



PROBATION
VENTURA COUNTY

**Ventura County Probation Agency
Adult Reporting and Resource Center
Evaluation Report 2022**

Acknowledgements

EVALCORP would like to express gratitude to Ventura County Probation Agency (VCPA) for the opportunity to partner in conducting an evaluation of the County's Adult Reporting and Resource Center (ARRC). Special thanks are extended to Chief Varela, Theresa Hart, Jamie Alvarado, Dawn Whitt, Miguel Guerrero, and Edith Hernandez from VCPA. Additionally, we greatly appreciate all of the support and assistance from GEO Reentry Services managers and staff including Mary Jane Cordova, Sara Gaytan, Molly Rose Graves, Aaron Knight, and Andrew Corter. Thanks also are extended to Ventura and Simi Valley ARRC staff who assisted with client related data collection activities, as well as to all the Deputy Probation Officers involved in the evaluation. This project would not have been possible without their participation.

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Introduction

Ventura County Adult Reporting and Resource Center History and Overview

Following shifts in Ventura County Probation Agency's (VCPA) work furlough program and identification of the need for additional community-based resources to support the County's probation population, VCPA established the Adult Reporting and Resource Center (ARRC). The ARRC was created to address the criminogenic factors that lead to recidivism while providing a supportive, welcoming environment offering comprehensive and research-based services. VCPA selected GEO Reentry Services, LLC (GEO) to develop and operate the ARRC's two sites based upon their successful history and expertise implementing effective reentry programs nationwide.

From the beginning, it was critical that the Ventura County ARRC be developed as a "safe space" for clients while also maintaining open communication and cooperation with VCPA. Moreover, the ARRC was intended to provide a "one stop shop" approach for probation clients, offering multi-phase services delivered by highly trained, licensed staff expert at addressing the criminogenic risk factors and needs strongly correlated to criminal behavior and re-offending. The ARRC's services help clients make positive behavioral changes in their lives, thereby leading to fewer clients that require custodial sanctions, a reduction in recidivism, and an increase in public safety.

The primary populations served at the ARRC include:

1. clients with serious needs or who are at most risk of re-offending;
2. clients who struggle to comply with their court ordered obligations, who would otherwise be at risk of being returned to custody; and,
3. clients released from custody who require supervision, treatment, and support to be successful in their transition back to the community.

The ARRC serves both those on probation and a subset of pretrial defendants.

Evaluation Design and ARRC Client Engagement Initiatives

In 2022, EVALCORP was contracted by VCPA to design and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the ARRC. The evaluation was completed through a series of steps that included analyses of administrative data along with primary data collection. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess client engagement in services and the extent to which ARRC participation impacted recidivism and other justice system outcomes.

EVALCORP employed a mixed-methods research design consisting of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis activities to assess the ARRC program and the impact services had on client outcomes. To document the characteristics of clients and the nature and extent of services that they received through the ARRC, the evaluation team relied on extant service/administrative data collected and maintained in GEO's case management system (GEOTRACK 3.0). Examples of such information includes, but is not limited to, client demographics, services accessed and received, frequency of attendance, program phase completion, and alcohol and drug testing. EVALCORP also incorporated VCPA data from the Ventura

County Integrated Justice System (VCIJS) to assess the impact of the ARRC's services relative to new arrests, filings, and recidivism. The methodologies used to capture stakeholder data for the evaluation included: a client survey, multiple focus groups with ARRC clients, and a series of key stakeholder interviews with VCPA and GEO program management and staff.

Evaluation Methodology

A comprehensive retrospective evaluation was conducted utilizing a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative and qualitative analytic approaches were used to address both process and outcome evaluation questions. More specifically, the process evaluation questions aimed to identify: the extent to which the program was implemented as planned, any barriers or challenges faced by the program, types and dosage of services delivered, and whether program services met clients' needs. Outcome evaluation questions assessed the impacts of ARRC participation on clients' criminal justice involvement. Additional detail regarding each of the specific types of data collection utilized in the evaluation is provided below.

Client Service and Criminal Justice Outcome Data

EVALCORP worked in collaboration with VCPA and GEO to obtain client-level ARRC service participation and outcome related information. Descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted to determine the types of services clients participated in and the impact of participation on clients' lives.

Process metrics for the client-level AARC service participation data included:

- Clients Referred and Enrolled
 - Number of clients referred to the ARRC
 - Number of clients enrolled in the ARRC
- Services Received
 - Types and quantity of services delivered
 - Attendance and absence rates
- Community Referrals Made
 - Types and quantity of referrals made to community resources

EVALCORP also examined multiple criminal justice outcome measures for ARRC program clients. To conduct these analyses, EVALCORP provided the GEO client list to Ventura County Probation's Information Technology Services to conduct a matched data extraction from the County's integrated criminal justice data system, VCJIS. The GEO client list included client first and last name, date of birth, and person number (i.e., client ID) for 1,078 individuals. The query returned a VCJIS match for 739 individuals (69% match rate). The VCJIS extraction included criminal justice data from the start of services (i.e., mid 2016) through April 2022.

ARRC Client Survey

In addition to the administrative data sets provided by GEO and VCPA, a key component of the evaluation design was the inclusion of clients' voices, perspectives, and recommendations for how to maximize the effectiveness of the ARRC. One aspect of this was a 14-item client survey, conducted over a three-week period in May-June 2022. The purpose of the survey was to determine the extent to which services offered through the ARRC met clients' needs. The ARRC Client Survey included questions regarding level of service participation, experiences with case managers, perceived usefulness of services, and ways in which the ARRC could be enhanced moving forward. The ARRC Client Survey was available in Spanish and English, in both paper and online formats. Paper surveys were provided to the Simi Valley site location while the

Ventura site location had the resources to administer the survey via computers upon client check in. A flyer with a QR code to the online survey was also provided in Spanish and English, and was made available in the ARRC's lobbies so that clients could opt to take the survey on their phones. All surveys were completed anonymously to enhance clients' willingness to respond openly and honestly.

For paper surveys completed at the ARRC, staff were asked to mark the client type (e.g., Probation or Pretrial) and location they report to. Clients were asked to indicate this information themselves on the online surveys. A total of 72 surveys were collected from clients (i.e., 52 from Ventura and 20 from Simi Valley).

ARRC Client Focus Groups

Four client focus groups were conducted to gather information on client experiences at the ARRC, the services they received, and programs they attended. Three focus groups were conducted in English, and one was facilitated in Spanish. All four focus groups took place via Zoom. Focus groups were held throughout the month of June at variable times to accommodate participants' work schedules. VCPA staff encouraged participation in the focus groups by distributing informational flyers in Spanish and English. Twenty-two clients participated across the four focus groups: 15 in English and 7 in Spanish. All participants received a \$25 gift card for their participation.

Management and Staff Key Stakeholder Interviews

A series of 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with a diverse range of personnel from VCPA and GEO who had direct knowledge of the ARRC's operations to determine the following:

- The extent that GEO implemented the ARRC program model outlined in the initial RFP service plan
- How closely implementation followed the proposed timeline
- What barriers or challenges the program faced, and what modifications were made to the original service plan to alleviate these challenges
- Suggestions from staff and administrators to enhance current programming and policies in their effective implementation
- What types of data or information would be useful to staff for future planning, programming, and resource allocation

Interviewee names and contact information were provided to the evaluation team by leadership at VCPA and GEO. Interviews were scheduled over email and conducted via Zoom. The evaluators spoke with Deputy Probation Officers, Program Supervisors, Case Managers, and Executive Leadership who had worked at their organizations from a range of less than one year to more than 10 years. Overall, 15 interviews were conducted with VCPA staff, and seven were conducted with GEO staff.

Findings

Service Participation and Outcomes

Clients Referred to and Enrolled in ARRC

Between July 2016 and February 2022, there were 1,144 potential clients referred to the ARRC. These referrals were recorded by the front desk staff members at each of the ARRC locations. Of note, it is possible that the number of referrals represented here is an undercount of actual referrals made to the ARRC due to handwritten record keeping for referrals within case notes.

During the same timeframe, 1,078 clients were enrolled in ARRC services. This included clients participating across both ARRC sites. Of the clients enrolled, 913 clients participated in at least one service. Figure 1 displays the number of clients referred to the ARRC, the number enrolled, and those that received at least one service.

Figure 1. Client Participation



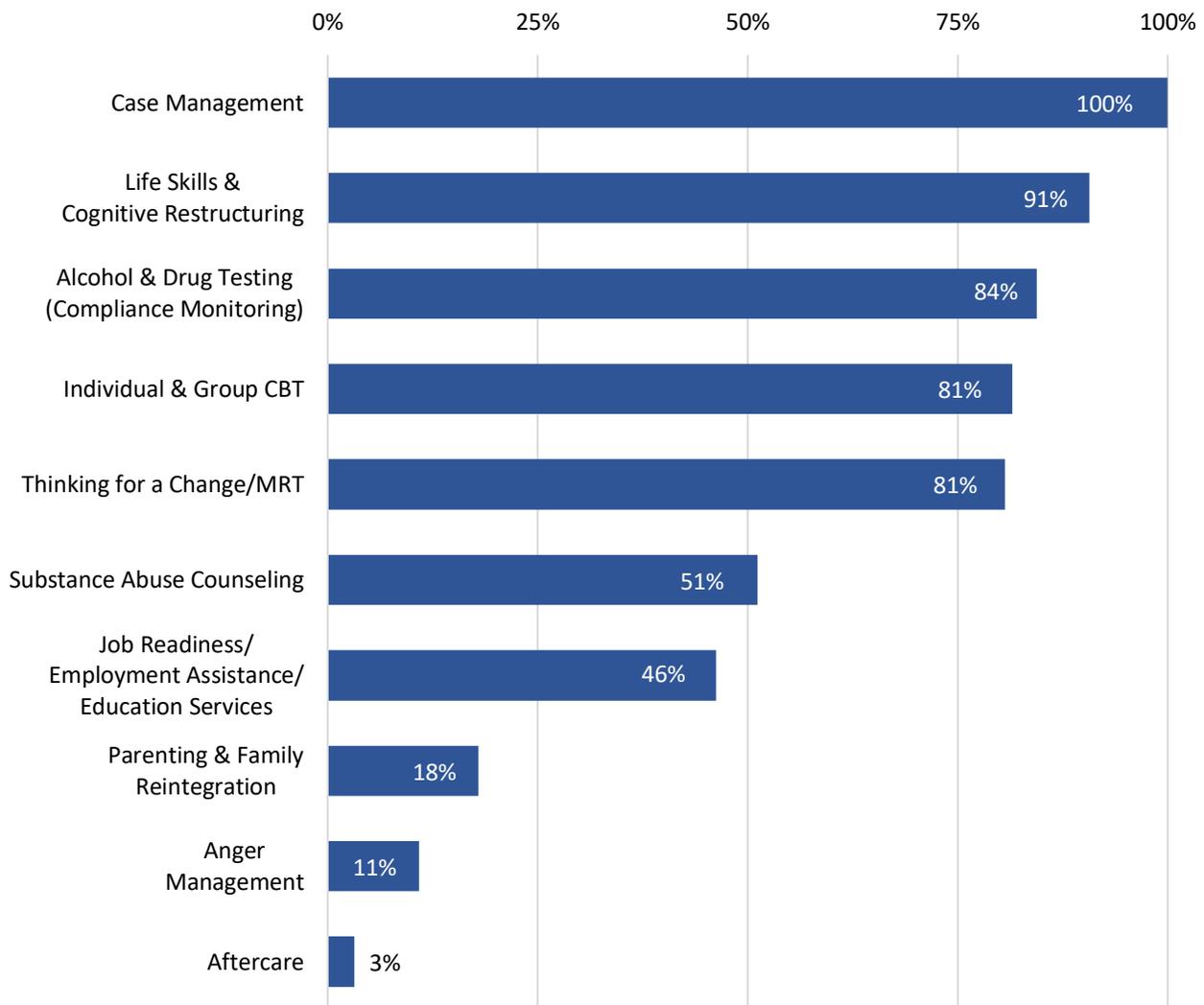
ARRC Services Received by Clients

Across the two ARRC sites in Ventura County, 913 clients participated in 107,895 service sessions between August 2016 and February 2022.

Figure 2 on the following page shows the percentage of clients who received a service across ten different service categories. A client is counted the first time they received a service in that service category. Clients may appear in multiple service categories but are only counted once in each.

All clients received services in Case Management (100%). Additionally, most clients received services in Life Skills and Cognitive Restructuring (91%), Alcohol and Drug Testing/Compliance Monitoring (84%), Individual and Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (81%), and Thinking for a Change/Moral Reconciliation Therapy (81%). About half of all clients participated in Substance Abuse Counseling (51%) and Job Readiness/Employment Assistance/Education Services (46%). Fewer clients received services in Parenting and Family Reintegration (18%), Anger Management (11%), and Aftercare (3%).

