SYEP 150-hour media camp	24	48	2
Digital Literacy	17	25	9
Mental health - group sessions	13	21	2
Mental health - physical fitness and socialization	12	18	3
Job Readiness - for underaged Participants	8	15	5
Media-podcasting & civics	9	15	6
Careers - OSHA 40 training	8	8	1
Careers - civics and public speaking	3	7	4
Career panels - entrepreneurs	2	6	4
Media workshops-blogs, videos	3	6	3
Job Readiness- for employment-aged Participants	3	5	3
Careers - cooking, restaurant industry	2	2	1
Financial literacy	1	1	1

Length of Participation and Retention

Table 7 illustrates the length of participation of AFJ Court-Involved participants seen in 2022. Fifty-two percent of all participants had been in the program for less than one year and 27% had been in the program for one or two years. Twenty-one percent had been attending for three or more years. On average, participants had been with the program for 1 year.

Table 7: Length of participation	Diversion youth (n=86)	Non-Diversion youth (n=176)	All youth (n=262)
Less than 1 year	78%	39%	52%
1 or 2 years	22%	30%	27%
3 or 4 years	0%	16%	11%
5 or more years	0%	15%	10%
Median # of years	0.6	1.6	1.0

AFJ began serving Family Court Diversion participants in 2020. Diversion participants are mandated to AFJ for 4 to 16 sessions (encounters) for a 60-day period. Of the 28 Diversion participants who left the program in 2022, the average length of stay was ten months. Thus, the inclusion of Family Court Diversion participants has reduced the average length of program stay compared to previous years.

Of the 53 participants who enrolled during 2021 and were eligible to be active (did not graduate the program) one year later, the program retained 89%. Of the 27 participants who enrolled during 2019 and were eligible to be active three years later, the program retained 56%. Of the 44% who were not retained, 8 (30%) completed court goals only, and 4 (15%) were terminated from the program.

Participant Encounters

As seen in Table 8, the 262 Court-Involved participants had an average of 75.3 encounters with staff; the median² number of encounters was 34. Participant encounters included telephone, electronic, letter, and face-to-face contacts which may involve counseling, tutoring, or workshop attendance. The 102 new participants had an average of 64.8 encounters with staff; the median number of encounters was 38. Monthly median encounters for all Court-Involved participants and for new Court-Involved participants were 4.7 and 7.8 respectively. Monthly median calculations only account for the period in which a participant is active in the program, so it is the most accurate measure of the frequency of encounters. By design, AFJ staff interact with new participants more often than with other participants because that is when most participants are at greatest risk.

Table 8: Encounters (2022)	Diversion youth (n=86)	Non-Diversion youth (n=176)	New participants (n=102)	All youth (n=262)
Total	3,419	16,323	6,613	19,742
Mean	39.8	92.7	64.8	75.3
Median	27.5	37.5	38.0	34.0
Range	1 to 336	1 to 824	1 to 442	1 to 824
Monthly mean	9.2	11.7	10.8	10.9
Monthly median	3.5	5.3	7.8	4.7

² The mean number of encounters is much higher than the median number of encounters because total encounters for individual participants ranged from one to as many as 824 during 2022. The median is the more accurate way to consider a typical case.

Note: The monthly mean and monthly median are calculated by dividing the number of encounters during the reporting period by the number of months a participant was active during that reporting period.

Figure 1 shows the total number of encounters over the past five years. The number of participants is included below each year in parenthesis. The number of encounters increased substantially in 2019 due to improvements in data collection. Starting in 2019, AFJ court advocates recorded all participant contacts separately (in previous years, multiple contacts on a given day were recorded as one encounter).

It should be noted that in 2020 and 2021 the number of encounters decreased due to two factors. Firstly, the community center closures required by COVID-19 reduced staff/participant interpersonal interactions. Secondly, 42% of AFJ's new participants in the program in 2021 came from a Diversion program run by the Family Court which, by design, is more short-term in nature and calls for fewer encounters. Additionally, 15 participants in 2021 were shorter-term Re-entry participants. It is also possible that encounter data collection was challenged in 2021 by the full year of remote working. The number of encounters increased in 2022 with both community centers fully reopening.

Notably, however, Figure 2 shows monthly median encounters for new participants—who are at greater risk--have been fairly consistent over the past four years (the years in which it was measured). In 2023, AFJ will use a newly tailored database created in 2022 to facilitate and enhance data collection, including the recording of encounters, in all work environments.

