

# COUNTY SOLUTIONS FOR KIDS IN TROUBLE

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# Texas Juvenile Justice System 2011:

**55,145** youth referred to 165 county juvenile departments

**27,143** youth detained in 50 secure county pre-adjudication detention facilities

**16,601** youth disposed to probation

**2,616** youth sent to 33 secure county post-adjudication facilities.

**2,436** sent to non-secure placements

**956** youth sent to 6 state secure facilities

**173** youth certified



# Keeping Kids Close to Home

- Access to community resources
- Access to family
- Lower staff turnover
- Safer for youth and staff
- Less expensive
- Legislative Mandate



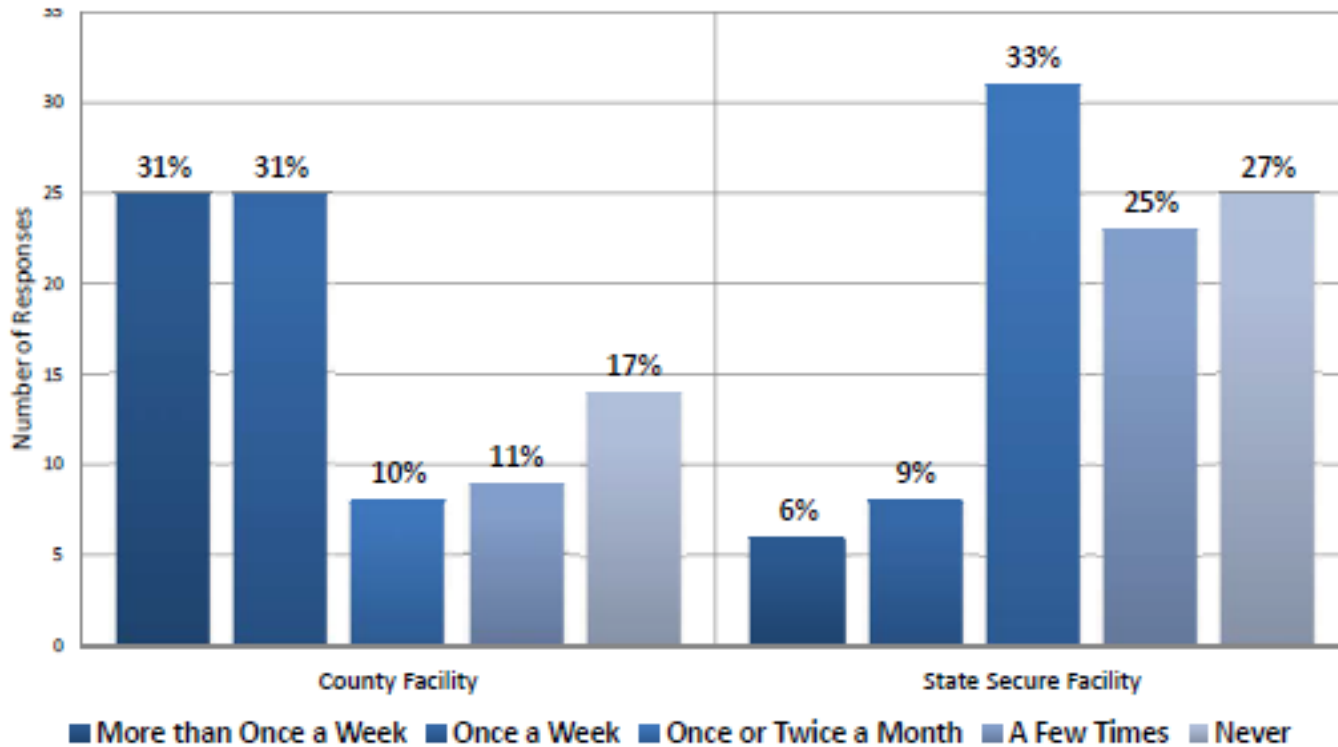
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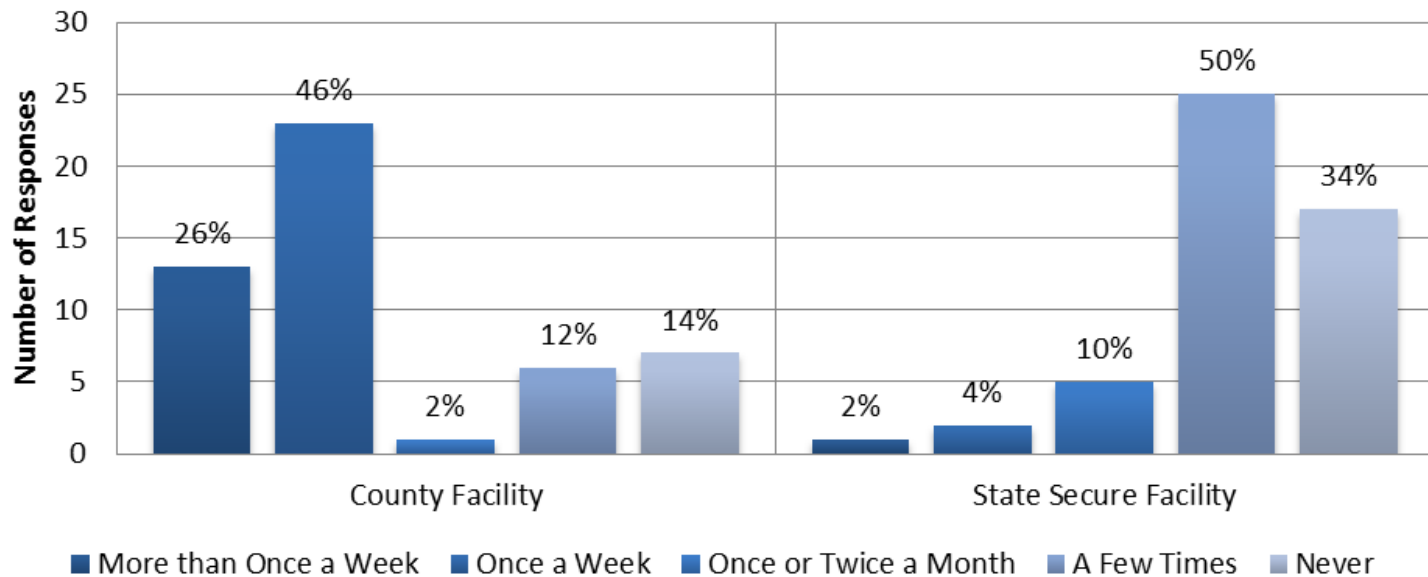
## How many times did a family member visit you at those facilities?