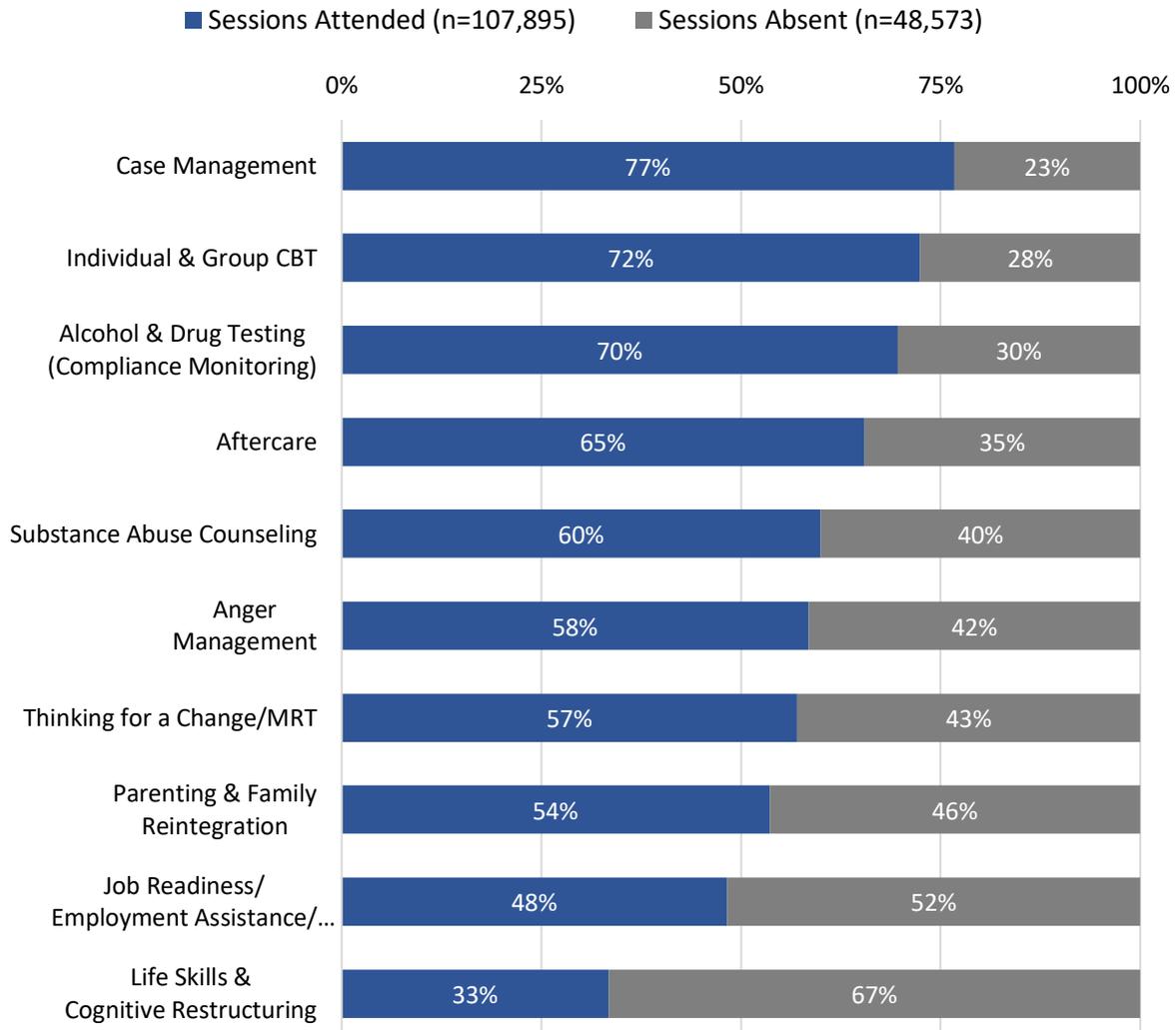
**Figure 2. Percent of Clients Receiving Services
(N=913)**



ARRC Service Attendance and Absence Rates

Between August 2016 and February 2022, over 155,000 service sessions were offered, with an overall ARRC service session attendance rate of nearly 70%. Figure 3 displays the percentage of sessions attended and the percentage of sessions where clients were absent (by each of the ten service categories). The blue portion of the figure represents the sessions that were attended, while the grey portion represents the sessions clients did not attend. All but two service categories had attendance rates of over 50%. The services with the highest attendance rates are Case Management (77%), Individual and Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (72%), and Alcohol and Drug Testing/Compliance Monitoring (70%). The service categories with the lowest attendance rates were Job Readiness/Employment Assistance/Education Services (48%) and Life Skills and Cognitive Restructuring (33%).

Figure 3. Percent of Sessions Attended and Absent by Service Category (N=156,468)



ARRC Client Referrals to Community Resources

Staff members across the two ARRC sites provided their clients with over 1,900 referrals to community resources. Table 1 on the following page lists all the community referral types that are offered. There were 1,919 community referrals logged, with over half of them being for assistance with Transportation (19%), Food (11%), Housing (9%), Employment (9%), Clothing (7%), and Medical related needs (7%).

Table 1. Referrals to Community Resources

Community Referral Type	Percent of All Referrals Made (N=1,919)
Transportation	19%
Food Assistance	11%
Housing Assistance	9%
Employment	9%
Clothing Assistance	7%
Medical Assistance	7%
Mental Health	4%
Legal Services	3%
Childcare Assistance	1%
Mentoring	1%
Family Assistance	<1%
Public Aid	<1%
Substance Abuse	<1%
Education Assistance	<1%
Transitional Jobs	<1%
Alcoholics Anonymous	<1%
Marriage Counseling	<1%
Support Groups	<1%
Other*	27%

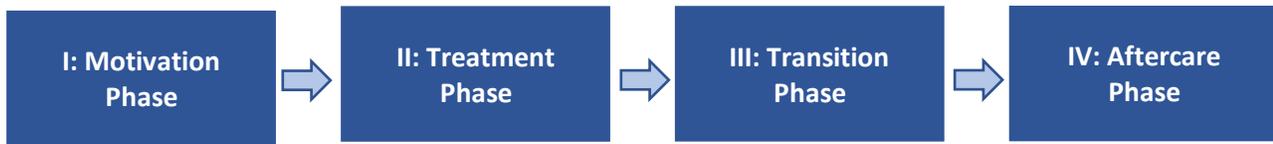
**The "Other" category allows staff members to describe the referral type.*

More than one-quarter of the referrals recorded were done so using the "Other" community referral type option. Within the data collection system, staff members can type in a description of the "Other" referral type. There were 716 qualitative descriptions provided for the "Other" community referral type. EVALCORP grouped these descriptions into sixteen different categories, which included one category labeled "No Referral Needed" (28%, n=203). After removing the "No Referral Needed" category, 513 qualitative descriptions remained. The "Other" community referral types that were recorded most often by ARRC staff members were for: Hygiene or Personal Care, Financial Assistance, and Help Obtaining Identification Documents.

ARRC Client Phase Progression

There are four different Phases that comprise GEO's ARRC model (displayed in Figure 4). A client moves through each Phase as they progress through their customized plan (i.e., their Behavior Change Plan).

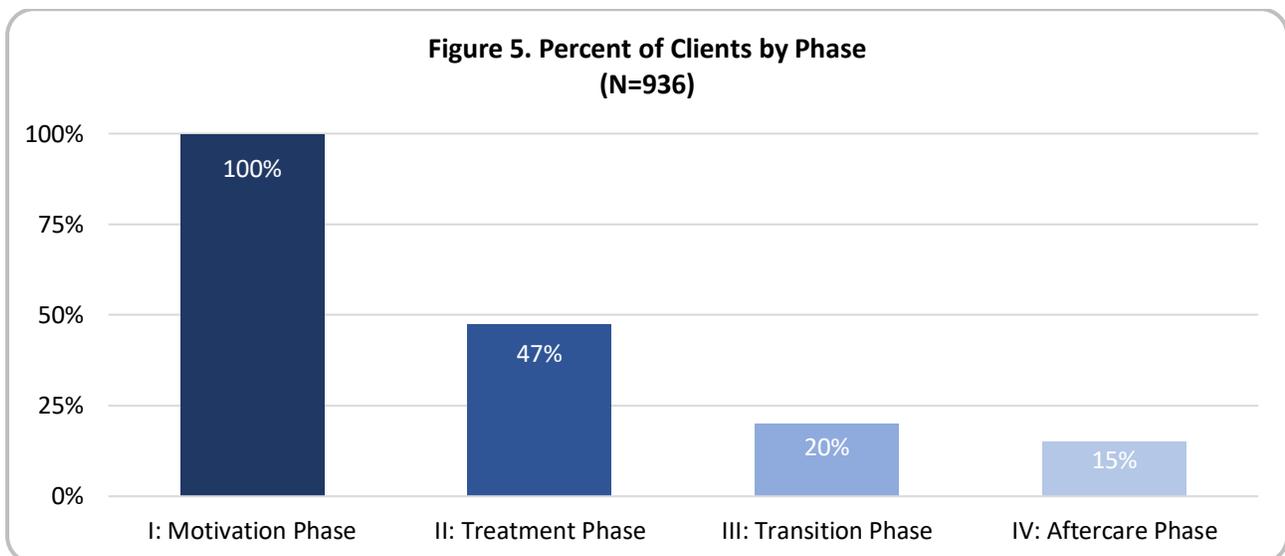
Figure 4. ARRC Phases for Client Progression



Between August 2016 and February 2022, there were 936 clients who entered the Motivation Phase at either of the two ARRC sites. Figure 5 displays the percentage of clients who moved into each of the four different Phases. In this analysis, a client was counted the first time they entered a specific Phase. Clients may appear in multiple Phases but were only counted once in each.

Of the 936 clients, 443 (47%) clients entered the Treatment Phase, 188 (20%) clients entered the Transition Phase, and 140 (15%) entered the Aftercare Phase.

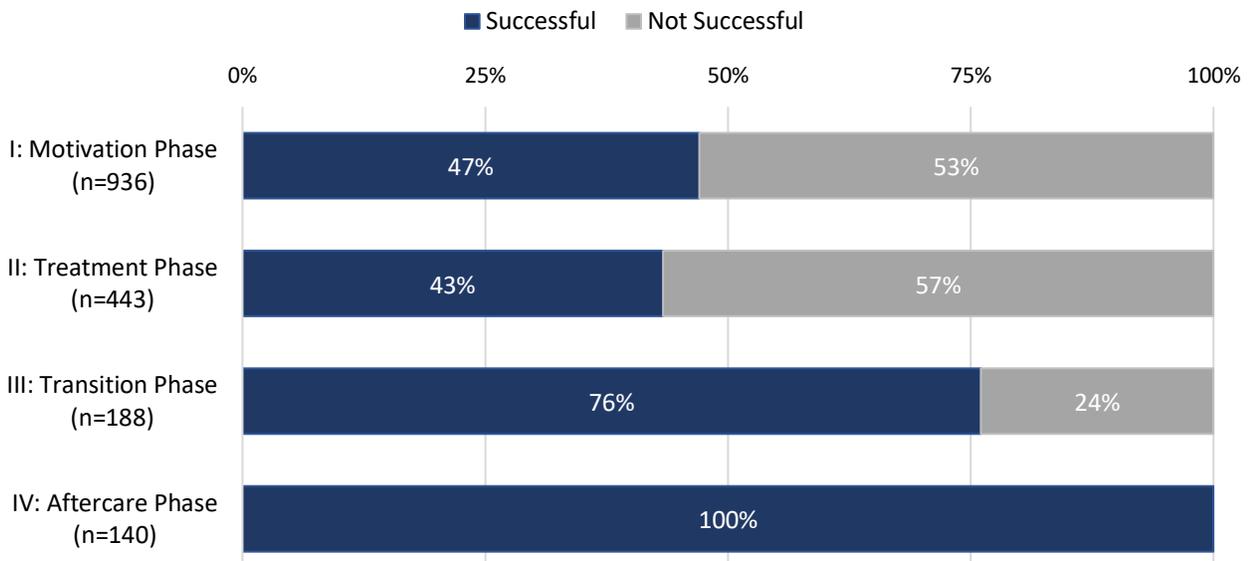
**Figure 5. Percent of Clients by Phase
(N=936)**



Not all clients who entered a Phase completed it successfully. Figure 6 on the following page displays the percentage of clients recorded as successfully completing a specific Phase. In this analysis, the number of clients that completed a Phase for the first time was divided by the number of clients who entered that Phase for the first time. Clients may appear in multiple Phases but were only counted once in each.

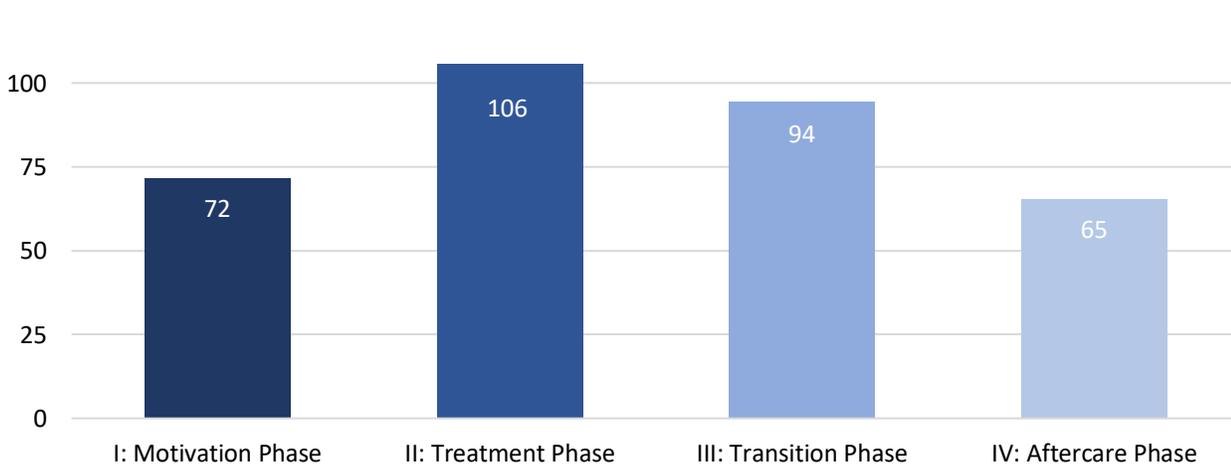
Of the 936 clients, 443 (47%) clients completed the Motivation Phase, 192 (43%) clients completed the Treatment Phase, 143 (76%) completed the Transition Phase, and 140 (100%) completed the Aftercare Phase. It is important to note that the number of clients who successfully completed a Phase may not equal the number of clients who entered the subsequent Phase.

Figure 6. Percent of Clients Successful within Each Phase



The time spent in each phase varied across clients. On average, clients spent 82 days in each Phase. Clients spent the least number of days in the Aftercare Phase (65 days on average) and the greatest number of days in the Treatment Phase (106 days on average). Figure 7 displays the average number of days clients spent in each of the four Phases. In this analysis, the total number of days spent in each Phase was divided by the number of client entries into that Phase.

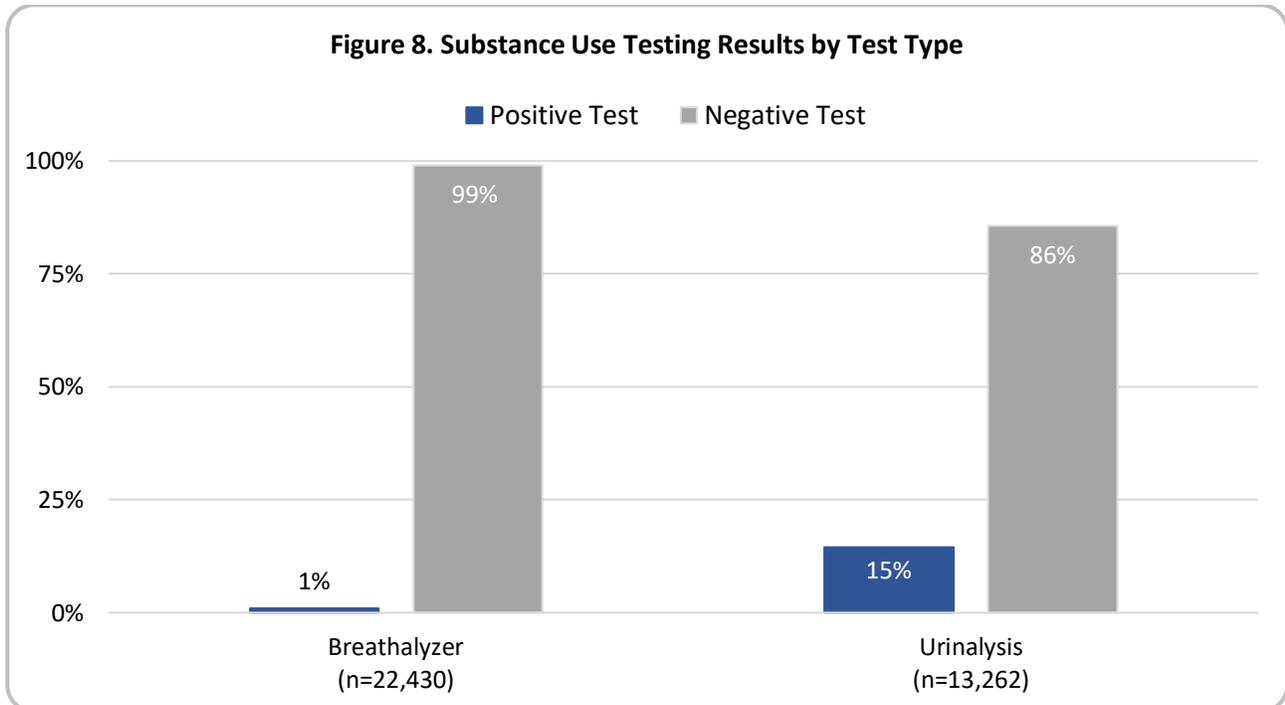
**Figure 7. Average Number of Days Spent in Each Phase
(Total Average=82 Days)**



ARRC Client Substance Use Testing Overall

Between August 2016 and February 2022, 745 clients completed 35,692 substance use tests. Breathalyzer testing accounted for 63% (22,430 tests) and urinalysis testing accounted for 37% (13,262 tests) of all substance use tests completed by ARRC clients.