Figure 1
Number of Client Encounters
2018 - 2022

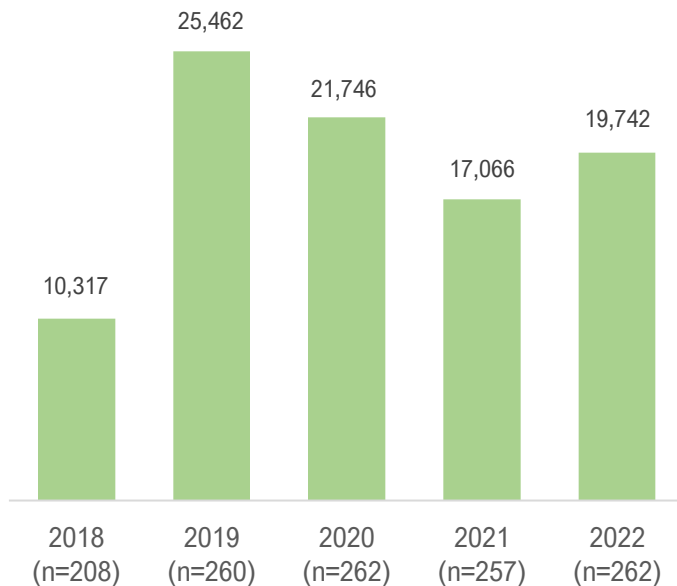
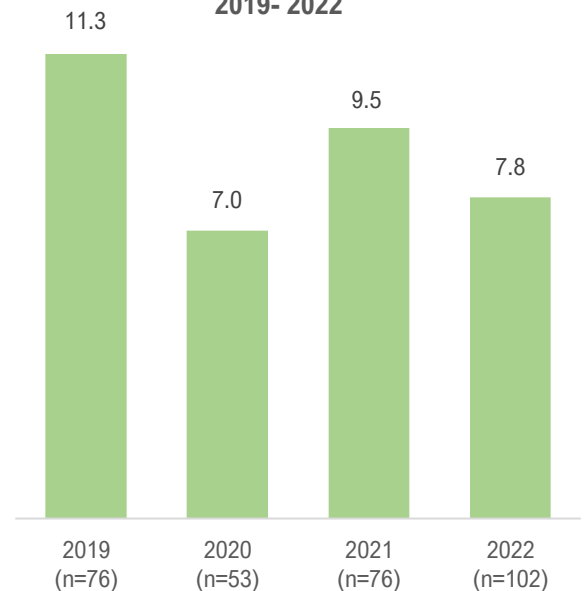


Figure 2
Median Monthly Encounters for New
Participants
2019- 2022



Referrals Made by AFJ

Table 9 shows the number of employment, education, substance abuse, mental health, housing, and medical referrals during 2022. During the year, there were 198 total referrals for 59 participants. Employment and education referrals occurred most often. Referrals are used to help prevent further involvement in the juvenile justice system and have become a substantial part of AFJ's work. The number of referrals in 2022 was lower than the number of referrals in pre-pandemic years because COVID-19 created a backlog in the delivery of health and social services by third-party providers. Additionally in 2022, many third-party providers were transitioning back to onsite/in person services creating long waiting lists.

Table 9: Referral type	# of participants	# of referrals	Median # of referrals per participant
Employment	44	115	2
Education	24	42	1
Substance abuse – inpatient	2	4	2
Substance abuse – outpatient	1	1	1
Mental health – inpatient	3	3	1
Mental health – outpatient	8	16	1
Housing	8	11	1
Medical	2	6	3
<i>Overall Total</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>2</i>

Program Outcomes

Graduation Outcomes

Graduation outcomes for participants who exited the program over the last seven years are shown in Table 10. As seen here, the vast majority of exiting participants completed the program successfully. Just 6% of Court-Involved participants who exited the program failed to complete the program.

Table 10: Graduation outcomes for participants who exited the program	Successful completion	Completed, not all goals met	Terminated/ incarcerated	Total # of participants who exited the program
2016	71%	21%	8%	38
2017	67%	31%	2%	55
2018	67%	25%	8%	24
2019	63%	31%	6%	51
2020	81%	15%	4%	81
2021	86%	9%	5%	96
2022	77%	13%	10%	101
<i>Total</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>446</i>

Table 11 shows the completion status of the new participants served over the past ten years as of December 2022. Of the 550 enrollees over this ten-year period, 29% were still active in the AFJ program, 54% successfully completed the program and met all goals, and 12% completed the program but did not meet all goals. Only 5% failed to complete the program.

Additionally, of the 75 Court-Involved participants who enrolled in 2021, 44 (59%) successfully completed the program by 2022. Twenty-five of these 44 were Family Court Diversion participants. This demonstrates the shorter duration of the Diversion program.

Table 11: Exit data per newly enrolled cohort over the past ten years	Newly enrolled	Still active	Successful completion	Completed, not all goals met	Terminated/ incarcerated
2013	46	2%	83%	13%	2%
2014	53	6%	67%	19%	8%
2015	42	7%	64%	19%	10%
2016	39	13%	21%	61%	5%
2017	32	19%	65%	13%	3%
2018	32	16%	59%	22%	3%
2019	76	13%	67%	12%	8%
2020	53	13%	70%	8%	9%
2021	75	32%	59%	8%	1%
2022	102	94%	2%	2%	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>5%</i>

Court Outcomes

In 2022, there were 279 court outcomes reported for 107 participants. Some 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 or dismissed cases. An AFJ participant's court case can

have multiple adjournments as the court and judge evaluate a participant's progress with the program.