*(More than Once a Week, Once a Week, Once or Twice a Month, A Few Times, or Never)*



Survey at Giddings (boys) state facility

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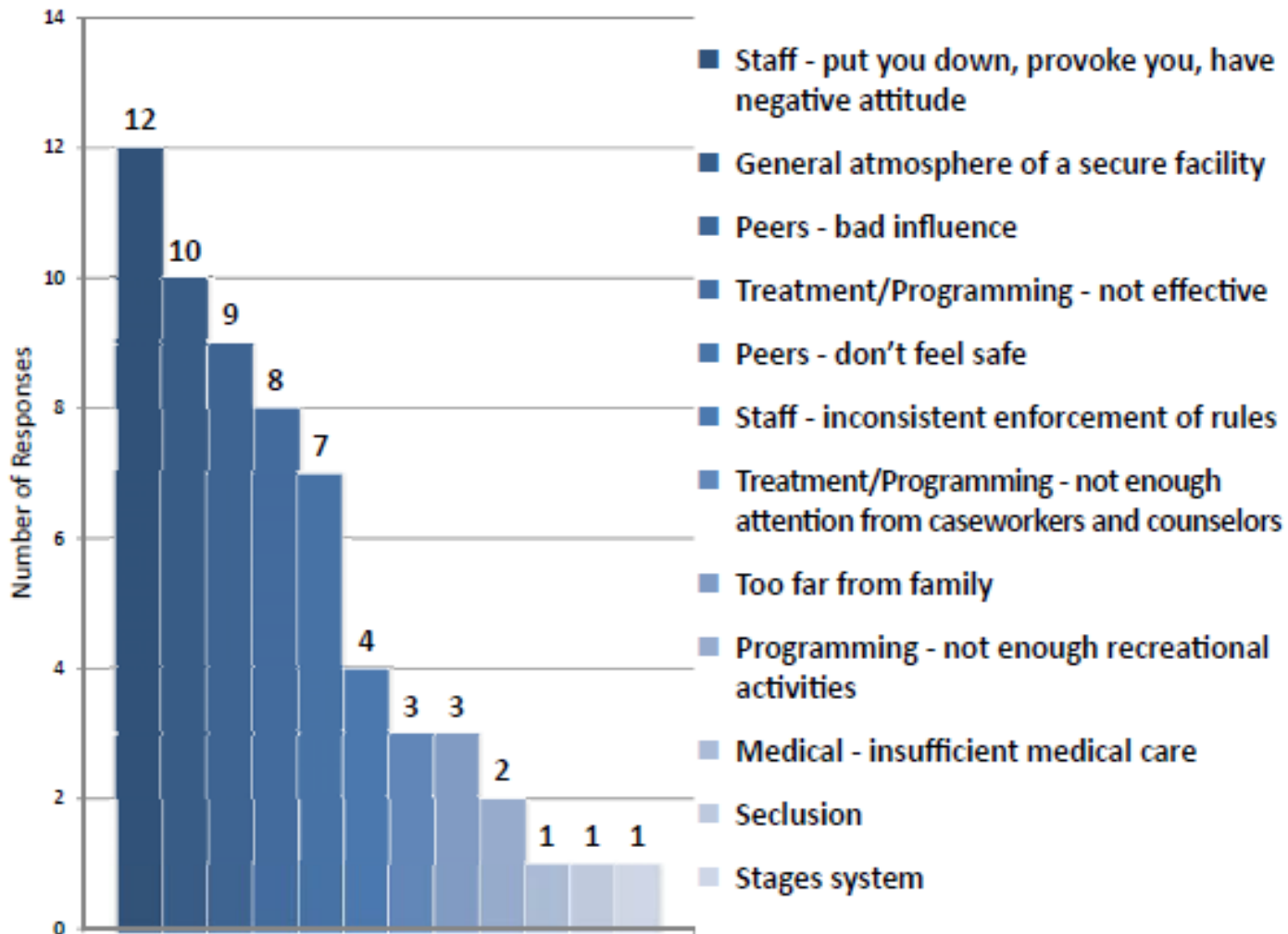