Overall, only 6% (1,977 tests) of all substance use tests returned a positive result, with 94% (33,715 tests) of all tests being negative. When examining the results for each of the separate testing types, nearly all (99%) of the breathalyzer tests were negative. Of the urinalysis tests completed, 85% returned a negative result and 15% were positive (Figure 8).



ARRC Client Substance Use Testing by Phase Group

When considering the outcomes of clients participating in the ARRC – including the results of substance use testing – it is important to understand which phase(s) the client has completed. In collaboration with VCPA and GEO, it was determined to categorize the ARRC clients into the following three groups:

- I. **Motivation Phase:** Includes the 493 clients who have only participated in the Motivation Phase and have never progressed to a latter Phase.
- II. **Treatment & Transition Phases:** Includes 303 clients who successfully completed the Motivation Phase and have progressed to the Treatment and Transition Phases.
- III. **Aftercare Phase:** Includes the 140 clients who successfully completed all four of the ARRC Phases.

The results of the substance use testing for each of these three groups are presented below. It should be noted that the total number of tests within each phase group increases, even though the total number of clients within the phase group decreases. This is because the phase groups are based on client progression, not testing date. Therefore, a client in the Aftercare Phase group will have completed more substance use tests than a client in the Motivation Phase because they have participated in ARRC programming for longer.

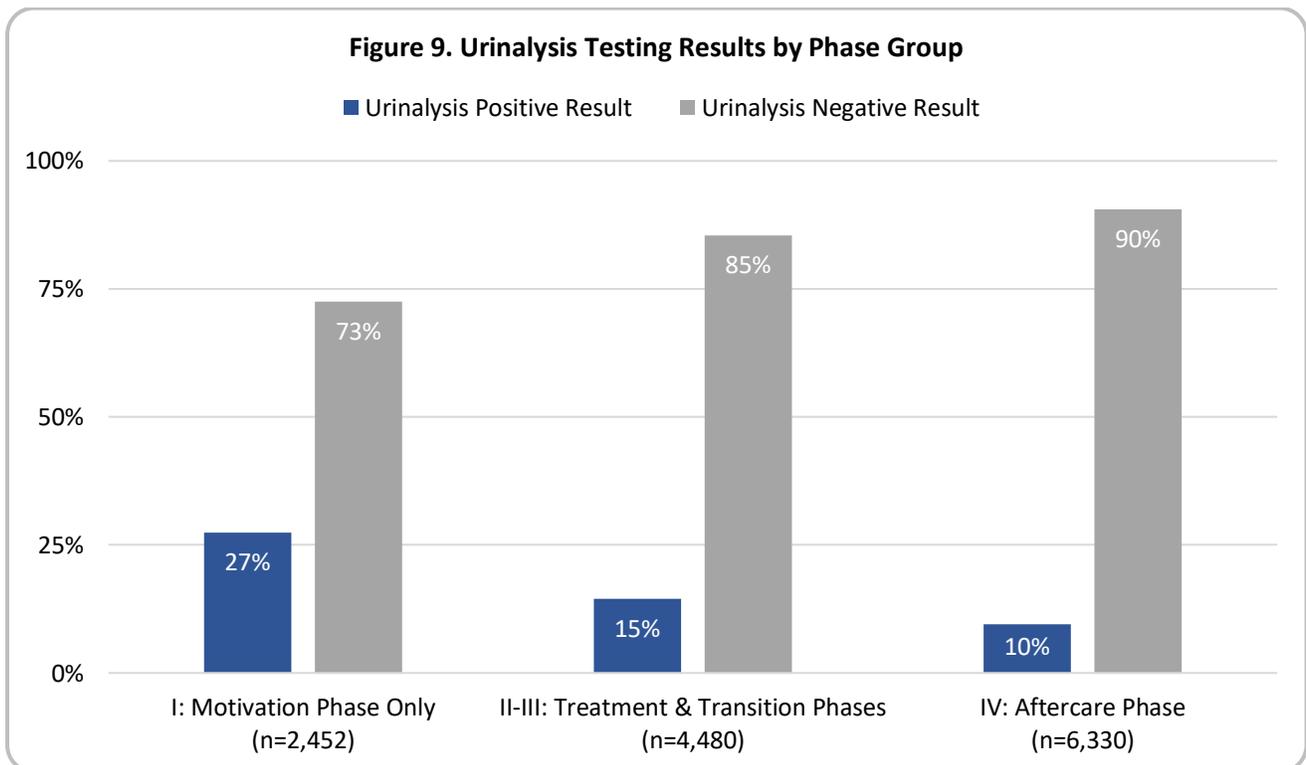
Among the clients in the Motivation Phase group, there were 7,751 substance use tests completed. Breathalyzer testing accounted for 68% (5,299 tests), while urinalysis accounted for 32% (2,452 tests) of the substance use tests completed by clients in this group.

Within the Treatment & Transition Phases group, there were 12,348 substance use tests completed. Breathalyzer testing accounted for 64% (7,868 tests), while urinalysis accounted for 36% (4,480 tests) of the substance use tests completed by clients in this group.

Among the clients in the Aftercare Group, there were 15,593 substance use tests completed. Breathalyzer testing accounted for 59% (9,263 tests), while urinalysis accounted for 41% (6,330 tests) of the substance use tests completed by clients in this group.

Analysis of breathalyzer testing results revealed no meaningful differences between the three groups. In fact, breathalyzer positivity rates for the Motivation Phase Only group were 0.3% and 0.2% for both the Treatment & Transition Phases group and the Aftercare Phase group.

Urinalysis testing results for the three groups are presented in Figure 9. The urinalysis positivity rate among clients in the Motivation Phase group was nearly double the positivity rate of clients in the Treatment and Transition Phases (27% versus 15%) and nearly triple the positivity rate of the Aftercare Phase group (27% versus 10%).



Criminal Justice Outcomes

A secondary component of the evaluation was to evaluate multiple criminal justice outcome measures for the 739 ARRC clients who had a matched data extraction from VCJIS. Specifically, the four criminal justice outcome measures examined through the matched analyses were:

- **Custodial Sanctions:** The number of clients who were remanded into custody on a violation of probation (VOP) while enrolled in ARRC services.¹
- **Rearrest Rate:** The number of clients who had a new felony or misdemeanor rearrest post entry to ARRC services and followed through April 2022.
- **New Case Filing Rate:** The number of clients who had a new felony or misdemeanor case filing post entry to ARRC services and followed through April 2022.
- **Recidivism Rate:** Recidivism analyses were conducted using the Board of State and Community Corrections' (BSCC) definition of recidivism in California's post-realignment period.

Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Recidivism Definition Used for Analyses
Conviction of a new felony or misdemeanor committed within three years of release from custody or committed within three years of placement on supervision for a previous criminal conviction. Committed refers to the date of the offense, not the date of the conviction.

For the criminal justice outcomes analyses, clients were categorized into two groups:

- I. **Motivation Phase Only:** Includes 395 clients (53%) who participated in only the Motivation Phase and never progressed to a latter Phase.
- II. **Treatment Phase and Beyond:** Includes 344 clients (47%) who successfully completed the Motivation Phase and progressed to the Treatment, Transition, or Aftercare Phases.

For the criminal justice outcomes analyses, only two groups of “phases” or subgroups of clients were examined. Although there are four phases in the GEO model and the evaluation did analyze the service engagement data according to each phase, there were insufficient sample sizes for conducting outcomes analyses beyond the two groups (i.e., “Motivation Phase Only” and “Treatment Phase and Beyond”). As such, the following pages provide information regarding the differences in criminal justice outcomes between the Motivation Phase Only group and the Treatment Phase and Beyond group.

¹ Custodial Sanctions included all jail bookings that took place under the following booking authorities: person serving a period of confinement for a VOP (Commit – VOP); arrest on warrant for Violations of PRC (PROS Warrant); booked into custody for a flash incarceration (PROSFI, PRO); PRO agrees to serve a period of confinement for violations of PRCS (PROSWAIV); person remanded to custody when sentenced on a VOP (Remand – VOP); person remanded to custody when sentenced on a VOP (VOP – Commitment); arrested for VOP and booked by DPO (VOP - Probable Cause); VOP remanded by courts (VOP – Remand); and arrested on a warrant for an outstanding new charge or a VOP (Warrant Arrest).

Table 2 compares the two groups relative to median age, gender, and race/ethnicity. These two groups were very similar with regard to client characteristics. Specifically, the typical client in both the Motivation Phase Only group and the Treatment Phase and Beyond group was 33 years of age, male, and Hispanic. Also, clients who did not progress past the Motivation Phase spent an average of 73 days engaged with the ARRC, while clients who progressed to the latter phases spent an average of 254 days engaged with the ARRC services.

Table 2. Characteristics and Length of Time in ARRC Services for Clients with Matched VCJIS Data by Phase Group

Characteristics and Length of Time in ARRC		Motivation Phase Only (n=395)	Treatment Phase & Beyond (n=344)	Total ARRC Clients with VCJIS Match (n=739)
Demographics	Median Age	32.5	34.3	33.3
	Male	77%	77%	77%
	Hispanic/Latin/Mexican	61%	60%	61%
	White	33%	33%	33%
	Black	4%	3%	4%
	Other Race/Ethnicity*	2%	4%	2%
Number of Days in ARRC Services^	Avg Number of Days	73 days	254 days	158 days
	Range	2 -313 days	10-862 days	2-882 days

* Other Race/Ethnicity includes Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Other, and Unknown.

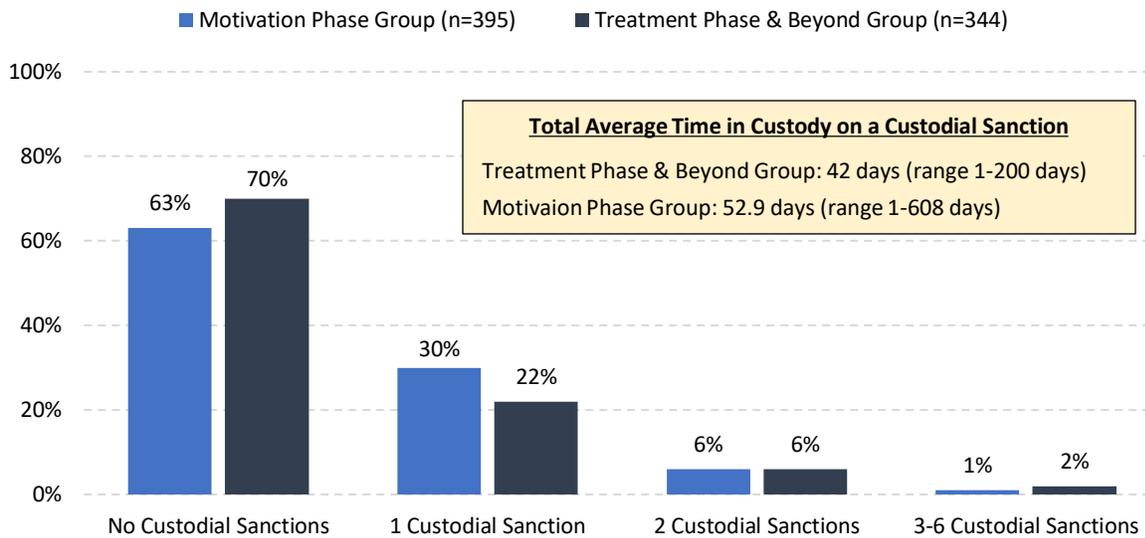
^ Length of time in ARRC services was calculated using ARRC departure and arrival dates.

Custodial Sanctions While Enrolled in ARRC Services

Figure 10 compares custodial sanctions imposed while engaged with ARRC programming between those in the Motivation Phase Only and the Treatment Phase and Beyond groups.

- As shown in Figure 10 on the following page, a majority of clients who were referred to and entered ARRC programming were able to remain in the community (no remand into custody on a violation of probation) while in ARRC programming regardless of phase status.
- Over one-third (37%) of the Motivation Phase Only group clients were remanded into custody on a violation of probation (VOP) one or more times while enrolled in ARRC services, compared to 30% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.
- Although rates of return to custody on a VOP were similar, clients in the Motivation Phase Only spent an average of 52.9 days in custody on a custodial sanction compared to an average of 42 days for clients in the Treatment Phase and Beyond group.

Figure 10. Percent of Clients Returned to Custody to Serve a Custodial Sanction for a Violation of Probation while in ARRC Services by Phase Group

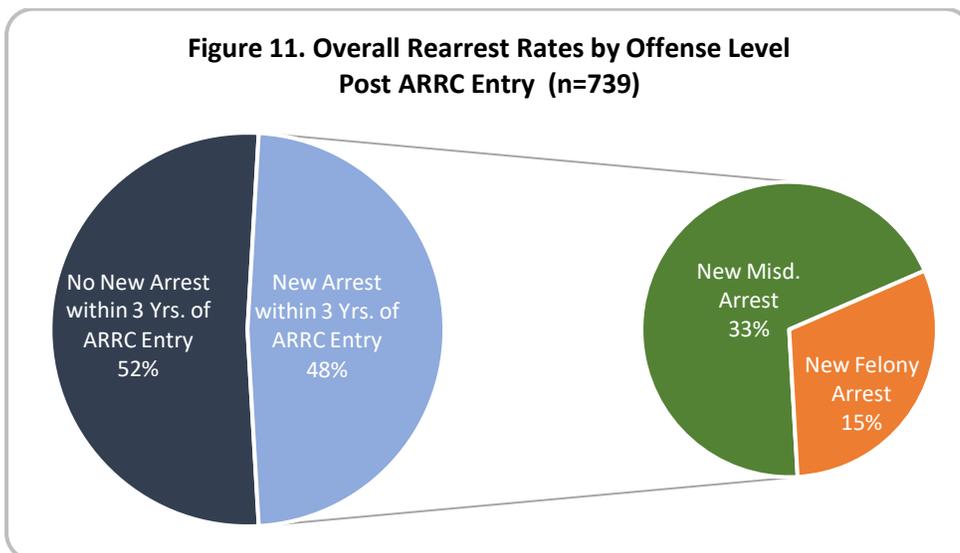


Overall Rearrest Rates Post ARRC Entry

The overall rearrest rate and rearrest offense type (i.e., felony or misdemeanor) for all 739 ARRC clients who had a VCJIS match from the start of programming through April 2022 are provided in Figure 11.