Table 12: Court outcomes	# (%)
Case adjourned	172 (62%)
Case dismissed	42 (15%)
Sent to probation	15 (5%)
Adjudicated youth offender	12 (4%)
Bail set	9 (3%)
Assigned to AFJ	7 (3%)
Plead	6 (2%)
Deferred sentence	5 (2%)
Conditional discharge/ACD	4 (1%)
Sent to prison	3 (1%)
Split sentence	1 (<1%)
Reduced Sentence	1 (<1%)
Paroled	0 (0%)
Community service	0 (0%)
Acquitted	0 (0%)
Other	2 (<1%)
Total	279 (100%)

Certifications

AFJ participants earned 281 digital literacy certifications in 2022 (Table 13). The most commonly earned certifications pertained to basic computer skills, email, internet basics, social media, and MS Windows 10.

Table 13: Digital literacy certifications	# earned in 2022
Basic computer skills	48 (17%)
Email	41 (14%)
Internet basics	39 (14%)
Social media	30 (11%)
MS Windows 10	27 (10%)
Mac OS	18 (6%)
Accessing telehealth appointments	16 (6%)
K-12 distance learning	14 (5%)
MS Word Office 2016	13 (5%)
Google docs	11 (4%)
MS PowerPoint Office 2016	8 (3%)
Your digital footprint	6 (2%)
MS Excel Office 2016	5 (2%)
Information literacy	3 (1%)
Career search skills	2 (<1%)
Total	281 (100%)

Eighteen (18) participants earned 21 OSHA certifications, with 17 certifications earned for OSHA 40 and four (4) earned for OSHA Flaggers and Scaffolding safety.

Table 14: OSHA certifications	# earned in 2022
OSHA 40	17 (81%)
OSHA flaggers and scaffolding safety	4 (19%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>21 (100%)</i>

Employment

Eighty-four (32%) of the 262 active participants were employed and 38 of these obtained employment during the 2022 calendar year. Of those that were employed, three-quarters participated in the HIRE UP program. Of those that had obtained employment during 2022, 89% had participated in the HIRE UP program.

Table 15: Employment	(n)	# (%)
Number of active participants employed	262	84 (32%)
Number who obtained employment in 2022	262	38 (15%)
Number of employed who participated in HIRE UP	84	62 (74%)
Number who obtained employment in 2022 who participated in HIRE UP	38	34 (89%)

Education

Education data are collected from participants at intake, on an annual basis while a participant is active (annual follow-up), and at program completion/exit. This provides information about these indicators during program involvement. One hundred sixty-six participants had at least one follow-up assessment and/or an exit assessment as of December 31, 2022.

As seen here, 68 participants were currently in school at last follow-up/exit and 21 identified a need for education and re-entered school at some point during participation in the AFJ program. In total, 50 participants improved their educational situation from intake to last follow-up/exit.

Table 16: Education	(n)	# (%)
Number in school/educational program at intake	262	164 (63%)
Number in school/educational program at last follow-up/exit	166	68 (41%)
Number that had re-entered school/educational program at some point during participation at AFJ (of those with an identified need to re-enter)	73	21 (29%)
Number who had HS diploma or GED at intake	262	60 (23%)
Number who attained a HS diploma/GED from intake to last follow-up/exit (of those without a HS diploma/GED at intake)	125	37 (30%)
Number who had college/trade school diploma at intake	262	2 (1%)
Number who attained a college/trade school diploma from intake to last follow-up/exit	166	1 (1%)
Number who had <u>any</u> improved educational situation from intake to last follow-up/exit	166	50 (30%)

Note: 166 of the 262 active participants had at least one follow-up and/or exit by December 2022.

Recidivism

A primary focus of ATI programs, such as AFJ, is to aid Court-Involved participants in desisting from future involvement in crime. Historically, to measure desistance, AFJ has tracked participant recidivism.³ In 2017, AFJ launched a new recidivism study. As seen in Table 17 below, 244 participants across six cohorts have been included in this new study to date.

Recidivism data were collected each year (2017 through 2022). Three-year recidivism rates were calculated using the date of enrollment in AFJ as the starting point. Recidivism was measured separately based on 1) rearrests, 2) convictions, and 3) incarcerations.⁴ Six-year recidivism rates are also provided for the 2013 through 2015 cohorts. To put the AFJ recidivism rates into context, comparison data are presented as well.

Study Sample

Demographic characteristics of the participants in the recidivism study were gathered from program enrollment data completed by AFJ Court Advocates. As seen in Table 17, the majority of participants identified as male. On average, they were about 18 years old. The majority were Black/African American or Hispanic/Latino.