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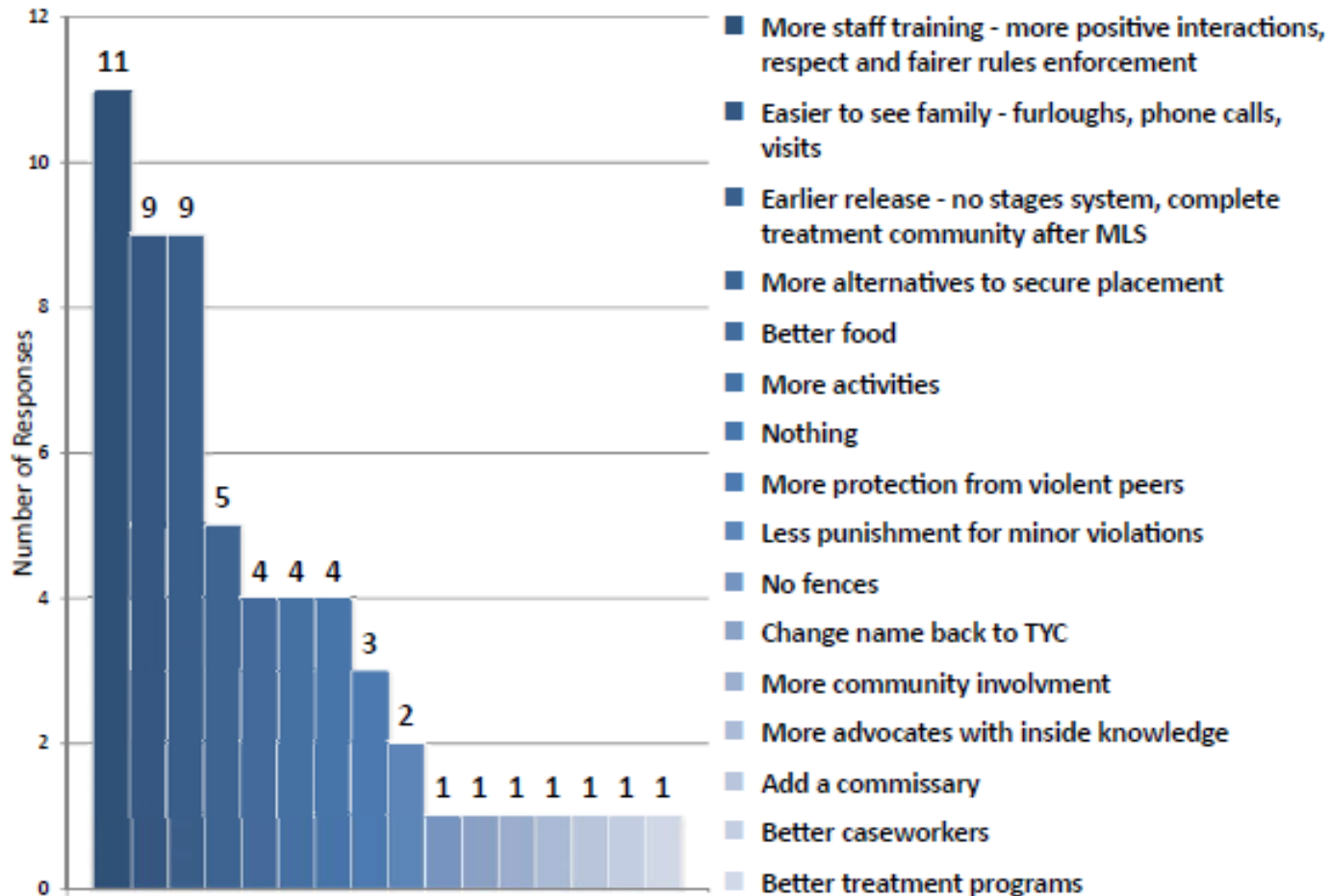
## What has been the least helpful to prepare you for your future after you leave the juvenile justice system?



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## If you were in charge and had the power to change one thing about the juvenile system, what would you change?



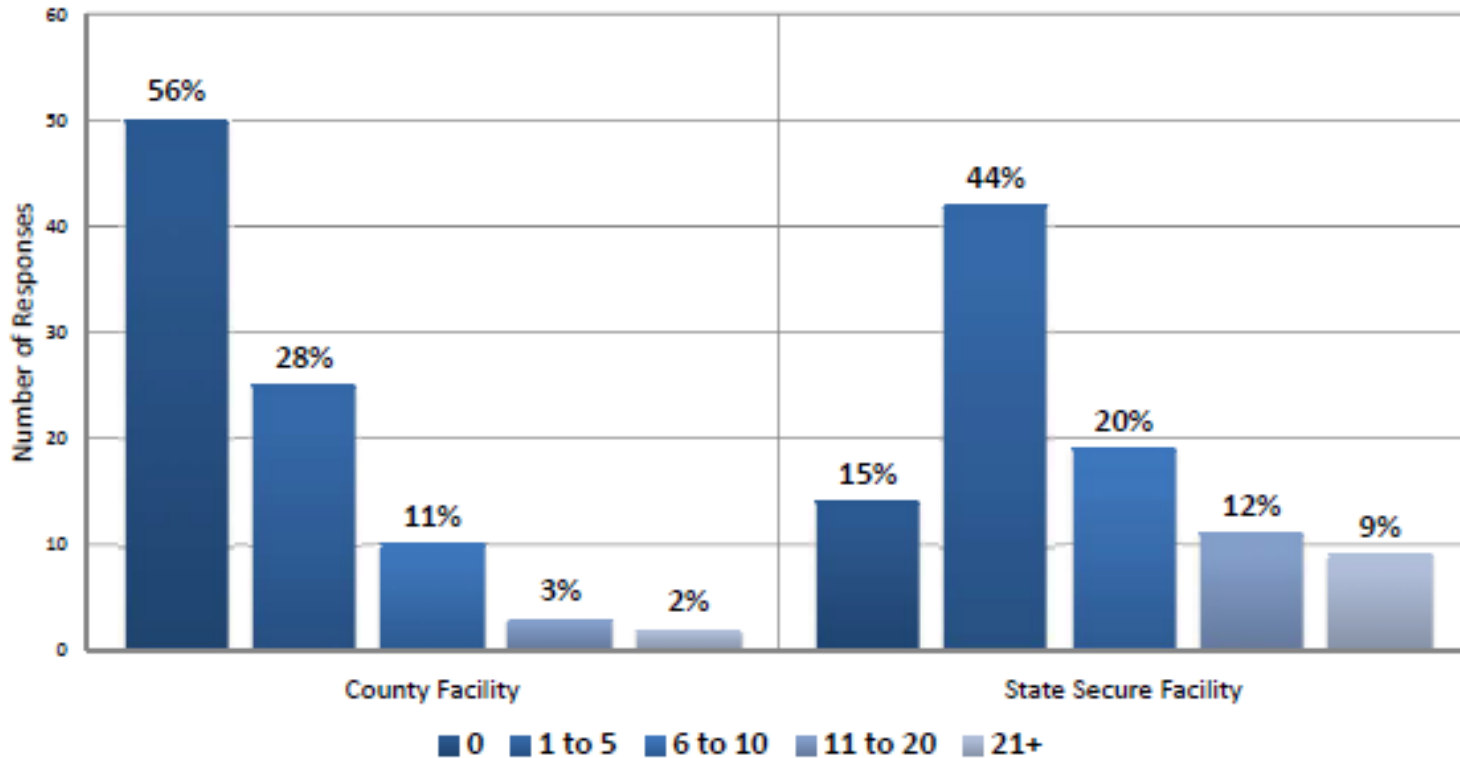
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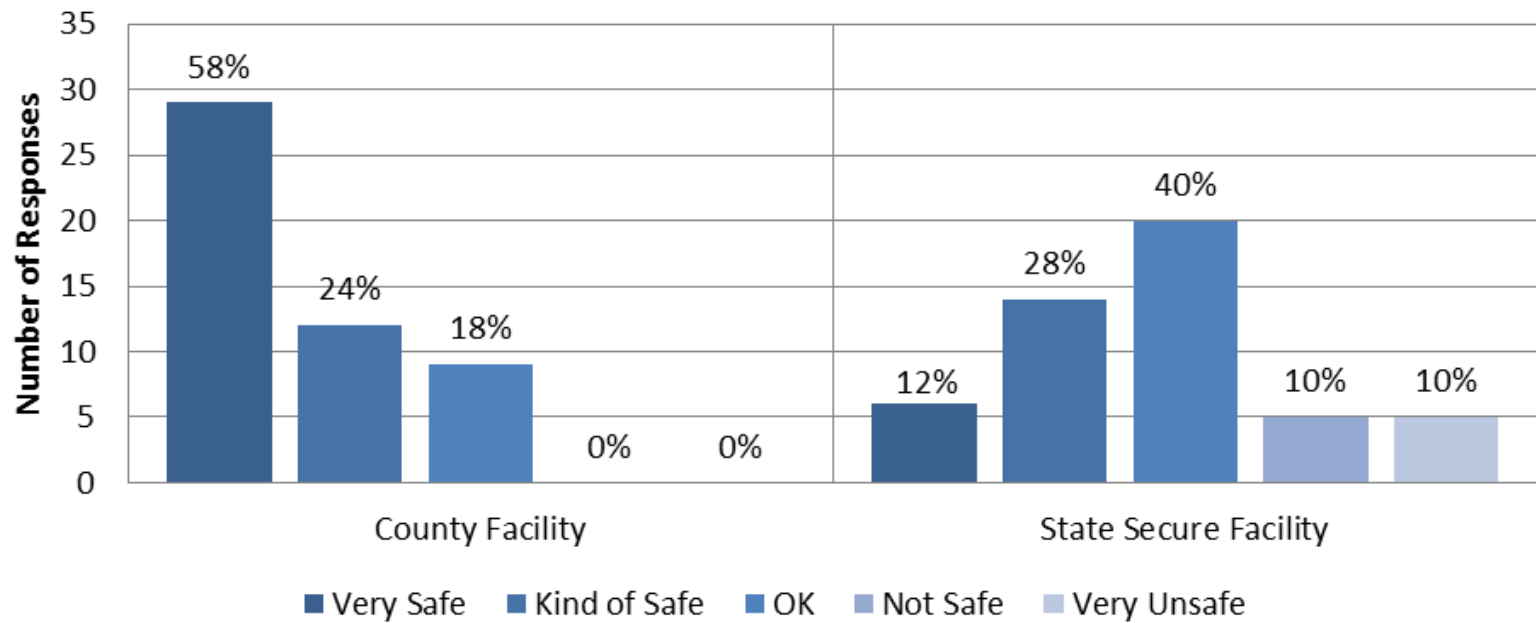