- A calculation of the overall rearrest rate showed that 52% of all clients did not have a new arrest post ARRC entry, regardless of phase status.
- Among the 48% of the clients who were rearrested post ARRC service entry, a higher percentage were rearrested for misdemeanor offenses compared to felony offenses (33% misdemeanor compared to 15% felony).

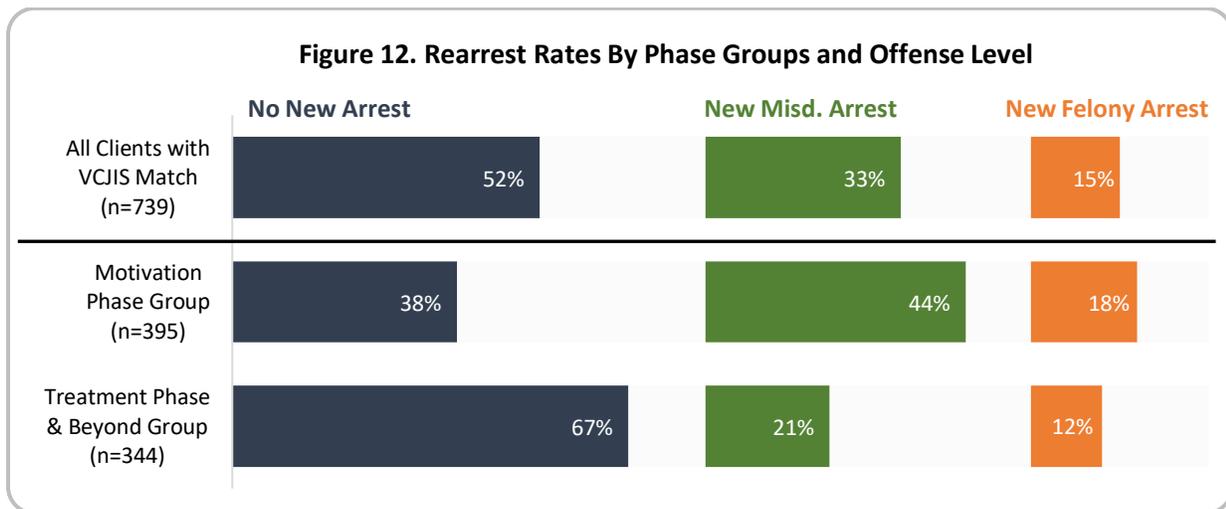
Figure 11. Overall Rearrest Rates by Offense Level Post ARRC Entry (n=739)



Rearrest Rates Post ARRC Entry by Phase Groups

A closer look at the phase group breakdown of rearrests post ARRC service entry is displayed in Figure 12. The Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients were rearrested at a lower rate than clients who did not progress beyond the Motivation Phase of ARRC programming (Figure 12).

- As shown, 38% of the Motivation Phase Only group clients remained arrest free post ARRC entry, compared to 67% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.
- The Motivation Phase Only group clients were rearrested for alleged misdemeanors and felony offenses at a higher rate than Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.



The VCJIS arrest file did not contain the charge offense category (i.e., drug, property, other, weapon, DUI, or person crime) that resulted from the first new arrest.

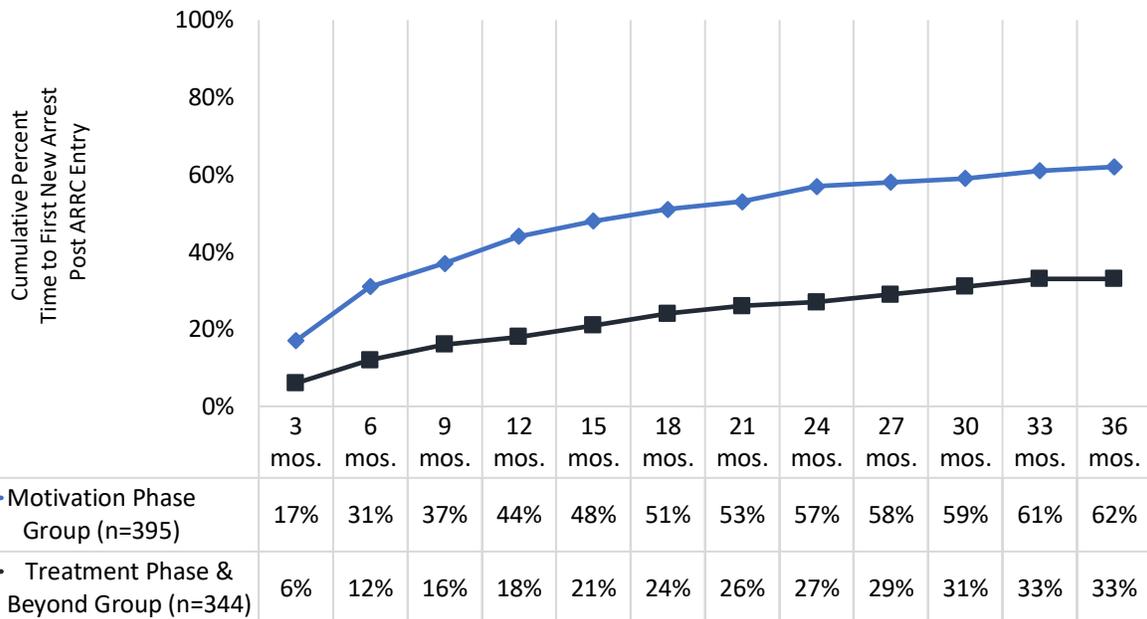
Time to First Rearrest by Phase Groups

To provide more in-depth analyses of rearrest, we compared time to rearrest across phase groups. Figure 13, on the following page, shows time to first new rearrest post ARRC entry by phase group.

- Within three months of ARRC service entry, 6% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group had a new arrest compared to 17% of the Motivation Phase Only group clients. A new arrest early in ARRC engagement may be one of the reasons for program attrition among the clients in the Motivation Phase Only group.

- Within 24 months of ARRC service entry, 27% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group had a new arrest compared to 57% of the Motivation Phase Only group.
 - By way of comparison, a multi-county study published in June 2019 by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) reported two-year arrest rates across 12 counties in California to represent the state. This study found that individuals sentenced to probation as of October 2015 had an overall two-year rearrest rate of 58%².
 - The Motivation Phase Only group clients had similar two-year rearrest rates as the felony probationers examined in the PPIC multi-County study (57% compared to 58%) while clients in the Treatment Phase and Beyond group had much lower two-year rearrest rates (27% compared to 58%).

Figure 13. Time to First New Arrest Post ARRC Entry by Phase Groups



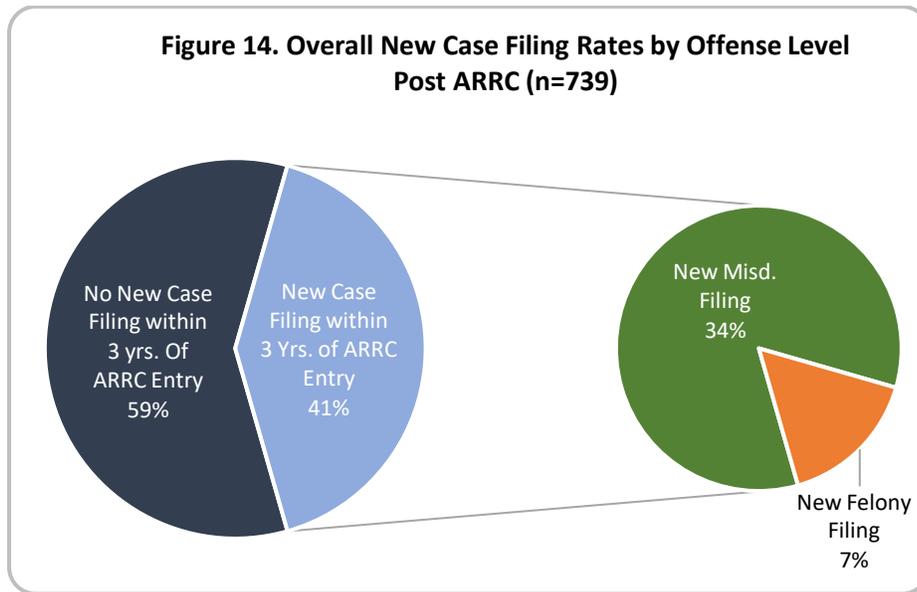
New Case Filing Rates Post ARRC Entry

Given that not all arrests result in charges being filed, EVALCOP also examined the number of clients that had a new felony or misdemeanor case filing (i.e., a charge was filed) post ARRC service entry.

Figure 14 on the following page shows the overall new case filing rate and filing offense type (i.e., felony or misdemeanor) for all 739 ARRC clients who had a VCJIS match through April 2022.

² Bird, Mia, Goss, Justin, and Viet Nguyen. 2019. Recidivism of Felony Offenders in California. Public Policy Institute of California. <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/recidivism-of-felony-offenders-in-california.pdf>. Accessed October 10, 2022. The 12 counties included in the multi-County study included: Alameda, Contra Costa, Humboldt, Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Francisco, Shasta, and Stanislaus.

- A review of new case filings showed that 59% of all clients had no new charges filed against them post ARRC entry (regardless of phase status).
- Among all ARRC clients, 34% had a new misdemeanor case files against them while 7% had a new felony case file post ARRC entry.

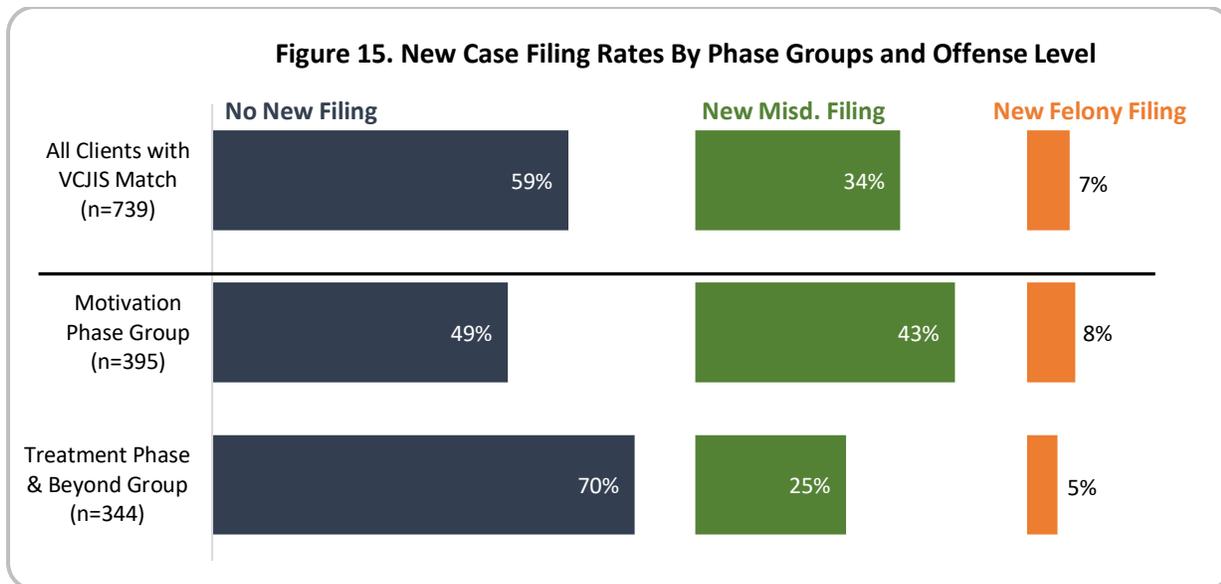


New Case Filing Rates Post ARRC Entry by Phase Groups

Figure 15 on the following page displays the overall new case filing rate by phase group and filing offense type (i.e., felony or misdemeanor) for all 739 ARRC clients who had a VCJIS match through April 2022.

- 49% of Motivation Phase Only group clients had no new charges filed against them post ARRC entry, compared to 70% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.
- Just over two in five (43%) of the Motivation Phase Only group clients compared to one in four (25%) of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients had new misdemeanor charges files.
- New felony filings were fairly low among both phase groups (8% among the Motivation Phase Only group clients compared to 5% for the Treatment Phase and Beyond group).

Figure 15. New Case Filing Rates By Phase Groups and Offense Level



Top Charge Offense Type that Led to the First New Case Filing by Phase Groups

Table 3 provides the top charge offense category (i.e., drug, property, other, weapon, DUI, or person crime) that resulted in the first new case filing by ARRC phase group. As shown, most new case filings were for misdemeanor drug charges across both groups, followed by other misdemeanor offenses, and misdemeanor property offenses.