Table 17: Demographics at intake	2013 Cohort (n=46)	2014 Cohort (n=53)	2015 Cohort (n=42)	2016 Cohort (n=39)	2017 Cohort (n=32)	2018 Cohort (n=32)	Total (n=244)
Gender	(n=46)	(n=52)	(n=42)	(n=39)	(n=32)	(n=32)	(n=243)
Male	70%	81%	88%	67%	78%	66%	75%
Female	30%	19%	12%	33%	22%	34%	25%
Race/ethnicity	(n=46)	(n=51)	(n=42)	(n=39)	(n=32)	(n=32)	(n=242)
Hispanic/Latino	33%	47%	52%	41%	41%	60%	45%
Black/African American	48%	39%	45%	41%	41%	31%	41%
White/Caucasian	2%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	1%
Other/Multiethnic	17%	14%	3%	15%	18%	9%	13%
Age	(n=46)	(n=53)	(n=42)	(n=39)	(n=32)	(n=32)	(n=244)
Age:							
15 years & younger	13%	21%	12%	13%	9%	3%	13%
16-18 years	48%	66%	55%	67%	57%	53%	57%
19-21 years	35%	11%	29%	15%	28%	28%	24%
22-24 years	4%	2%	2%	5%	3%	16%	5%
25 years and older	0%	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%	1%

Recidivism Outcomes

Rearrests

The definition of recidivism varies across studies. In its study, AFJ calculated three different recidivism rates starting from enrollment in AFJ to 1) first arrest after program enrollment within the study period, 2) first conviction after program enrollment within the study period, and 3) first incarceration after program enrollment within the study period. Eighty-six percent (86%) of AFJ

³ A prior recidivism study which ran from 1994-2015 was discontinued in anticipation of this study, which includes more detailed data collection.

⁴ To obtain follow up data, AFJ staff searched the NYS Unified Court System's eCourts case tracking service and provided arrest, conviction, and incarceration data to Philliber Research & Evaluation. Documentation of the data presented in this report is stored at AFJ.

participants in the study were not rearrested in New York State within 3 years of enrollment. Of the 14% (n=33) of AFJ participants who were rearrested, 7% were charged with misdemeanors and 7% were charged with felonies (Table 18). Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the participants who successfully completed AFJ's program avoided rearrest. Of the 12% (n=19) who were rearrested within three years of program entry; 7% (n=11) were charged with a misdemeanor crime and 5% (n=8) with a felony crime.

Of the nine participants in the 2018 Cohort rearrested, six were arrested in 2020 and one in 2021. It is possible that this is related to the increase in crime in New York City due to COVID-related socioeconomic dislocation.

Table 18: Rearrested within three years of intake	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort	2015 Cohort	2016 Cohort	2017 Cohort	2018 Cohort	Total
Among entire sample	(n=46)	(n=53)	(n=42)	(n=39)	(n=32)	(n=32)	(n=244)
No new arrest	78%	90%	100%	89%	84%	72%	86%
New misdemeanor arrest	18%	4%	0%	8%	3%	6%	7%
New felony arrest	4%	6%	0%	3%	13%	22%	7%
Among clients who successfully completed program	(n=38)	(n=36)	(n=25)	(n=24)	(n=21)	(n=18)	(n=162)
No new arrest	84%	91%	100%	92%	85%	72%	88%
New misdemeanor arrest	13%	6%	0%	8%	5%	6%	7%
New felony arrest	3%	3%	0%	0%	10%	22%	5%

It is now possible to assess recidivism after six years among the 2013, 2014, and 2015 cohorts. As seen below, 18% of participants (n=25) who were enrolled in 2013, 2014, or 2015 were rearrested within six years of enrollment. Among successful program completers, 16% (n=16) were rearrested within six years of enrollment; 11% (n=11) for a misdemeanor crime, 4% (n=4) for a felony crime, and 1% (n=1) for a technical violation misdemeanor.

Table 19: Rearrested within six years of intake	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort	2015 Cohort	Total
Among entire sample	(n=46)	(n=53)	(n=42)	(n=141)
No new arrest	65%	84%	98%	82%
New misdemeanor arrest	26%	8%	0%	11%
New felony arrest	9%	6%	2%	6%
Technical violation misdemeanor	0%	2%	0%	1%
Among clients who successfully completed program	(n=38)	(n=36)	(n=25)	(n=99)
No new arrest	71%	86%	100%	84%
New misdemeanor arrest	21%	8%	0%	11%
New felony arrest	8%	3%	0%	4%
Technical violation misdemeanor	0%	3%	0%	1%

Reconvictions

Reconvictions are generally considered a more valid measure of recidivism than rearrests because not all arrestees have in fact committed crimes. This is especially true in heavily policed neighborhoods such as the ones where most of AFJ's participants live. Within three years of enrollment, 6% of AFJ participants were convicted within New York State (Table 20).⁵ Among successful program completers, 7% (n=11) were convicted within three years of enrollment; 4% (n=6) were convicted of a misdemeanor crime and 3% (n=5) with a felony crime.

⁵ Eight cases were still pending court outcome.