## How many times were you in a physical fight with other youths at these facilities?



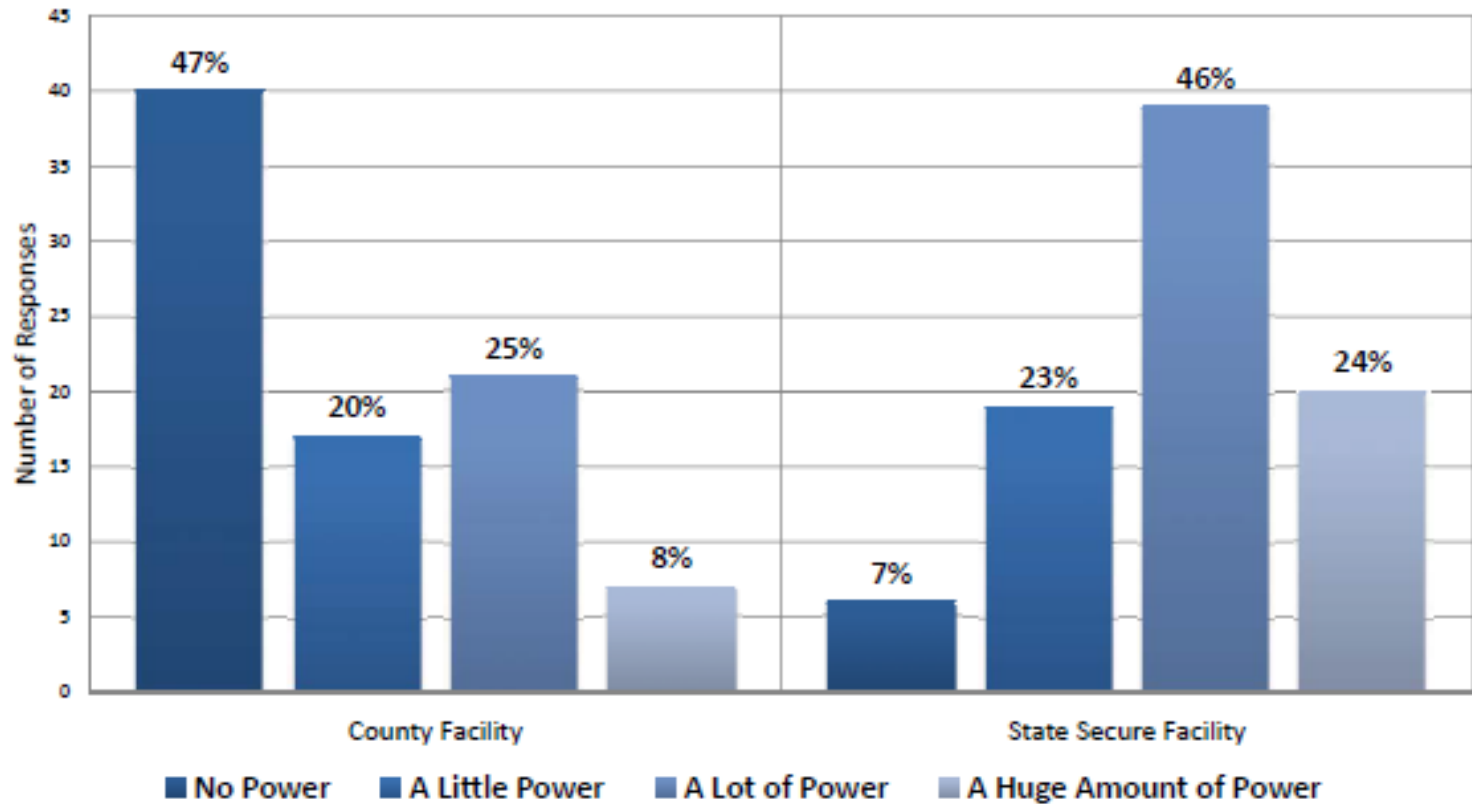
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## How safe did you feel at those facilities? (Very Safe, Kind of Safe, OK, Not Safe, Very Unsafe)