Table 3. Top Charge Offense of New Case Filing by Phase Group

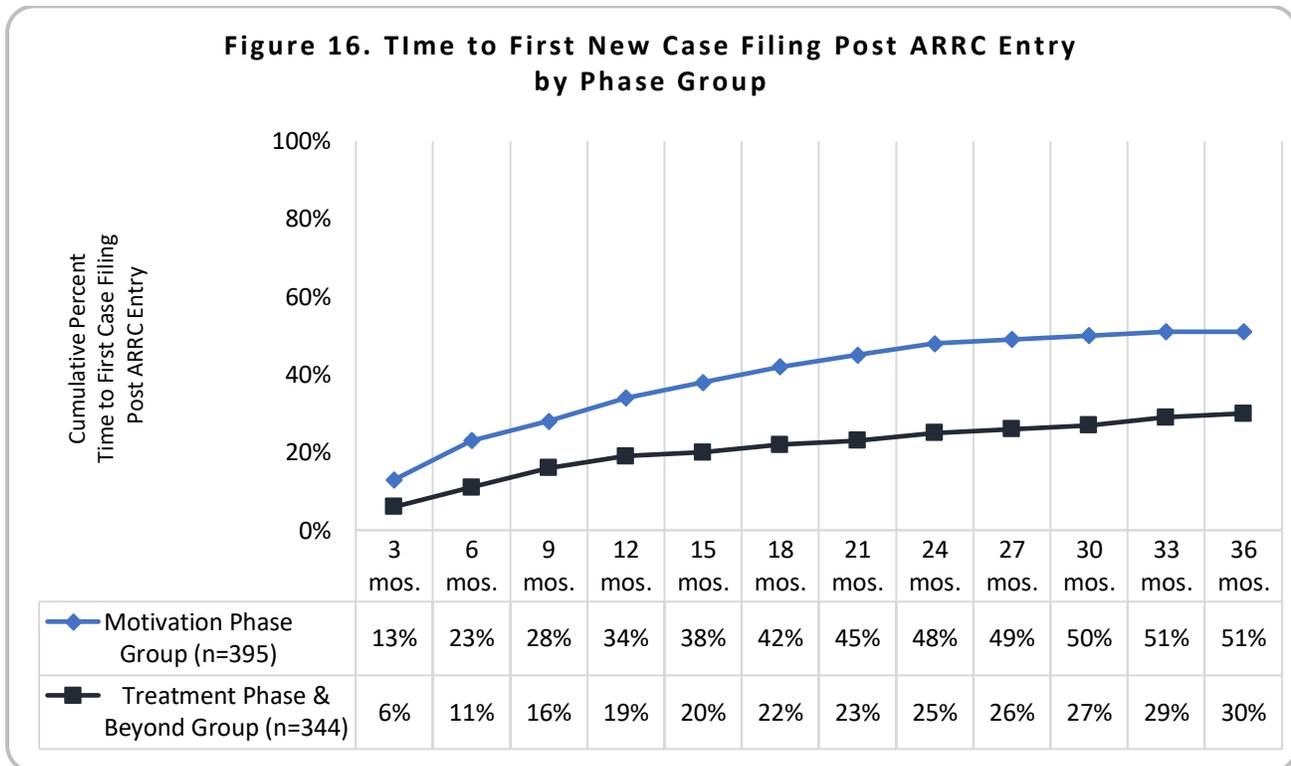
Top New Case Filing Offense Category within 3 Years of ARRC Entry	Motivation Phase Only Group		Treatment Phase & Beyond Group		Total ARRC Population with VCJIS Match		
	Column #	Column %	Column #	Column %	Column #	Column %	
No New Case Filings	194	49%	241	70%	435	59%	
Misdemeanor Case Filings Charge Category	▪ Person Offense	14	4%	10	3%	24	3%
	▪ Weapon Offense	3	1%	4	1%	7	1%
	▪ Property Offense	32	8%	13	4%	45	6%
	▪ Drug Offense	57	14%	30	9%	87	12%
	▪ DUI Offense	19	5%	14	4%	33	4%
	▪ Other Offense*	43	11%	16	5%	59	8%
Felony Case Filings Charge Category	▪ Person Offense	4	1%	3	1%	7	1%
	▪ Weapon Offense	3	1%	1	<1%	4	1%
	▪ Property Offense	14	3%	6	2%	20	3%
	▪ Drug Offense	5	1%	4	1%	9	1%
	▪ DUI Offense	1	<1%	0	...	1	<1%
	▪ Other Offense*	6	2%	2	<1%	8	1%
Total	395	100%	344	100%	739	100%	

*Other Offense category includes resist, obstruct, delay of peace officer or EMT; giving false information to a police officer; obstructing or intimidating business operators or customers; disobeying court order; and other miscellaneous offenses.

Time to First Case Filing by Phase Groups

To provide more in-depth analyses of new case filings, comparisons were run on time to new filing across phase groups (Figure 16). Within 12 months of entry into ARRC services, nearly 1 in 3 of the Motivation Phase Only group clients had a new case filing compared to 19% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.

Within 24 months of entry into ARRC services, nearly half of the Motivation Phase Only group clients had a new case filing compared to 1 in 4 of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.



BSCC Three-Year Recidivism Rates

Utilizing the BSCC definition of recidivism in California’s post-realignment period, EVALCORP examined the longer-term impact that participation in ARRC services has on clients. The recidivism analyses presented in this report focused on Ventura County probationers who entered the ARRC’s programming between FY 16/17 and FY 18/19. Only these three “entry cohorts” were used because:

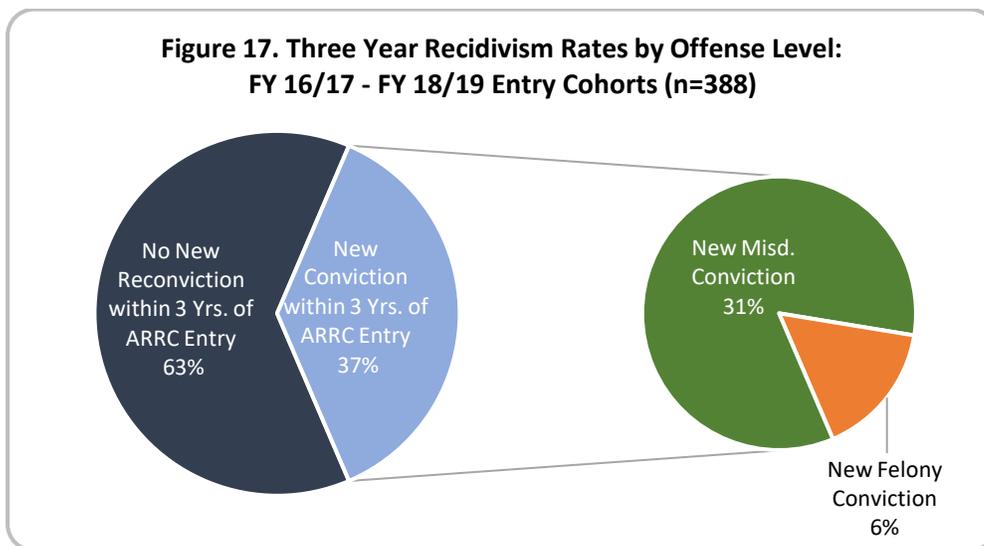
- individuals within these three cohorts had the full 36 months of exposure to risk in the community (i.e., in community three years post release), aligning with the BSCC definition of recidivism;
- they provide stable and valid calculations of recidivism metrics; and,
- the cohort methodology aligns with the BSCC’s research guidelines suggesting that cohort analyses are to be used to measure recidivism.

Clients admitted to the ARRC's services in later cohorts (i.e., FY 19/20 and beyond) were excluded from the findings presented in the section that follows because they did not have sufficient exposure to risk in the community to measure 36-month recidivism. It should be noted that data regarding new offenses and convictions are available only for those that occurred in Ventura County.

BSCC Recidivism Rates Post-ARRC Entry

The ARRC's overall three-year recidivism rate and new conviction offense type (i.e., felony or misdemeanor) for the FY 16/17 to FY 18/19 entry cohorts are provided in Figure 17.

- 37% (n = 144) of all ARRC clients, regardless of phase status, recidivated within three years of ARRC service entry.
- Compared to felonies, a higher percentage of offenders committed misdemeanor offenses that resulted in a recidivism event (31% compared to 6%).



Offense Level that Resulted in First Recidivism Event by Phase Group

Figure 18 on the following page provides the offense type (i.e., felony or misdemeanor) that resulted in the first recidivism event by phase groups.

- 57% of Motivation Phase Only group clients had no new convictions within three years post ARRC entry, compared to 74% of the Treatment Phase & Beyond group clients.
 - Over one in three (36%) of the Motivation Phase Only group clients had a new misdemeanor recidivism event within three years post ARRC entry, compared to nearly one-fourth (23%) of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.
 - A higher percentage of Motivation Phase Only group clients had a felony recidivism event compared to clients that progressed to the Treatment Phase and Beyond group (8% compared to 3%, respectively).

Figure 18. Three-Year Recidivism Rates By Phase Group and Offense Level of New Conviction: FY16/17 - FY18/19 Entry Cohorts

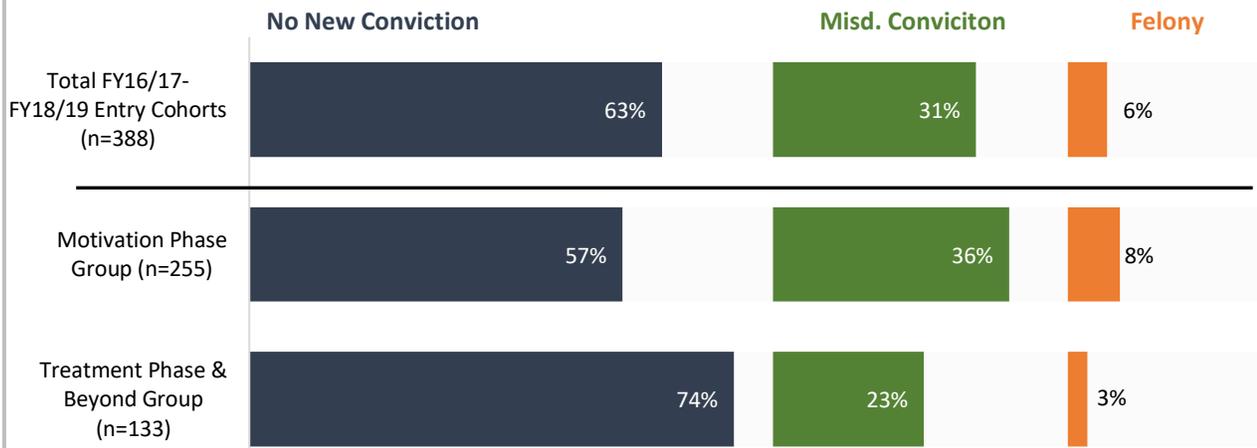


Table 4 provides the top charge offense category (i.e., drug, property, other, weapon, DUI, or person crime) that resulted in the first new recidivism event by phase group.

Table 4. Top New Recidivism Offense Charge Category by Phase Group: FY 16/17 – FY 18/19 Entry Cohorts

Top New Recidivism Offense Category within 3 Years of ARRC Entry	Motivation Phase Only Group		Treatment Phase & Beyond Group		FY16/17 – FY18/19 Entry Cohorts with VCJIS Match		
	Column #	Column %	Column #	Column %	Column #	Column %	
No New Recidivism Event	145	57%	99	74%	244	63%	
Misdemeanor Reconviction Charge Category	▪ Person Offense	10	4%	2	2%	12	3%
	▪ Weapon Offense	3	1%	0	--	3	1%
	▪ Property Offense	16	6%	4	3%	20	5%
	▪ Drug Offense	27	11%	6	5%	33	8%
	▪ DUI Offense	8	3%	8	6%	16	4%
	▪ Other Offense*	27	11%	10	7%	37	10%
Felony Reconviction Charge Category	▪ Person Offense	2	1%	0	--	2	1%
	▪ Weapon Offense	1	<1%	0	--	1	<1%
	▪ Property Offense	8	3%	3	2%	11	3%
	▪ Drug Offense	4	1%	0	--	4	1%
	▪ DUI Offense	0	--	0	--	0	--
	▪ Other Offense*	4	2%	1	1%	5	1%
Total	255	100%	133	100%	388	100%	

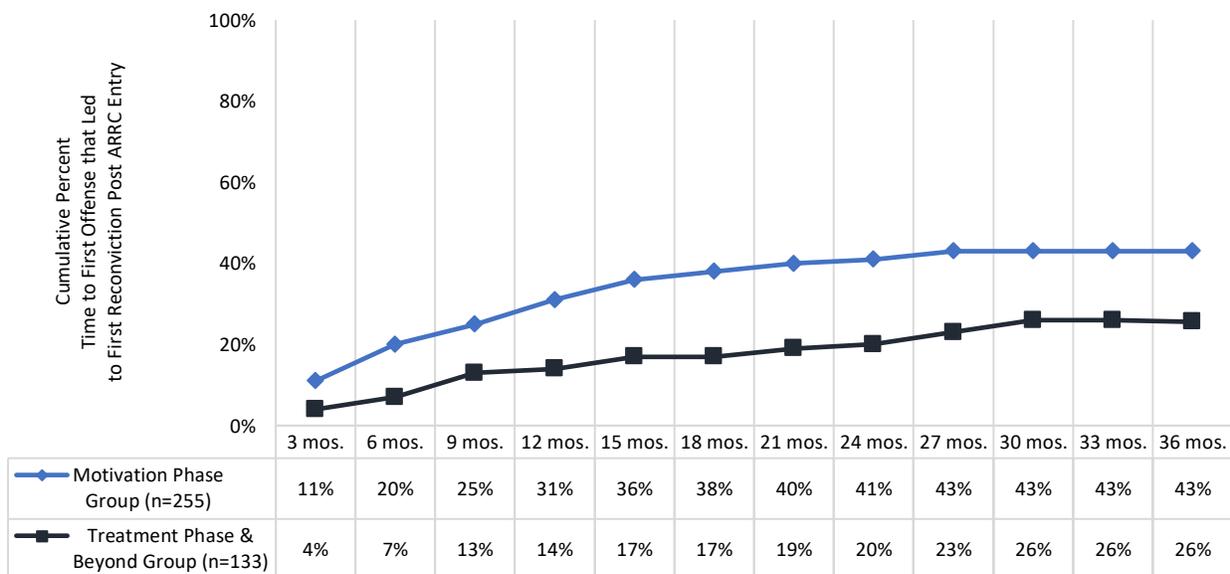
*Other Offense category includes resist, obstruct, delay of peace officer or EMT; giving false information to a police officer; obstructing or intimidating business operators or customers; disobeying court order; and other miscellaneous offenses.

Recidivism Analyses by Time to First Offense that Led to the New Conviction

To provide more in-depth analyses of recidivism, the time to offense that led to first recidivism event post ARRC entry was calculated by phase group (Figure 19).

- Within 12 months of ARRC service entry, nearly 1 in 3 (31%) of the Motivation Phase Only group had committed an offense that led to a reconviction, compared to 14% of the Treatment Phase & Beyond group clients.
- A much higher percentage (43%) of the Motivation Phase group had committed a new offense within three years of entry to ARRC services that resulted in a reconviction, compared to 26% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.
 - In the same study previously referenced, the PPIC found that as of October 2015, individuals sentenced to probation had an overall two-year reconviction rate of 31% while the felony reconviction rate was 21%.³
 - Taken together, Figures 18 and 19 suggest that ARRC participation that progresses to the Treatment Phase and Beyond leads to a noticeable reduction in recidivism.

Figure 19. Time to Offense that Led to First Reconviction Post ARRC Entry by Phase Groups: FY16/17 - FY18/19



³ Bird, Mia, Goss, Justin, and Viet Nguyen. 2019. Recidivism of Felony Offenders in California. Public Policy Institute of California. <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/recidivism-of-felony-offenders-in-california.pdf>. Accessed October 15, 2022.

ARRC Client Survey

Key findings from the ARRC Client Survey are presented below in six sections: (1) Survey Respondent Characteristics; (2) Phase One Orientation; (3) Services Received while at the ARRC; (4) Experiences with ARRC Case Manager(s); (5) ARRC Impact; and (6) Recommendations to Improve the ARRC.

Survey Respondent Characteristics

Respondents from diverse backgrounds completed the survey with varying levels of housing, employment, and supervision statuses. Current clients in both the Ventura and Simi Valley ARRC locations were provided opportunities to complete the Client Survey in Spanish or English. Below is an overview of the clients opting to complete the survey.