Table 20: Convicted within three years of intake	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort	2015 Cohort	2016 Cohort	2017 Cohort	2018 Cohort	Total
Among entire sample	(n=46)	(n=53)	(n=42)	(n=39)	(n=32)	(n=32)	(n=244)
No new conviction	87%	94%	100%	97%	94%	91%	94%
New misdemeanor conviction	11%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%	3%
New felony conviction	2%	4%	0%	0%	6%	9%	3%
Among clients who successfully completed program	(n=38)	(n=36)	(n=25)	(n=24)	(n=21)	(n=18)	(n=162)
No new conviction	89%	94%	100%	96%	90%	89%	93%
New misdemeanor conviction	11%	3%	0%	4%	0%	0%	4%
New felony conviction	0%	3%	0%	0%	10%	11%	3%

Within six years of enrollment, 13% (n=19) of participants who were enrolled in 2013, 2014, or 2015 were convicted. Among successful program completers, 12% (n=12) were convicted within six years of enrollment; 9% (n=9) were convicted of a misdemeanor crime and 3% (n=3) of a felony crime.

Table 21: Convicted within six years of intake	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort	2015 Cohort	Total
Among entire sample	(n=46)	(n=53)	(n=42)	(n=141)
No new conviction	70%	90%	100%	87%
New misdemeanor conviction	24%	4%	0%	9%
New felony conviction	6%	6%	0%	4%
Among clients who successfully completed program	(n=38)	(n=36)	(n=25)	(n=99)
No new conviction	77%	91%	100%	88%
New misdemeanor conviction	18%	6%	0%	9%
New felony conviction	5%	3%	0%	3%

Incarcerations

Just 6% of AFJ participants were incarcerated within three years of their enrollment in AFJ (Table 22). This number was consistent among successful program completers as well; 3% (n=5) were incarcerated on misdemeanor charges and 3% (n=5) on felony charges.

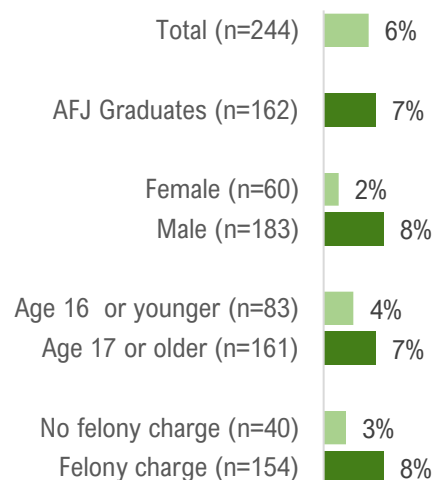
Table 22: Incarcerated within three years of intake	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort	2015 Cohort	2016 Cohort	2017 Cohort	2018 Cohort	Total
Among entire sample	(n=46)	(n=53)	(n=42)	(n=39)	(n=32)	(n=32)	(n=244)
No new incarceration	91%	94%	100%	97%	91%	91%	94%
New misdemeanor incarceration	9%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%	3%
New felony incarceration	0%	4%	0%	0%	9%	9%	3%
Among clients who successfully completed program	(n=38)	(n=36)	(n=25)	(n=24)	(n=21)	(n=18)	(n=162)
No new incarceration	92%	94%	100%	96%	90%	89%	94%
New misdemeanor incarceration	8%	3%	0%	4%	0%	0%	3%
New felony incarceration	0%	3%	0%	0%	10%	11%	3%

Within six years of enrollment, 12% (n=17) of AFJ participants enrolled in 2013, 2014, or 2015 were incarcerated; 8% (n=11) on misdemeanor charges and 4% (n=6) on felony charges. Among successful program completers, 11% (n=11) were incarcerated; 8% (n=8) were incarcerated on misdemeanor charges and 3% (n=3) on felony charges.

Table 23: Incarcerated within six years of intake	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort	2015 Cohort	Total
Among entire sample	(n=46)	(n=53)	(n=42)	(n=141)
No new incarceration	74%	92%	98%	88%
New misdemeanor incarceration	20%	4%	0%	8%
New felony incarceration	6%	4%	2%	4%
Among participants who successfully completed program	(n=38)	(n=36)	(n=25)	(n=99)
No new incarceration	79%	91%	100%	89%
New misdemeanor incarceration	16%	6%	0%	8%
New felony incarceration	5%	3%	0%	3%

Three-year reconviction rates were examined by participant characteristics at program enrollment (combining all cohorts). Those with reconvictions were slightly more likely to be male, and/or age 17 or older, and/or have had a felony charge at enrollment (Figure 3). None of these differences were statistically significant.

Figure 3
Reconviction rates by subgroup
(3 years after enrollment)



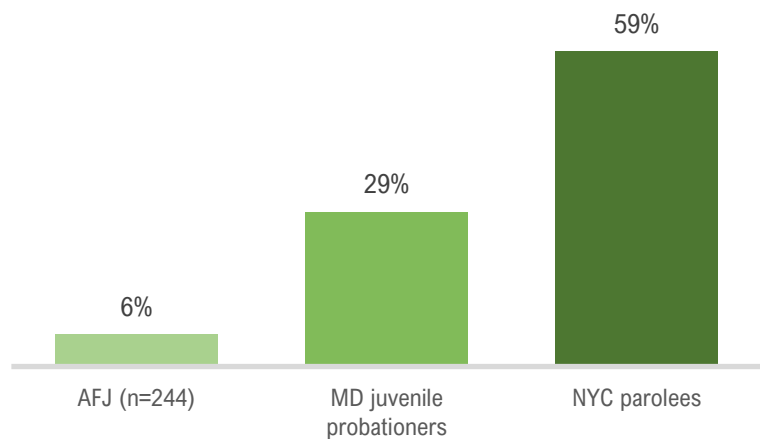
Overall, these recidivism data suggest the AFJ program continues to succeed in helping participants desist from future crime.