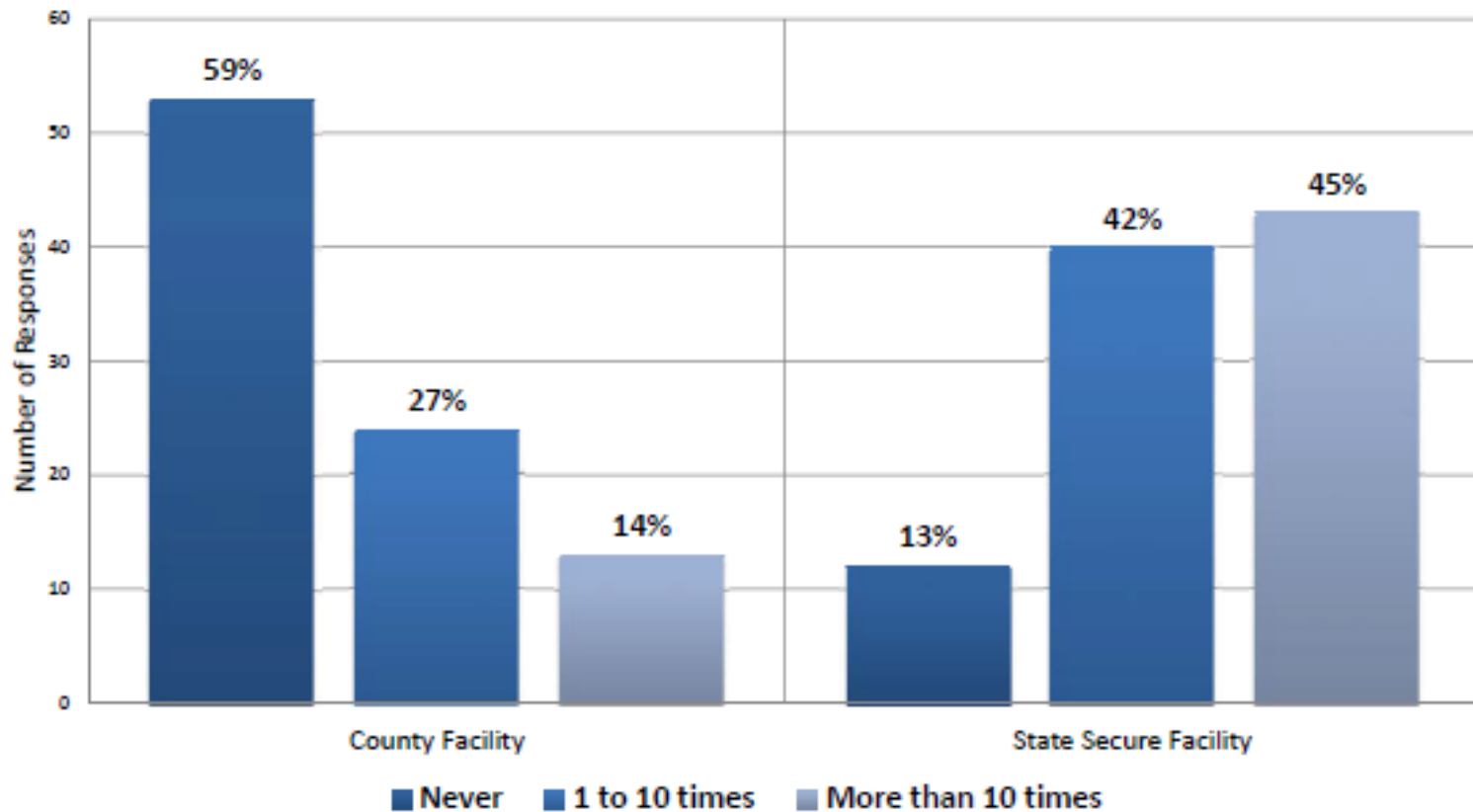
Survey at Ron Jackson (girls) state facility

## How much power did gangs have in those facilities? (No Power, A Little Power, A Lot of Power, A Huge Amount of Power)



Survey at Giddings (boys) state facility

## How many times were you confined to your room as punishment for more than 24 hours at those facilities?



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# Community Challenges

- **(Very) Insufficient Funding**

**Is current funding for county juvenile probation departments sufficient to implement best practices for reductions in juvenile crime and recidivism?**

- Very insufficient: 11%
- Insufficient: 64%
- Sufficient: 25%
- More than sufficient: 0%

- **Limited state oversight / guidance**



# Community Priorities

**Please rank the following by need of increased funding at your department.**

1. Mental Health Services (average rank: 3.0)
2. Community Alternatives to Secure Detention (average rank: 3.2)
3. Family Involvement Programs (average rank: 3.7)
4. Prevention Programs (average rank: 4.2)
5. Substance Abuse Services (average rank: 4.4)
6. Reentry and Aftercare Programs (average rank: 5.0)
7. Staff Training (average rank: 6.7)
8. Assessment Instruments (average rank: 7.3)
9. JJAEP and Detention Schoolwork (average rank: 7.7)