- Most respondents were male (81%); and between 25 and 34 years of age (43%).
- Almost two-thirds identified as Hispanic (63%).
- About 3 in 4 respondents spoke English most often at home (74%).
- Just under half (47%) of clients reported living at a family member’s house or apartment, while one-third (33%) reported living in their own house or apartment.
- At the time the survey was conducted, nearly half were employed in a full-time position (47%) while 17% worked part-time; of respondents who were not employed (36%), about 1 in 5 reported that they are looking for work.

Table 6 presents additional detail about respondents who provided demographic information on the survey.

Table 6. ARRC Respondent Demographics

Demographics		Overall Percentages (N=72)	ARRC Service Site Percentages	
			Ventura (n=52)	Simi Valley (n=20)
Gender	Male	81%	81%	80%
	Female	19%	19%	20%
	Gender variant/non-conforming	--	--	--
	Other gender identity	--	--	--
Age	18 to 24	22%	27%	10%
	25 to 34	43%	42%	45%
	35 to 44	21%	19%	25%
	45 or older	14%	12%	20%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	--	--	--
	Black or African American	3%	2%	5%
	Hispanic	63%	69%	45%
	Multiracial	3%	4%	--
	Native American	1%	2%	--
	White	25%	19%	40%
	Prefer not to answer	1%	2%	--
	Other, not specified	4%	2%	10%
Language	Chinese – including Mandarin and Cantonese	--	--	--
	English	74%	69%	85%
	Spanish	24%	27%	15%
	Tagalog – including Filipino	--	--	--
	Mixteco	1%	2%	--
	Other, not specified	1%	2%	--

Housing	Own house or apartment	33%	29%	45%
	Family member's house or apartment	47%	48%	45%
	Friend's house or apartment	10%	11%	5%
	Residential treatment facility	3%	4%	--
	Vehicle	3%	4%	--
	Outside	1%	--	5%
	Other, not specified	3%	4%	--
Employed	Yes, full-time	47%	50%	40%
	Yes, part-time	17%	15%	20%
	Not employed - but looking for work	22%	25%	15%
	Not employed - not actively looking for work	14%	10%	25%

*Respondents were able to select more than one option. Totals may be over 100%

A description of the respondents' supervision is presented in Table 7. Some noteworthy findings are:

- Three-quarters (74%) of respondents reported their status (i.e., 63% were on probation and 11% were pretrial); however, 22% left this item blank and 4% were unsure.
- At the time the survey was conducted, a quarter of respondents (25%) had been on probation from 1 to 2 years, with 29% being on probation 2 years or more.
- The majority (78%) of respondents' parents or caregivers did not have a criminal record.

Table 7. ARRC Client Supervision Status, Time on Probation, and Family Justice Involvement

Criminal Justice Status		Overall Percentages (n=72)	ARRC Service Site Percentages	
			Ventura (n=52)	Simi Valley (n=20)
Client Type	Probation	63%	60%	70%
	Pretrial	11%	11%	10%
	I do not know	4%	6%	--
	Missing	22%	23%	20%
Length of Time on Probation	Less than 3 months	13%	14%	10%
	3 to 6 months	13%	15%	5%
	6 to 11 months	19%	15%	30%
	1 to 2 years	25%	31%	10%
	2 to 3 years	19%	17%	25%
	3 or more years	10%	8%	15%
	Missing	1%	--	5%
Parents/ Caregiver with Criminal Record	No	78%	79%	75%
	Yes	19%	21%	15%
	Missing	3%	--	10%

ARRC Orientation

The second portion of the survey asked clients to reflect the extent to which the ARRC Orientation met their needs. ARRC Orientation provides clients with information on programs offered at the ARRC, employment services, and information on how to better connect to the community. During orientation, a participant's criminogenic risk as well as substance, and employment needs are assessed for individualized program planning. An analysis of these questions was conducted to better understand (1) if Orientation activities met participants' service engagement/case planning needs; (2) whether clients' cultural, language, and gender identity needs were met; and (3) how engaged clients were in services offered through the ARRC; and (4) whether services were perceived as helpful.

Most survey respondents (86%-97%) indicated that ARRC Orientation activities met their service engagement and case planning needs (Figure 20).

Figure 20. ARRC Participant Rating of Phase One Orientation (n=69-71)

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No

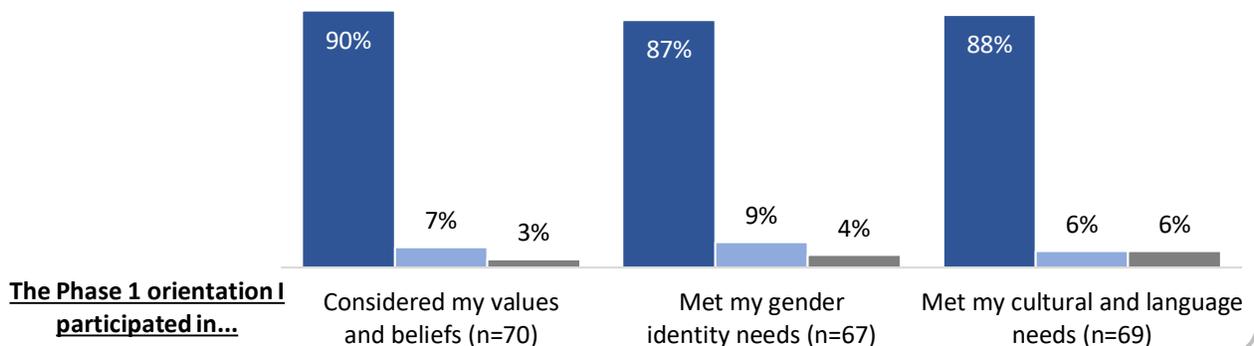
The Phase 1 Orientation I participated in...



Additionally, respondents (94%-96%) indicated that phase one orientation met or somewhat met their cultural, language and gender identity needs (Figure 21).

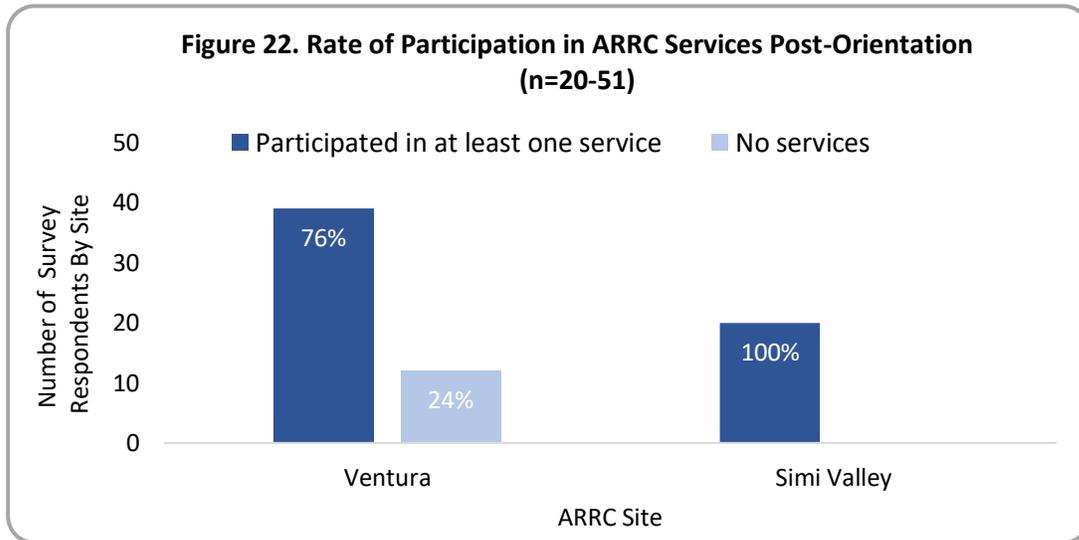
Figure 21. ARRC Participant Rating of Orientation Cultural and Gender Responsivity (n=67-70)

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No



Services Received while at the ARRC

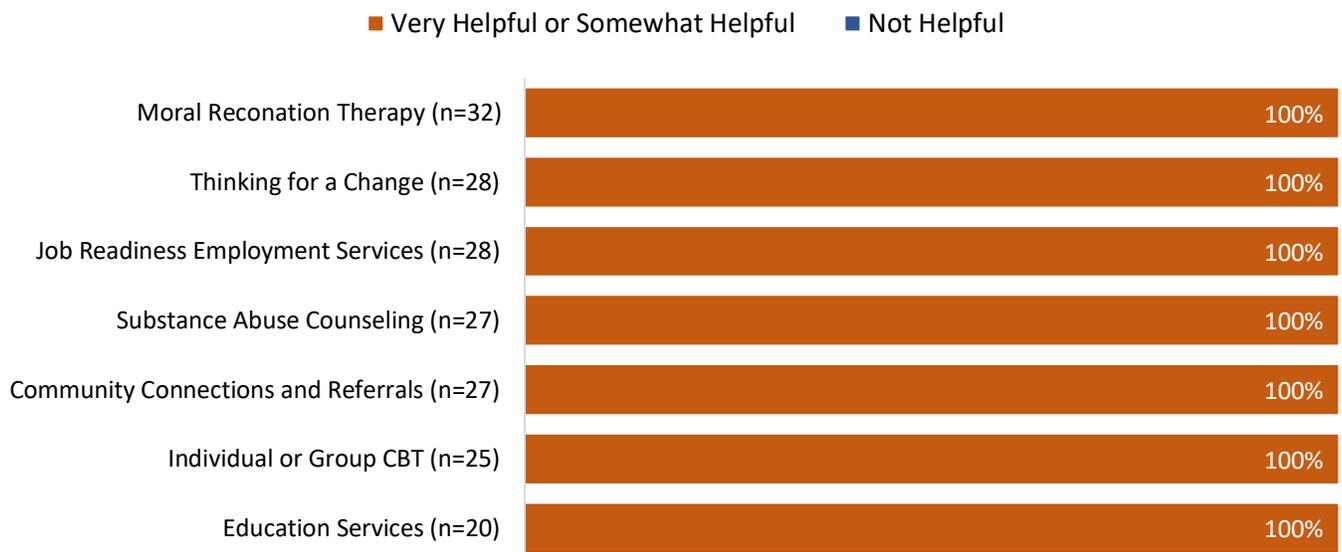
Additionally, the second portion of the survey evaluated the helpfulness of the programs and services they participated in while reporting to the ARRC. Seventy-six percent of respondents from the Ventura site and all survey respondents from the Simi Valley site reported participating in one or more ARRC service at the time the survey was conducted. Figure 22 displays the rate of participation in ARRC services post-Orientation.



Respondents also provided information about the helpfulness of specific services in which they participated. Figures 23a and 23b on the following page present respondents' perceived helpfulness of the service(s) they received at their ARRC site. Survey respondents were given several options to choose from, one of which was "Does Not Apply to Me," (i.e., this option was interpreted to mean that the respondent did not engage in this service). These individuals were not included in figures 23a and 23b.

Survey respondents at the Ventura Site (Figure 23a) who participated in the survey, engaged most in Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), Thinking for a Change (T4C), and Job Readiness/Employment Services. The services least engaged by survey respondents were Education Services; however, those who did participate in these services found them to be somewhat or very helpful.

**Figure 23a. Perceived Helpfulness of Services: Ventura ARRC
(n=20-32)**



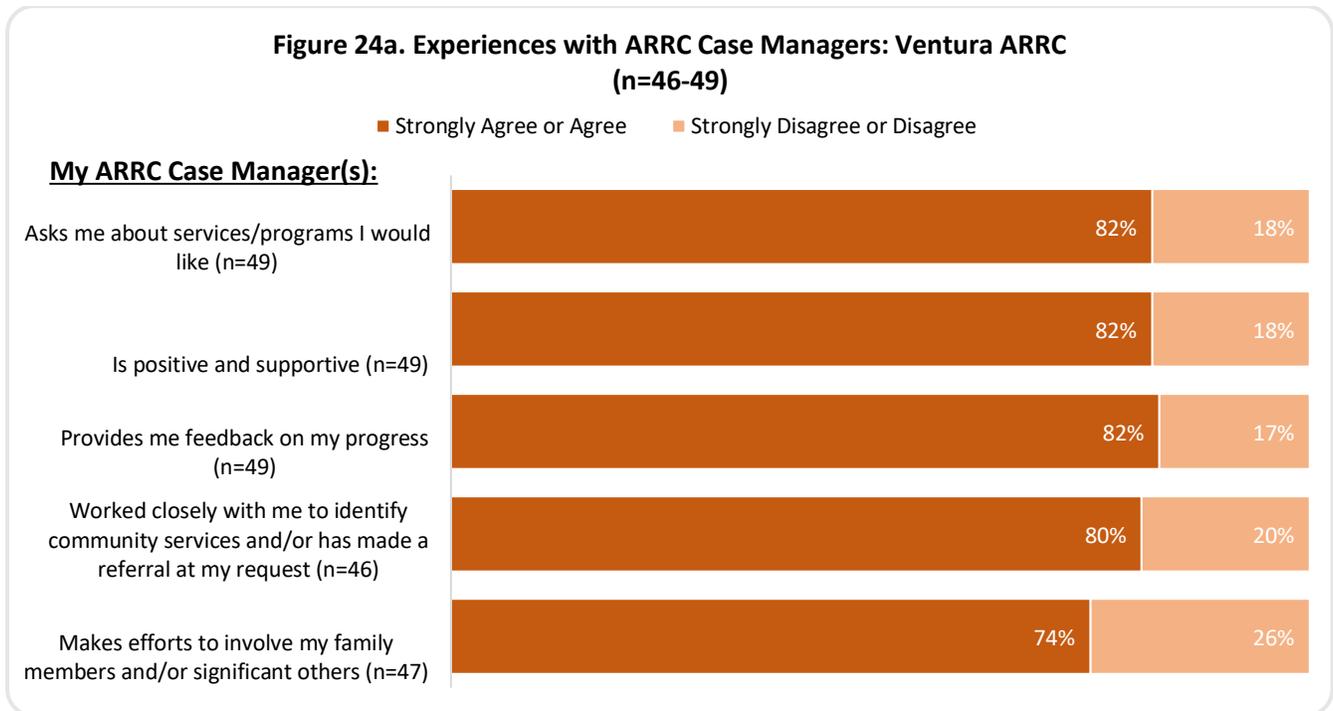
Simi Valley clients (Figure 23b) responded similarly to those participating from the Ventura site with the exception of 6% reporting that T4C was not helpful to them, and 11% reporting that MRT was not helpful to them. All other Simi Valley clients who reported participating in the further services found them to be helpful.