Comparison Data

This section highlights comparison data from several studies, but caution should be used when considering comparison recidivism data. The design of a study will affect the reported recidivism rates. For example, recidivism may be defined as rearrest, reconviction, or reincarceration. Some studies may include incarceration for technical violations while others may not. Further, study samples may include only prisoners or probationers, while others may include only juveniles or adults.

Although sampling techniques, sample characteristics, and definitions of recidivism and incarceration vary, published recidivism data suggest AFJ participants have rearrest, reconviction, and incarceration rates considerably lower than comparison samples. The three-year AFJ reconviction rate is 6% compared to other studies (Figure 4). The six-year AFJ reconviction rate is 13% (compared to a 32% reconviction rate among federal offenders released in 2005 after eight years) (not shown).

Figure 4
Comparison 3-year reconviction rates



The following is a select list showing comparison rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration rates:

- A study of Maryland juvenile offenders with first-time probation dispositions found that within three years of the start date of community supervision, 59% were rearrested, 29% were reconvicted, and 15% were incarcerated.⁶
- A study published in 2010, found that 69% of New York City parolees were rearrested within three years and 59% were reconvicted within three years.⁷
- Based on 2019 DART data, the New York City rearrest rate within one year was 25% among those who were 16-24 years old at time of arrest in Manhattan.⁸
- A 2016 report from the United States Sentencing Commission found that among more than 25,000 federal offenders released in 2005, 49% were rearrested, 32% were reconvicted, and 25% were reincarcerated over an eight-year follow-up period.⁹
- A 2015 report from the CSG Justice Center compiled recidivism data from 39 states and found that the highest reported recidivism rate (reinvolverment with the justice system) for juvenile offenders was 76% within three years, and 84% within five years.¹⁰
- Based on a 2005-2014, 30-state recidivism study among those aged 24 or younger the three-year rearrest rate was 76%, the six-year rearrest rate was 87%, and the nine-year rearrest rate was 90%.¹¹

⁶ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. (December 2021). *Data Resource Guide: Fiscal Year 2021*. [Data Resource Guide Fiscal Year 2021 \(maryland.gov\)](https://www.mdtv.org/Data-Resource-Guide-Fiscal-Year-2021). Accessed August 2022.

⁷ Hamilton, Z. (2010). *Do Reentry Courts Reduce Recidivism?*

https://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/Reentry_Evaluation.pdf. Retrieved October 2017.

⁸ New York City's Data Analytics Recidivism Tool (DART), v1.01. <http://recidivism.cityofnewyork.us>. Accessed August 2022.

⁹ Recidivism Among Federal Offenders: A Comprehensive Overview. United States Sentencing Commission. <https://www.ussc.gov/research/research-reports/recidivism-among-federal-offenders-comprehensive-overview>

¹⁰ 2015 CSG Justice Center report.

<https://info.mstservices.com/blog/juvenile-recidivism-rates#:~:text=The%20study%20found%20that%20juveniles,the%20numbers%20are%20equally%20high>

¹¹ United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics (May 2018). NCJ 250875. Special Report – 2018 Update on Prisoner Recidivism: A 9-Year Follow-up Period (2005-2014) <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/18upr9yfup0514.pdf>. Accessed September 2020.

Participant Satisfaction

In 2021, AFJ began using an online SurveyMonkey® survey to gather satisfaction feedback information on an anonymous basis from participants who had exited the program to gauge their opinions of the AFJ program regarding the staff, the services received, and program impact. The survey also seeks participant suggestions on how the program can be improved. Thirty-seven recent AFJ graduates have completed this survey.

Describing the Survey Sample

Of the 37 graduates that completed a satisfaction survey, most entered the program in 2020 or 2021 and all but one completed the program during 2021 or 2022. The length of time in the program ranged from three months to 8.5 years, with a median length of stay of 1.3 years.

Table 24: Intake and Exit Information (n=37)		%
Year of program intake:		
2021		35%
2020		35%
Between 2013 and 2019		30%
Year of program exit:		
2022		54%
2021		43%
2020		3%

Rating the Program Content

Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the most favorable rating, graduates rated the assistance they received from the AFJ program. As seen below, each of the services received were rated highly, all had an average rating of 4.1 or higher on the 5-point scale. Legal, family counseling, and educational assistance were rated the highest, with average ratings of 4.8 and 4.4 out of 5.0, respectively. Referrals to outside agencies and substance use assistance were rated lowest, both with an average of 4.1. Overall, AFJ services were rated very favorably, on average, 4.6 out of 5.0.