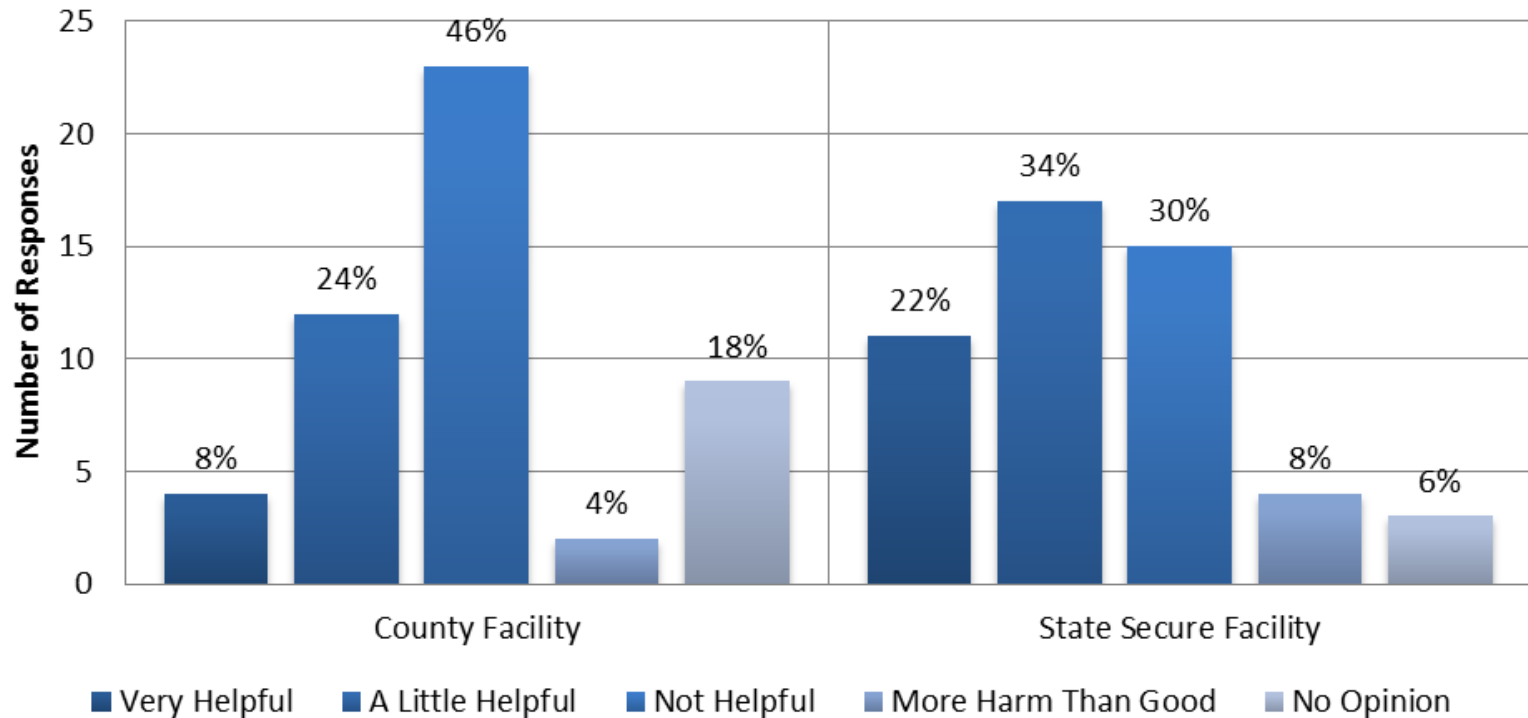


# Mental Health and Trauma

- Texas ranks **last** in mental health funding
- 1/3 of probation youth have a diagnosed mental illness
  - Only 1/4 of those diagnosed youth receive mental health treatment
- 1/2 of referred youth report a past traumatic experience
  - 1/2 of girls at Ron Jackson report probation experience did not help or did more harm than good in helping them to deal with past trauma
  - The biggest predictor of increasingly severe placements for girls
- Wide variation in county responses to mental health



# How well did staff, programs, and treatment help you to deal with past trauma in your life? (Very Helpful, A Little Helpful, Not Helpful, More Harm Than Good)



Survey at Ron Jackson (girls) state facility



# County Successes

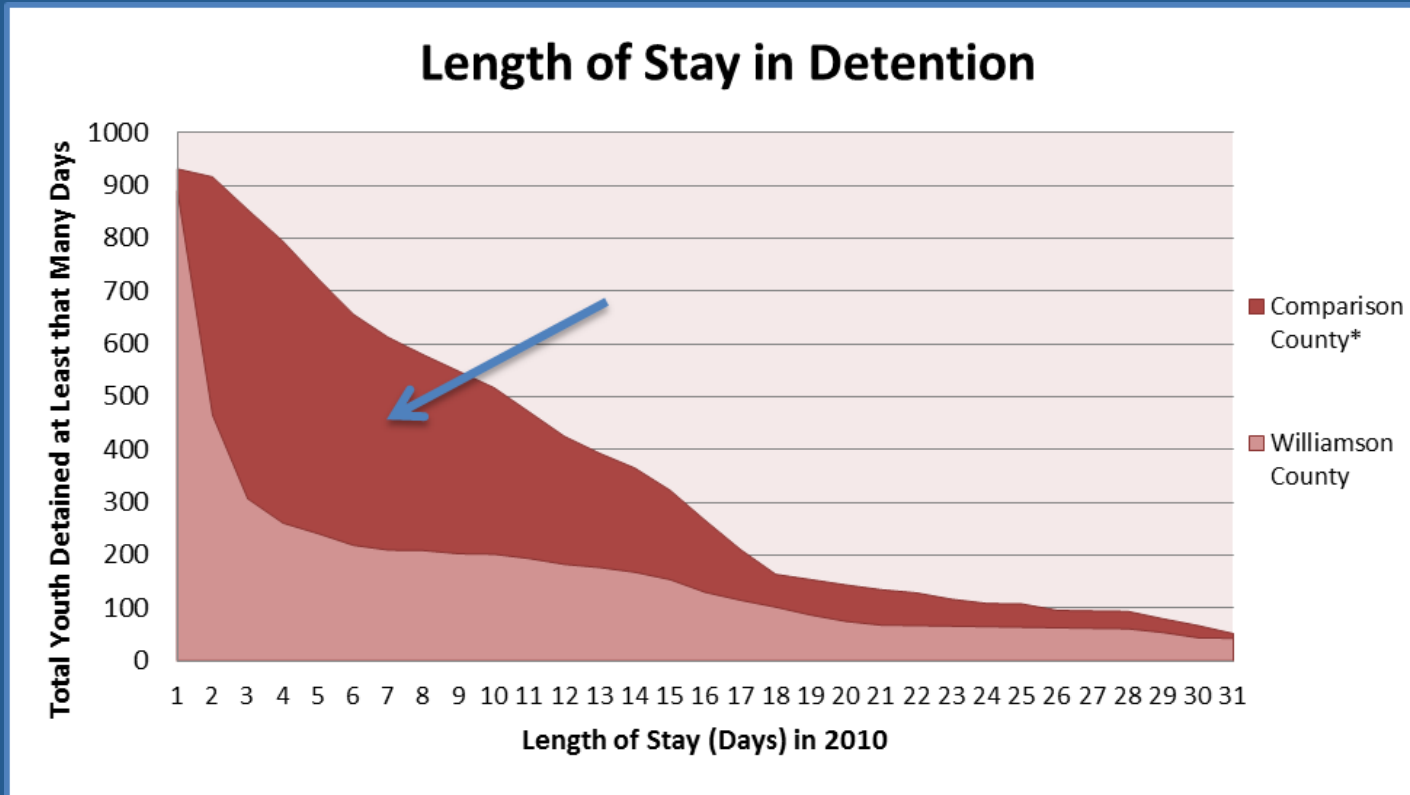
- Coordination is Key
  - Texas Front End Diversion Initiative
  - Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams
- Need for more trauma-informed systems