**Figure 23b. Perceived Helpfulness of Services: Simi Valley ARRC
(n=12-18)**



Experiences with ARRC Case Managers

Respondents also provided information about their experience with their ARRC case manager. Survey respondents were given several answer options, one of which was “Does Not Apply to Me”. Respondents from both sites reported high levels (67-85%) of agreement that their ARRC Case Manager provides support, feedback, referrals, and inquiries about the services/programs they would like, as seen in Figure 24a and 24b. Overall, 74%-82% of Ventura site respondents strongly agree or agree that their case manager asks them what they want out of services, is a positive support to them, and more.

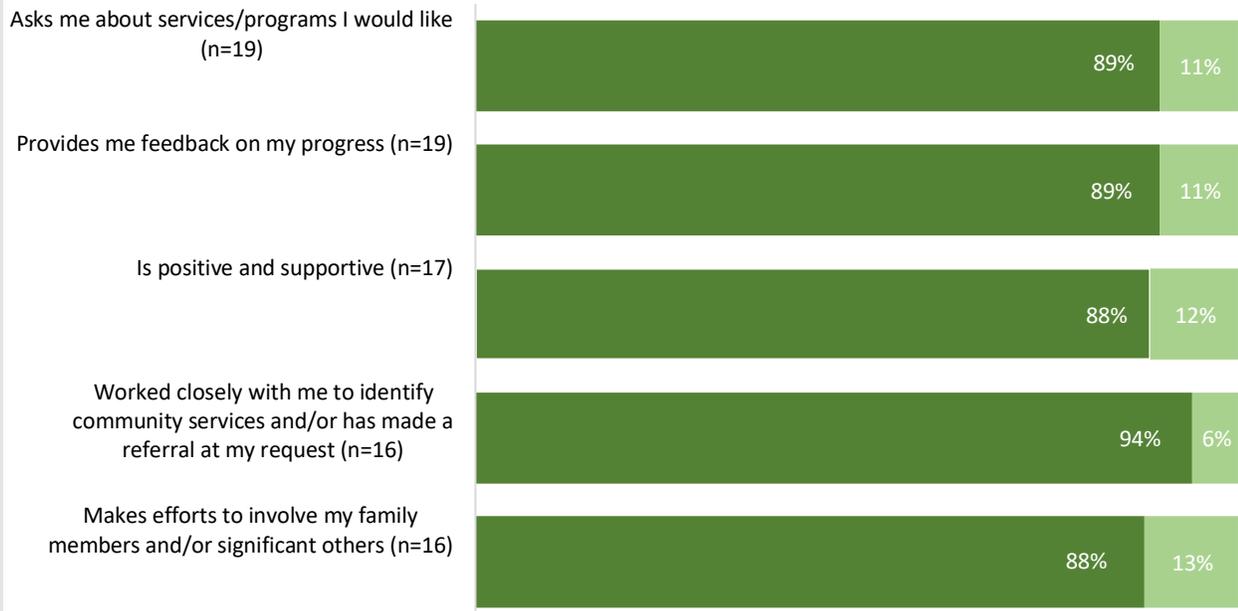


Responses from clients who attend the Simi Valley location are similar to Ventura site clients but with slightly higher levels of agreement with the following statements (i.e., between 88% and 94% agreeing; Figure 24b).

Figure 24b. Experiences with ARRC Case Managers: Simi Valley ARRC (n=18-20)

■ Strongly Agree or Agree ■ Strongly Disagree or Disagree

My ARRC Case Manager(s):



The ARRC’s Impact

The final section of the Client Survey assessed the impacts of participating in the ARRC and recommendations for improvements. As displayed in Table 8 on the following page, the majority (75%-95%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the ARRC had a positive impact across various aspects of their lives. At both the Ventura and Simi Valley sites, the statement with the highest level of agreement was: “Since I started attending the ARRC, I have improved my interpersonal relationships.” The statement with the lowest levels of agreement at the Ventura site was: “I am better able to avoid criminal and/or risky behaviors.” However, there was still a high level of agreement at 75%. The statement with the lowest level of agreement from client survey respondents at the Simi Valley site was: “I have not violated my probation.” Again, there was still a high level of agreement with this statement at 80%.

“I think you guys are doing a great job here. You’ve helped me see life in a whole new way and achieve goals I never thought were possible.”
-ARRC Client

Table 8. Perceived Impact of Attending the ARRC

Since I started attending the ARRC...	Ventura (n=52)			Simi Valley (n=20)		
	% Strongly Agree or Agree	% Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Does Not Apply to Me	% Strongly Agree or Agree	% Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Does Not Apply to Me
I have improved my interpersonal relationships.	80%	14%	6%	95%	5%	-
I am better able to avoid criminal and/or risky behaviors.	75%	17%	8%	90%	10%	-
I have not violated my probation.	79%	17%	4%	80%	10%	10%
I have been motivated to make positive changes in my life.	85%	11%	4%	90%	10%	-
I am more likely to remain arrest/conviction free.	85%	11%	4%	85%	10%	5%

Recommendations to Improve the ARRC

When respondents were asked to share the ways the ARRC services could be improved, 89% of all survey respondents provided comments that are summarized below:

- 32% (n=16) offered recommendations to improve the ARRC’s services. These included:
 - Offer services in additional locations
 - Offer more services such as case investigation assistance, MRT & thinking for a Change (T4C) for non-criminal populations, and medical assistance
 - Add food breaks
 - Add more social activities
 - Have clients help with classes
- 35% (n=18) said “yes” with no elaboration
- 33% (n=17) respondents took the opportunity to complement or give praise to the program

“The ARRC services are great in many ways. I personally wouldn't change anything because even the staff at the front make you feel like you're at home. Everyone here is very well family orientated.”
 -ARRC Client

Other responses included personalized requests for an ankle monitor over jail time, more career readiness programs, and to be added to the GEO team.

ARRC Client Focus Groups

To further understand client’s experiences, a series of focus groups was conducted to allow ARRC participants the opportunity to engage with one another in a facilitated conversation about their overall experience as a client of the reporting and resource center, as well as their recommendations to improve services.

Overall, focus group participants expressed an appreciation for the ARRC and the services offered. Clients mentioned frequently that the ARRC aids greatly in their successful transition from community supervision.

Moreover, they shared the challenges and needs encountered while on supervision, and recommendations for the ARRC to best serve its clients. Key findings from the focus groups are detailed below.

Services

Focus group participants were asked about the services and support available to them that addressed the problems and barriers they encountered while on community supervision. Responses reflected an appreciation for the services, curriculum, and the support received at the ARRC.

Services cited as critical for clients' success included:

- Courses and programs
- Mental health resources
- Employment opportunities
- Clothing provision
- Emotional support and regulation

One client expressed appreciation for the ARRC's referral to therapy and psychiatric help when they needed mental health resources. These services provided this client with the medication they needed.

Courses and Programs

The courses and programs provided by GEO that participants found the most useful included:

- Those that help to change their thinking (MRT; T4C)
- Substance abuse counseling/treatment
- Parenting classes
- Anger management classes
- Classes in Spanish
- Education programs

Programs to Change Thinking

Participants frequently mentioned Moral Recognition Therapy (MRT) as a course that has positively impacted their lives. MRT was described by client participants as teaching an understanding of how individuals process information, stress, and their environment. Clients also spoke about what they learned

"It taught me how to stop and think differently. I can look at my problem, digest it, and then reconstruct it and choose better."
-ARRC Client

regarding self-awareness, self-reflection, and overall healing. Additionally, MRT assists participants in setting realistic long-term goals, and in learning honesty, trust, and acceptance. Thinking for a Change (T4C) is another course offered by GEO that assists clients with problem solving and thinking critically about situations. T4C works with clients to get to the root of their problem(s), manage their immediate reactions, and find healthy alternative ways of responding to conflict with practical steps.

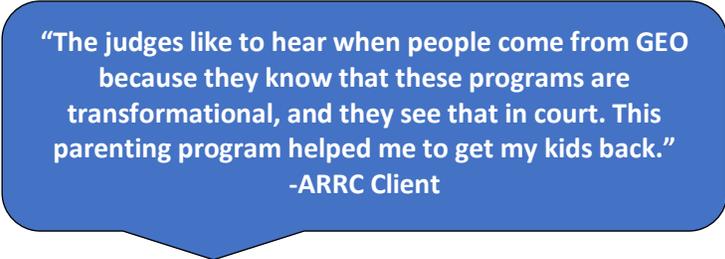
Substance Abuse Counseling/Treatment

GEO's substance abuse counseling/treatment teaches clients about the impact substances have on an individual's mental, emotional, and physical health. Clients talked about the teachings and discussions around relapse triggers, sex education, sobriety, learning accountability, and reflecting on paths that led to their substance use. One participant shared that prior to taking this course, he sought refuge in drugs to cope with stress and escape from reality. Another shared that the program fills his schedule which helps prevent relapse.

Parenting Classes

Some individuals participate in GEO's parenting classes to improve their parenting skills, strengthen their parent-child relationship(s), and/or regain custody of their child(ren). Parents working to regain custody learn parenting skills to better prepare them for their child's return and those who have regained custody with assistance from the program participate in classes to continue to strengthen parenting skills. The parenting classes provide tools on effective communication, impacts of negative and positive reinforcement, benefits of positive parenting, and share how to enjoy and connect with their children.

Many focus group participants took time to praise the parenting class instructor for not passing judgement over losing custody of their child and exceeding expectations by listening to and answering participants' questions.



“The judges like to hear when people come from GEO because they know that these programs are transformational, and they see that in court. This parenting program helped me to get my kids back.”
-ARRC Client

Education Programs

Two education programs mentioned during the focus groups were the GED program and Cal Lutheran program. The GED program is a course that prepares students to take the GED test and covers the associated testing fees. The Cal Lutheran program is a critical thinking class in which ARRC clients learn alongside college students to earn college credit. A participant in this program shared that taking the course with college students was impactful and validating.

Other programs and classes that were not extensively discussed but were mentioned as being valuable were Anger Management classes and courses taught in Spanish.

Environment and Support

Participants highlighted their appreciation for the support their case managers and course instructors provided. Participants expressed feeling safe and comfortable when speaking with their case manager and described the environment as being “non-judgmental” and “a safe place to be vulnerable.”

"I feel at home when I come here. I feel like I matter when I walk in."

-ARRC Client

Additionally, participants shared that their perception of staff at other organizations was that they are "just there for the paycheck," but they felt cared for and that they mattered at GEO. Participants felt that they received the emotional support and accountability they needed to remain sober and the motivation to get a better job. They were also grateful for assistance with their cases from the character letters they received from their case manager. Case managers were described as "very resourceful" and providing consistent aid regardless of client mistakes.

When asked if GEO's services help them "stay out of trouble" and from returning to jail, respondents agreed but stated, "You have to do your part." It was evident from the focus groups that case managers and programs motivate participants to stay clean, contribute to their personal growth, and assist with their employment. One participant shared that being a part of the program taught them self-worth, self-love, and to take pride in who they are and who they will become.

"The staff not only helps me with one problem, they always go the extra step and above and beyond."

-ARRC Client

Challenges and Needs

Focus groups explored the typical challenges participants encountered while on supervision and while accessing services. Additionally, participants were asked what services are missing from, but would be beneficial at, the ARRC. The themes that emerged from this discussion are outlined below.

Housing

A common barrier affecting those on community supervision was a lack of housing. Participants found that this barrier led to additional problems such as poor hygiene, food insecurity, limitations to pursuing job opportunities, and a higher risk of COVID-19 illness. One focus group participant shared that the lack of housing when leaving prison is a stressor that leads to relapse, particularly during the time between leaving incarceration and finding GEO.

Transportation

Many focus group participants expressed that transportation was a barrier to attending work and mandatory programs, as well as to accessing services. Some participants lost their car and/or license due to their incarceration. Although those who require transportation support are provided bus passes, the distance can be challenging and requires multiple buses that run on an infrequent schedule. One participant

shared that they were able to retrieve their car from impound with GEO's help. Although GEO's services reduce some transportation challenges, recommendations were made to further address this barrier. Recommendations shared to improve the ARRC transportation support included providing vouchers to get a new license and assisting with gas money.

Employment/Finances

Seeking employment was further complicated for focus group participants by lack of affordable housing and reliable transportation. Although the ARRC provides job training and placement services, there are participants who still experience job insecurity and unemployment. Participants found that the lack of employment and being recently incarcerated without money complicates obtaining necessities, such as food.

Environmental Stressors

Focus group participants identified some environmental stressors they experienced upon their release from incarceration. These stressors included exposure to substance abuse, other substance users, neighborhood environments, and life stress.

**“Going back to life on the street or to work situation that are stressful are not conducive to staying away from drugs and alcohol.”
-ARRC Client**

Once released, getting medication, specifically suboxone to aid in ending substance use, was difficult for participants. Moreover, individuals who were released during the COVID-19 pandemic felt resources were less accessible to them.

Personal/Self

While many focus group participants expressed that joining the program was easy and the staff are great, some shared that their reluctance to participate in the program served as a barrier to pursuing the services and resources the ARRC offers.

**“I’ve had to work on myself- I explore consequences that are from my decisions, I can’t complain. If there are any challenges, they are within me.”
-ARRC Client**

One participant explained that they initially did not believe they should be part of the program, but quickly realized it would be beneficial to them and fully committed to the program. Another participant stated that participating in the program can be emotionally and mentally rigorous but challenging in a positive way. Others expressed feeling like “a burden” because they required support immediately upon their release from prison. They shared that this pressure made them feel like relapsing on substances.

Terms of Probation

Participants shared that at times their terms of probation were restrictive. Several participants preferred an ankle monitor because, as one participant expressed, they could continue to work rather than sit in jail.

When this individual's request for an ankle monitor was not approved, they felt that "no one could help" them. Another individual's request was rejected without any reason. The discussion also revealed that the ankle monitor request form is only available in English. For one bilingual participant, they did not experience any issues with requesting an ankle monitor. Their request was approved, and they attribute this success to knowing where to go for help. However, a mono-lingual Spanish speaking participant had to use their phone to translate the document, making the request process more difficult. Other challenges participants faced on probation included not knowing that they could request to participate in the ARRC.

Other Service Needs

Participants expressed a desire for the following additional services to better address their needs:

- Courses in Spanish and Spanish-speaking staff, specifically for education and professional development
- Help with Medi-Cal enrollment
- Programs for professional development
- Resources to access food

Recommendations

Participants were given the opportunity to share recommendations for additional support or resources that could encourage their success, recommendations to improve the ARRC program, and advice for other individuals on community supervision.

Recommendations for additional support and resources included:

- Housing assistance
- Mentorship program
- On-site vocational training
- Food services
- Aftercare programs
- Life skills classes
- More court-approved curriculums
- More transportation services
- More programs offered in Spanish

Participants shared that housing assistance would address their most critical need and help participants stay out of jail. Most frequently mentioned as a recommendation was a mentorship program for clients from marginalized communities. Participants shared that clients could be given a formal opportunity to "give back" through a mentorship program by helping others in similar situations. Additionally, participants frequently suggested bridging the time gap between release from incarceration and joining the ARRC program so clients receive timely resources during a vulnerable period. Lastly, participants proposed offering the program as an intervention to at-risk individuals in the community to prevent them from committing a criminal offense.