Table 25: Content ratings	(n)	1	2	3	4	5	Average rating
The legal assistance you received.	29	-	-	7%	10%	83%	4.8
The family counseling assistance you received.	19	-	5%	21%	5%	69%	4.4
The educational assistance you received.	31	-	-	19%	23%	58%	4.4
The vocational assistance you received.	26	-	7%	12%	19%	62%	4.3
The housing assistance you received.	16	6%	6%	13%	6%	69%	4.3
The mental health assistance you received.	23	4%	-	17%	22%	57%	4.3
The physical health assistance you received.	22	4%	-	23%	18%	55%	4.2
The financial/food assistance you received.	21	-	10%	19%	14%	57%	4.2
The referrals you received to outside agencies.	24	4%	8%	21%	4%	63%	4.1
The substance use assistance you received.	20	5%	10%	10%	20%	55%	4.1
The overall services you received at AFJ.	36	-	3%	3%	22%	72%	4.6

Note: Content ratings are based on those who received these services. In other words, if a graduate did not receive a service, a rating was not provided. Thus, the sample size fluctuates across content ratings.

Rating AFJ Staff and Other Aspects of the Program

Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the most favorable rating, graduates rated the helpfulness of the AFJ staff and court advocates, the frequency of contact, and the information provided. As seen below, all of the items listed were rated highly, with each receiving a rating of 4.3 or greater. The highest rating, on average, was given to the helpfulness of the court advocates with a mean of 4.8 out of 5.0.

Table 26: Staff ratings	(n)	1	2	3	4	5	Average rating
The helpfulness of the court advocates.	31	-	-	3%	10%	87%	4.8
The helpfulness of AFJ staff.	37	-	3%	3%	13%	81%	4.7
The information provided by court advocates.	30	-	3%	10%	-	87%	4.7
The information provided by AFJ staff.	37	-	5%	8%	11%	76%	4.6
The frequency of contact from AFJ staff.	35	-	-	12%	14%	74%	4.6
The frequency of contact from court advocates.	30	7%	3%	10%	13%	67%	4.3

Graduates indicated how helpful they thought the AFJ program was to them regarding numerous mental health concepts, relationships, decision making, peer pressure, education, employment, and managing alcohol/substance use (using a 4-point scale where 1 = 'not helpful at all' and 4 = 'very helpful'). Table 27 shows the percentage of responses within each category, as well as the average item rating. As seen here, the ratings ranged from an average of 2.8 to 3.3 on the 4-point scale. The areas with the highest ratings included: making smart decisions (rating of 3.3), having feelings of hope for the future (3.2), and being exposed to new possibilities and experiences (3.2). Graduates were less inclined to feel the AFJ program helped them with feelings of isolation or feeling as though they are part of a community (2.8).

Table 27: Helpfulness of the program	(n)	Not helpful at all	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Very helpful	Average rating
Making smart decisions	36	-	11%	50%	39%	3.3
Having feelings of hope for your future	37	3%	16%	35%	46%	3.2
Exposure to new possibilities & experiences	37	3%	13%	46%	38%	3.2
Resisting peer pressure	37	-	14%	54%	32%	3.2
Your mental health	37	8%	14%	46%	32%	3.0
Your education	37	8%	19%	38%	35%	3.0
Improved relationships with family & friends	37	11%	8%	49%	32%	3.0
Improving your self-esteem	37	5%	14%	57%	24%	3.0
Knowing and expressing your feelings	37	11%	13%	49%	27%	2.9
Your employment/job readiness	36	11%	14%	44%	31%	2.9
Managing alcohol/substance abuse	36	11%	14%	50%	25%	2.9
Feeling part of a community	37	11%	19%	46%	24%	2.8
Feeling less isolated	37	19%	11%	46%	24%	2.8

When asked what they liked best about the program, responses fell into three main categories: the staff and community of people, the support or services received, and the welcoming environment. Two participants simply said they liked everything about the program.

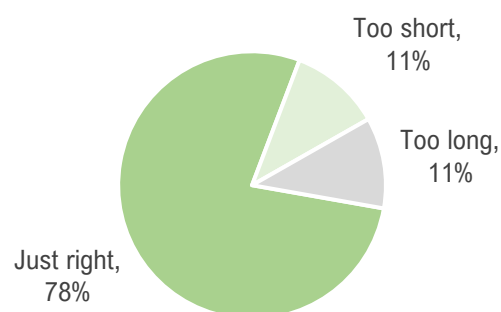
“{What I liked best about the program was} the staff and the interest they showed in helping.”

“The services I received with court advocates.”

“The family friendly environment. It’s been years and I still feel like AFJ still treats me like family!”

Graduates were asked to describe their length of participation at AFJ using the choices, “Too long,” “Too short,” or “Just right.” More than three-quarters (78%) reported their length of time at AFJ was just right (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Length of Participation



Assessing Program Impact

As seen in Table 28, 84% of the graduates agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “My life has improved as a result of AFJ”. Graduates rated this item, on average, at 3.2 out of 4.0 (using a 4-point scale ranging from 1 ‘strongly agree’ to 4 ‘strongly disagree’; this item was reverse coded so higher numbers were more favorable).