# Pre-adjudication Detention

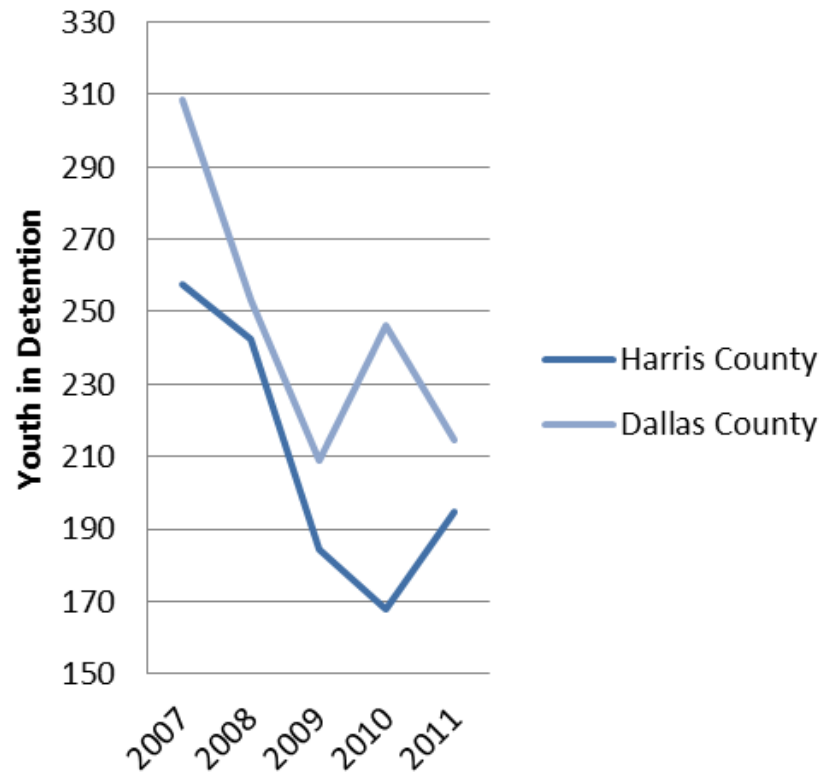
- In 2011:
  - 16,700 youth spent more than 10 days
    - 11,000 for non-felony offenses
  - 5,600 spent more than a month
    - 3,400 for non-felony offenses
  - 600 spent over 100 days
    - 280 for non-felony offenses
- Texas law disfavors detention
- It does not reduce recidivism for most youth
- It's 4 times as expensive as intensive supervision
- Varies widely from county to county

# County Successes



# County Successes

## JDAI Sites' Average Daily Detention Population





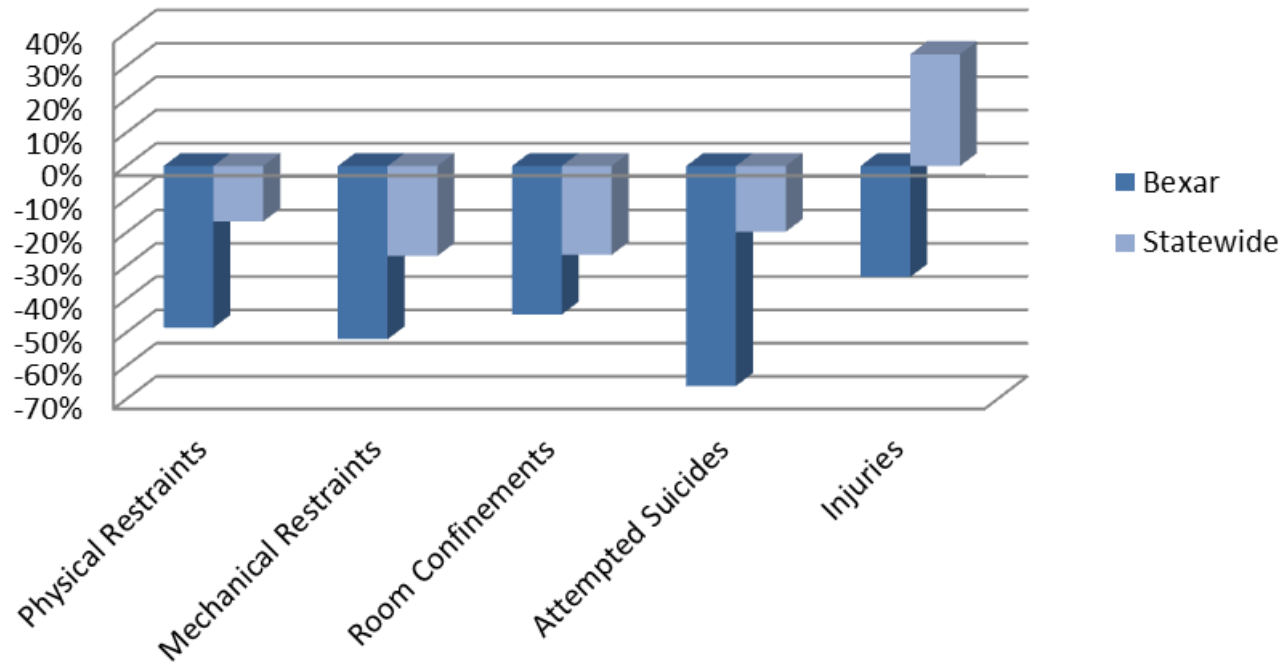
# Seclusions and Restraints

- In 2011 in county facilities:
  - 5,333 physical restraints
  - 37,071 seclusions (likely thousands >24hrs)
- Especially problematic for traumatized youth or youth with disabilities
- Injuries are very costly
- Policies and procedures vary widely from county to county