Respondents had much to say when prompted to give advice to someone on community supervision. The advice further reflected clients' appreciation for, and dedication to, GEO's services. Examples included:

- "Be yourself, don't be something you are not. Speak up, this is a safe zone. Don't feel the need to pretend."
- "Try the GEO program, we are proof of what it can do."
- "I have been where you are at, maybe you don't want to be here, [but] you can leave here a different person. It is your choice. You may think this does not apply to you but if you really reflect and sit with the material, you might just find that this is speaking directly to you."
- "That there is someone here for you, and it may be the difference between relapse, reincarceration, and becoming independent and living a healthy, happy lifestyle."
- "Dedicate yourself for two weeks, listen and learn, and little by little you will create a bond with others and the staff, and you will want to keep coming."

Impact

The ARRC gives clients the tools to make their desired life changes and has an impact on clients that extends beyond graduation. Although most focus group participants were still working towards graduation, those who had finished the program shared that they are still involved with the ARRC (i.e., attending meetings, providing support, and mentorship). When asked about the changes they have seen in their lives after participating in the program, one participant said, "I would like to come back to GEO and give back and continue to participate." Those awaiting graduation were filled with hope for the changes they want to see in their lives after the program. Some shared general desires such as to "live a goal-oriented life," become a resilient person, keep their independence, and to "maintain the tools learned to make good decisions." Others had specific goals for life after graduation. Examples include having to have a stable living situation, maintaining peace with their family, and being a more active parent.

"I want peace and tranquility."

-ARRC Client

"I want stability and to not be a burden. I want to have a home and start a family. I want to be the father figure that I never had to a son- that will tell me that I have truly arrived."

-ARRC Client

Staff Key Stakeholder Interviews

To gain VCPA and GEO staffs' unique perspectives regarding clients' needs and the impact of the ARRC on clients, EVALCORP conducted semi-structured interviews with key management and staff. These interviews were done to gain insight into these perspectives, gather their recommendations to improve the ARRC, and understand current needs and challenges. Descriptions of major themes identified from the interviews are detailed below along with illustrative quotes.

Clients' Needs

Across all interviews, a majority of staff expressed that the most prominent need among clients is greater access to resources, specifically food, education, mental health, substance abuse treatment, transportation, and housing. Interviewees frequently mentioned that most housing options are geared toward those who struggle with substance abuse, and individuals who do not use substances feel they do not have a place to go. Additionally, staff shared that many housing resources, substance use focused or not, have long waitlists. Moreover, even when a client has a family or friend they can stay with, it is often an environment that is not conducive to their rehabilitation goals. They may be surrounded by criminal behavior, substances, or a lack of support for their participation in the ARRC's programming.

Other general needs discussed included emotional support, accountability, additional programming, and more referrals to services. Interviewees spoke of how these needs were impacted by factors such as cultural, demographic, and individual barriers, as well as barriers caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many staff felt that there was a need for more services available in Spanish. Staff also noted that additional services, such as a women's only MRT group, especially for those who have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault, would support the varying individual needs.

While staff noted that they quickly adjusted to the ever-evolving conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to meet the needs of their clients, interviewees described how the pandemic still impacted those needs. Although referrals continued throughout the pandemic, they were made less frequently. Additionally, the pandemic limited the level of client interaction with services, their probation officers, and their case managers. The approach to client interactions changed from in person to phone, facetime, or "porch calls", making it difficult for staff to maintain a holistic assessment of their client's progress and a strong connection with their clients. The pandemic also posed a barrier to conducting drug testing, which interviewees shared led to an increased number of relapses and lower levels of client engagement in the program.

**"[GEO] worked as hard as they could to meet the needs of clients."
-VCPA DPO**

"The program is well developed but there is a need for more resources for Spanish-speaking population, many services are only provided in English and [Spanish speakers] cannot be referred there."

-GEO Staff

Impact on Clients

It was evident from the interviews that ARRC participants benefit in numerous ways from the individualized support, resources, and services they receive from their case managers and other staff who genuinely care for them. The staff pointed out that clients also receive support and encouragement from other clients they can relate to.

“It’s inspiring to see where [the clients] came from and what they’ve achieved...to see how they’ve transformed their lives is incredible.”

-VCPA Staff

Additional benefits noted were that the ARRC holds clients accountable and gives them support, a routine, and positive reinforcement. Specifically with case management, “there’s familiarity meeting with the same person [so that] they can build rapport and it is [a] comforting and welcoming environment.” Case managers individualize treatment plans for each client and find ways to get their families involved, such as through social events. Other benefits mentioned are the tools that clients learn at the ARRC to change their thinking, deal with stress and anxiety, help them gain employment, and “find their purpose”.

When asked about specific programs they believed were most useful to the clients, many staff mentioned MRT. Other programs and services mentioned included employment support, parenting classes, anger management classes, case management, and drug testing. Referrals to community partners, such as Goodwill Second Chance, were also repeatedly discussed.

“[GEO] works with the client on a personal level and get to know them. [They] work towards meeting [the clients] goals as well as their needs”

-VCPA DPO

“They like to be in a place where they can speak openly about what they’re going through in life without feeling judgement, they get that support system of acceptance.”

-VCPA DPO

Recommendations

Interviewees were asked to share their recommendations for improving the ARRC's services to better help clients overcome the barriers previously identified. When prompted, staff did not believe that any of the existing services offered should be discontinued because "there is always someone who can benefit from any of the ARRC's services." Instead, many provided suggestions for improving or expanding services. The most common were to provide housing to participants who do not have substance use problems and to expand transportation services. Additionally, staff proposed making the Simi Valley ARRC a full-service location as well as creating an additional, more centralized location in Oxnard to address the transportation barriers many clients face in the region. Other recommendations included strengthening community connections for referrals, expanding program hours to evenings and weekends, and strengthening employment and education services.

Furthermore, GEO staff were asked to describe the efforts that have been made to improve existing services. They explained that they have offered MRT and parenting classes in Spanish to better serve their Spanish speaking population. They also mentioned that efforts have been made to maintain relationships and communications with VCPA and their community partners to support referrals.

Staff Needs and Challenges

The final portion of the interview assessed staff experiences, including the challenges they faced when engaging with clients and their need for additional data and information. Initially, staff had difficulty getting clients to engage with the ARRC and difficulty with some clients' "intense" demeanor. Other challenges included facing dishonesty from some clients, managing high caseloads, and managing disappointment when a client relapses or does not follow through with referrals. However, staff expressed that they felt supported by their supervisors and coworkers when facing these difficult situations.

"One thing we all have in common is that we want the best for everyone we serve...you have to want to help this population"

-GEO Case Manager

Staff were also asked if they had a need for any information or data. While many felt that the communication between GEO and VCPA and the information they received from one another were sufficient, staff at VCPA thought it would be helpful to receive continuous feedback about their clients' progress including updates on their testing and assessments as well as overall trends in client progression through the program. Staff also felt that having access to client history, case notes, and ARRC referral history would be useful. Additional helpful data or information mentioned included success rates of clients, recidivism rates after graduation, the average time it takes for a client to complete programming at the ARRC, and information on attrition.

Final Thoughts

At the end of the interview, staff had an opportunity to share any remaining thoughts or comments. Many took the time to praise the ARRC as well as GEO case managers and staff. Staff expressed gratitude for the ARRC and the changes they have seen in their clients' lives. Interviewees also praised the continuous communication between GEO and VCPA staff, and the very successful and longstanding partnership between the two agencies.

"I really applaud the case managers that work there because they really put a lot of time and effort into making sure all clients' needs are met."

-VCPA DPO

"By providing good quality services for one person, you're impacting a lot of people. The more success an individual has, the greater the ripple effect."

-VCPA Staff

Summary and Recommendations

A multi-year retrospective evaluation of the Ventura County ARRC was conducted using a mixed-methods approach. The evaluation aimed to identify the levels of participation in services among clients, document the impacts on clients' criminal justice outcomes, and examine whether program services met clients' needs. To achieve these objectives, both quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies were employed including analyses of GEO and Ventura County Justice Information System (VCJIS) data, along with a series of surveys, interviews and focus groups with clients and staff.

Service Participation

Between August 2016 and February 2022, 936 clients entered the ARRC program, which includes four distinct phases: Motivation, Treatment, Transition, and Aftercare. Of the 936 clients who entered the Motivation Phase, 443 (47%) completed. All these clients then progressed to the Treatment Phase, of which 192 (43%) successfully completed. A total of 188 clients then entered the Transition Phase, where 143 (76%) completed the phase. Finally, 140 clients started and successfully completed the Aftercare Phase.

During the same timeframe, more than 150,000 service sessions were conducted. The overall ARRC service session attendance rate was nearly 70%, with at least 8 in 10 clients attending sessions in Case Management, Life Skills & Cognitive Restructuring, Alcohol & Drug Testing/Compliance Monitoring, Individual Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, T4C, and MRT.

Among the 745 clients who completed 35,718 substance use tests, only 6% (1,977 tests) of all tests returned a positive result, with 94% (33,741 tests) of all tests being negative.

Criminal Justice Outcomes

EVALCORP examined multiple criminal justice outcome measures for ARRC clients who had a matched data extraction from VCJIS. Of the 739 clients for which there was a VCJIS match, 395 (53%) were in the Motivation Phase group and 344 (47%) had progressed to the Treatment Phase and Beyond group.

Overall, clients who progressed to Treatment Phase and Beyond had better criminal justice outcomes than Motivation Phase Only clients. Specifically:

- Clients who progressed to the Treatment Phase and Beyond had fewer in-program custodial sanctions than Motivation Phase Only clients.
- Clients who progressed to the Treatment Phase and Beyond had lower rearrest rates and lower new case filing rates than Motivation Phase Only clients.

- 62% of the Motivation Phase Only group clients had a new arrest post ARRC admission, compared to just 33% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.
- 51% of the Motivation Phase Only group clients had new charges filed post ARRC admission, compared to just 30% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients
- FY16/17 – FY18/19 ARRC clients who progressed to the Treatment Phase and Beyond had lower rates of recidivism compared to those in the Motivation Phase Only group.
 - Within 12 months of entry into ARRC services, nearly 1 in 3 of the Motivation Phase Only group had committed an offense that led to a reconviction, compared to 14% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.
 - Within 36 months of entry into ARRC services, 43% of the Motivation Phase Only group had committed a new offense that led to a reconviction, compared to just 26% of the Treatment Phase and Beyond group clients.
- Overall, the longer a client remained in ARRC services, the better their outcomes (i.e., lower rates of arrests, violations of probation leading to a custodial sanction, and lower rates of recidivism).

Client Engagement and Staff Perspectives

A client survey was conducted to determine the extent to which the ARRC services met clients' needs, to identify the types of secondary effects stemming from program participation, and to capture client suggestions about how the ARRC can better meet clients' needs.

Concerning service engagement and helpfulness, survey respondents at the Ventura Site engaged most in MRT, T4C, and Job Readiness/Employment Services and engaged least in Education Services. Universally, Ventura Site clients found all services to be somewhat or very helpful. Simi Valley clients reported similar engagement rates and helpfulness of services. However, 6% reported that T4C was not helpful to them and 11% reported that MRT was not helpful to them. All other Simi Valley clients who participated in the remaining services (i.e., substance abuse counseling, individual or group CBT, community connections and referrals, job readiness and employment services, education services) found them to be helpful.

Respondents from both sites reported high levels (67-85%) of agreement that their ARRC Case Manager provided support, feedback, referrals, and inquiries about the services/programs they would like. Overall, 74%-82% of Ventura site respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their case managers asked them what they want out of services and were a positive support.

Additionally, four client focus groups were conducted to gather information on client experiences at the ARRC, the services they received, and programs they attended. Services cited as critical supports for clients' success included: courses and programs, mental health resources, employment opportunities, clothing provisions, and emotional support and regulation. The primary challenges and needs of the ARRC clients were housing, employment, financial support, environmental stressors, and certain terms of their probation.

Staff Perspectives

Across all staff interviews, the majority of staff expressed that the most prominent need of their clients was greater access to resources, specifically for food, education, mental health, substance abuse treatment, transportation and housing. It was evident from the interviews that ARRC participants benefit in numerous ways from the individualized support, resources, and services they receive from their case managers and other staff who genuinely care for them. The staff pointed out that clients also receive support and encouragement from other clients they can relate to. Additional benefits cited by respondents were that the ARRC holds clients accountable and gives them support, a routine, and positive reinforcement, specifically with case management. The primary challenges and needs of GEO and VCPA staff were difficulty getting clients to engage with the ARRC at times, difficulty with some clients' "intense" demeanor, facing dishonesty from some clients, managing high caseloads, and disappointment when a client relapses or does not follow through with referrals. However, staff expressed that they felt supported by their supervisors and coworkers when facing these difficult situations.

Recommendations

The recommendations presented below have been determined based on all the data collected and assessed through the evaluation.

Data Management

To ensure a better understanding of the ARRC's participation rates and successes, and to support analysis and ongoing evaluation, we recommend VCPA and GEO make several changes to their data management systems. To track referrals and successful enrollment rates, we recommend VCPA DPOs keep detailed digital records of the referrals they make to the ARRC. Additionally, to increase the amount of data that matches the County's criminal justice data, GEO could improve its system for capturing accurate Person Numbers. We also recommend that the following Community Referral options be added into GEO's data management system, which accounted for over 75% of "Other" community referrals: "No Referral Needed"; "Hygiene/Personal Care"; "Financial Assistance"; and "Obtaining Identification Documents."

Analysis

The evaluation team recommends completing additional statistical analyses to examine the 3-year recidivism rates of ARRC clients after more clients progress to the Aftercare Phase/graduate the program and spend sufficient time in the community.

Augmenting and/or Expanding ARRC Services

Many requests from clients and staff involved offering more of ARRC's existing services. In alignment with these requests, we recommend expanding ARRC operations to include a centralized location in Oxnard, additional hours and weekends at the Simi Valley ARRC site, and more transportation services. Fulfilling these recommendations would allow clients to more easily attend the ARRC's services and programs, thereby increasing their engagement and improving their chances of not recidivating. While clients committed to the ARRC appear to have high levels of engagement already, we recommend that case

managers and staff make a greater effort to involve clients' family members and significant others in services. Hosting more social events for clients and their families would further help to increase levels of consistent engagement. Additionally, strengthening community connections for referrals to additional services (e.g., including housing assistance, especially for those who do not have substance use problems, food services, vocational training, and case investigations) would be beneficial in ensuring that clients receive the full array of support they need. Recommendations for additional services offered at the ARRC are to provide more career readiness programs, life skills classes, and court approved curriculum. Given the large Spanish-speaking population attending the ARRC, offering more classes in Spanish and translating all documents into Spanish (e.g., ankle monitor request form) is recommended. Lastly, we recommend continuing to build relationships with system-level partner agencies to ensure all persons who are eligible and ready to change can be referred to the ARRC.