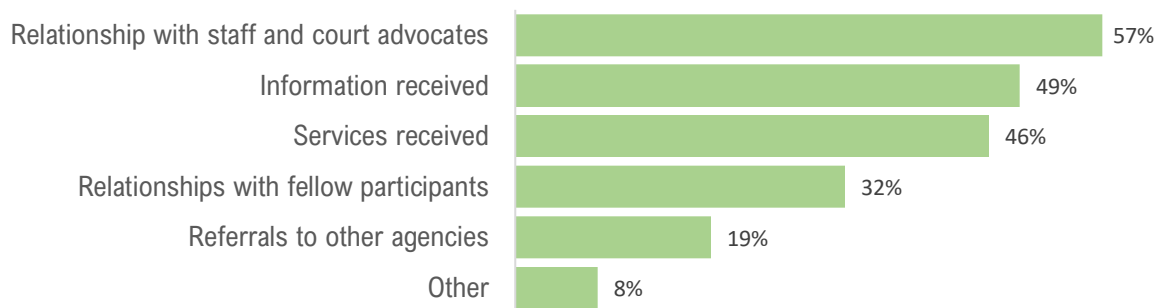
Table 28: Rating impact of program	(n)	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average rating
My life has improved as a result of AFJ.	37	41%	43%	13%	3%	3.2

“{My court advocate} was nothing but great to me. We also built a personal bond.”

“AFJ definitely is a place that kids and youth can look forward to going to after school or when things seem tough. They are always willing to help!”

Fifty-seven percent of the graduates reported their relationship with staff and court advocates was the most impactful part of their AFJ experience (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Most Impactful Part of AFJ Experience



Most survey respondents said they would not change anything at AFJ. A few suggested program changes including: more freedom for participants, start and end times, amount of time on zoom call, more locations, bigger space, better communication with staff, and offering more programs. Lastly, all but one of these 37 graduates would recommend the program to other young people involved with the criminal justice system.

Summary

This 2022 Annual Report is a statistical presentation of Avenues for Justice's program over the past year, as well as longer-term outcomes of recidivism and participant satisfaction for those participants no longer in the program. The Report reflects three key recent developments at AFJ: 1) AFJ's expansion of its service area from two neighborhoods in Manhattan to all five boroughs, 2) AFJ's new involvement in the New York City Family Court Diversion Program and a City-sponsored re-entry program for incarcerated youth, and 3) AFJ's expansion of its program offerings mainly through the build-out of the HIRE-UP program. All three are, to some degree, a result of AFJ's successful rapid evolution into a hybrid onsite/online program in response to the pandemic.

Expanded service area: In 2018-2019 AFJ expanded its service area from Manhattan to citywide. In 2022, 44% of participants overall were from Manhattan and 56% were from the outer boroughs, 68% of new intakes were from the outer boroughs.

Participants served: During 2022, AFJ worked with 262 Court-Involved participants. One hundred-two (102) of these participants entered in 2022, by far AFJ's largest one year intake. In 2022, 101 participants exited the Court-Involved program; 90% completed the program, with 77% achieving all program goals. Just 10% exited the program without completion.

Additionally, 72 At-Risk participants engaged in HIRE UP virtual and onsite programs through AFJ's two community centers, while another 52 youth received referrals or other short-term assistance. The majority of the Court-Involved youth were Hispanic or African American, male, and/or 16 to 21 years of age at enrollment. There were 19,742 encounters during 2022 and 198 referrals were provided.

AFJ's increased involvement in new programs: In 2021, AFJ became involved in two programs which are now part of AFJ's Court-Involved program: a program for incarcerated young people preparing to re-enter the community and the New York City Law Department's Family Court Division's Diversion program. Those from the Diversion division are mandated to attend AFJ for typically 4 to 16 sessions over a 60-day period. In 2022, 53% of new participants were Diversion youth. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the Diversion participants active in 2022 stayed in the program after the 60-day mandate. In 2022, AFJ served 21 Re-entry participants – these 21 are included in the 262 Court-Involved count and information.

Expanded program offerings: AFJ continued to expand its HIRE UP program launched in 2020, offering a total of 15 workshops in 2022, including topic areas focusing on careers, job readiness, mental health, financial literacy, digital literacy, and legal rights and responsibilities. The career offerings included the OSHA 40-hour construction safety training and the SYEP 150-hour media camp.

Court advocacy: Of the cases that had court outcomes during 2022, 62% were adjourned and 15% were dismissed.

Recidivism: Recidivism data have been collected for many years and continue to be among the lowest in the nation. Since 2013, the three-year AFJ conviction rate has been just 6%, while the six-year rate has been 13%. Both rates are considerably lower than comparison samples.

Expanded evaluation: AFJ continued its recent initiative to gather client satisfaction information from program graduates in 2022. Thirty-seven graduates have participated in this study to date. These past participants gave very favorable ratings to the services they received from AFJ, the staff, program logistics, and feelings of program impact. These results suggest participants valued their time at AFJ and nearly all would recommend the program to young people involved with the criminal justice system.