# County Successes

## Restraints and Seclusions Reductions In Bexar County, 2008-2011



# Family Involvement

- Higher involvement lowers recidivism for youth and siblings
- Many county visitation policies allow only for the minimum required visitation opportunities (30 minutes every seven days)

# County Successes

- Family Functional Therapy (FFT)
- Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)
- Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL)
- Parent Project, Family Preservation, others

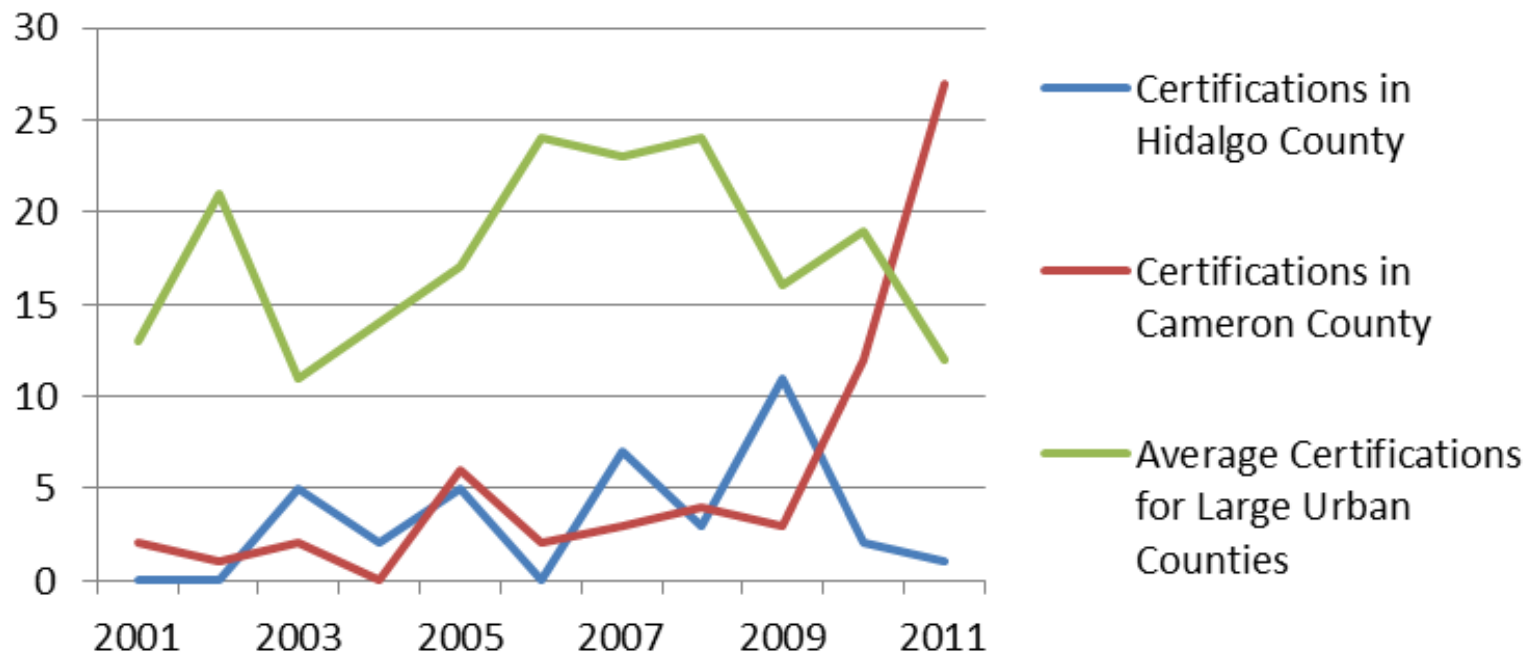


# Certification

- Adult prisons are very dangerous for youth
  - More sexual victimization
  - Limited programming and oversight
  - Development of anti-social behaviors
  - Higher recidivism
- 173 TX youth were certified as adults in 2011
  - Many were first-time offenders
  - Do not differ significantly from determinate sentenced youth

# County Successes

## Certifications in Hidalgo County



**“It’s not a question of being more effective, it’s a question of not allowing serious offenses to go unpunished. People have to be held accountable for their actions. . . Most of this is not a question of rehabilitation. Most of what we do is punishment.”**

*– Hidalgo County District Attorney Rene Guerra*

**“I view the adult system as a punitive system and the juvenile system as a rehabilitative system... Certification is always a last option.”**

*– Hidalgo County Judge Mario Ramirez*



# SB 653 (2011)

*Sec. 201.002. PURPOSES AND INTERPRETATION. This title shall be construed to have the following public purposes:*

*(1) creating a unified state juvenile justice agency that works in partnership with local county governments, the courts, and communities to promote public safety by providing a full continuum of effective supports and services to youth from initial contact through termination of supervision; and*

*(2) creating a juvenile justice system that produces positive outcomes for youth, families, and communities by:*

*(A) assuring accountability, quality, consistency, and transparency through effective monitoring and the use of systemwide performance measures;*

***(B) promoting the use of program and service designs and interventions proven to be most effective in rehabilitating youth;***

***(C) prioritizing the use of community-based or family-based programs and services for youth over the placement or commitment of youth to a secure facility;***

*(D) operating the state facilities to effectively house and rehabilitate the youthful offenders that cannot be safely served in another setting; and*

*(E) protecting and enhancing the cooperative agreements between state and local county governments.*





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