



Job Readiness Training For Teens: Providing Job Skills For A Bright Future

Deborah A. Lakin, BS

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Introduction

South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is a state cabinet agency. Our agency is responsible for providing rehabilitation and custodial care for the state's juveniles are under our supervision and in our care. The mission of SCDJJ is to "protect the public and reclaim juveniles through prevention, community programs, education and rehabilitative services in the least restrictive environment. "The mission of the SCDJJ Job Readiness Training (JRT) program is to improve the overall functioning of at-risk high school students at home, in school, and in the community.

Problem Statement

High school students drop out of school for many reasons; however the reason is still about choices and decisions. Students who don't complete high school or GED graduation are most likely to have difficult choices in the workforce obtaining high paying jobs. Many students who make the decision to drop out of high school typically have more time on their hands with nothing to do during school hours; this type of idle time is risky and has a likelihood to increase the opportunity for delinquent behavior and activity. Research has demonstrated that serious and violent crime committed by youth increase with teens who drop out of school and the hours between then end of a school day and when parents return home from work. Many of the adults in our prison system did not complete high school or GED. An at-risk youth is a child who is less likely, or the odds are against him/her, to transition successfully into adulthood. One possible success for this transition includes not only academic success but also job readiness.

The Job Readiness Training program targets at-risk high school students, with its efforts designed to promote high school attendance and graduation. JRT's mission is to improve the overall functioning of at-risk high school students. This program provides career exposure, and a community

internship/work experience component for at risk-high school students. The goals and objectives of the JRT are to;

- Increase the employability of at-risk high school students.
- Improve school attendance and academic performance.
- Decrease high school dropout rates.
- Increase the likelihood of high school completion and enrollment in secondary education, or the military.
- Reduce the recidivism rate for students served by the program that are involved with DJJ by preventing further delinquency and/or violence.

Each selected JRT sites receives up to \$60,000 per year (this is contingent on available funding in future years) to provide job readiness skills training. Each DJJ JRT will provide services to juveniles between the ages of 14-17; who are considered at risk youth under probation or parole supervision for non-violent offenses. JRT sites will also provide programmatic services to encourage teamwork, and build self-confidence and self-esteem.

Job Readiness Training and other activities provide students with important skills needed for success in the workplace, one of the most powerful learning experiences for the students is their community internships. For many of the students served by the program; their internship represents their first “real job”, and provides them with knowledge, skills and confidence needed to secure their own employment after graduating from the program. The internship sites are at a local business or organization that partners with the JRT site to provide the on the job experience for the student. Each student earns a stipend of \$7.25 per hour during the entire time for each session until completion or discharge.

Students with successful completion will have accomplished a minimum of 80% attendance at the afterschool centers for the session they are in, a minimum score of 80% on the Job Readiness Skills Training posttest, satisfactory attendance, behavior, and successful performance at the internship site.

JRT performance objectives are; 80% or more of youth enrolled will successfully complete the program, 80% or more youth will demonstrate skill attainment by achieving a minimum score of 70 percent on the JRT post-test, 80% or more youth in the program will stay in school, earn a GED. or graduate from high while in the program, and 80% or more will successfully complete the conditions of their probation, parole or contract with DJJ and/or will not be rearrested for a new criminal offense for one year after completing the program. Based on some of the data, it is believed that JRT students under DJJ supervision have a lower recidivism rate.

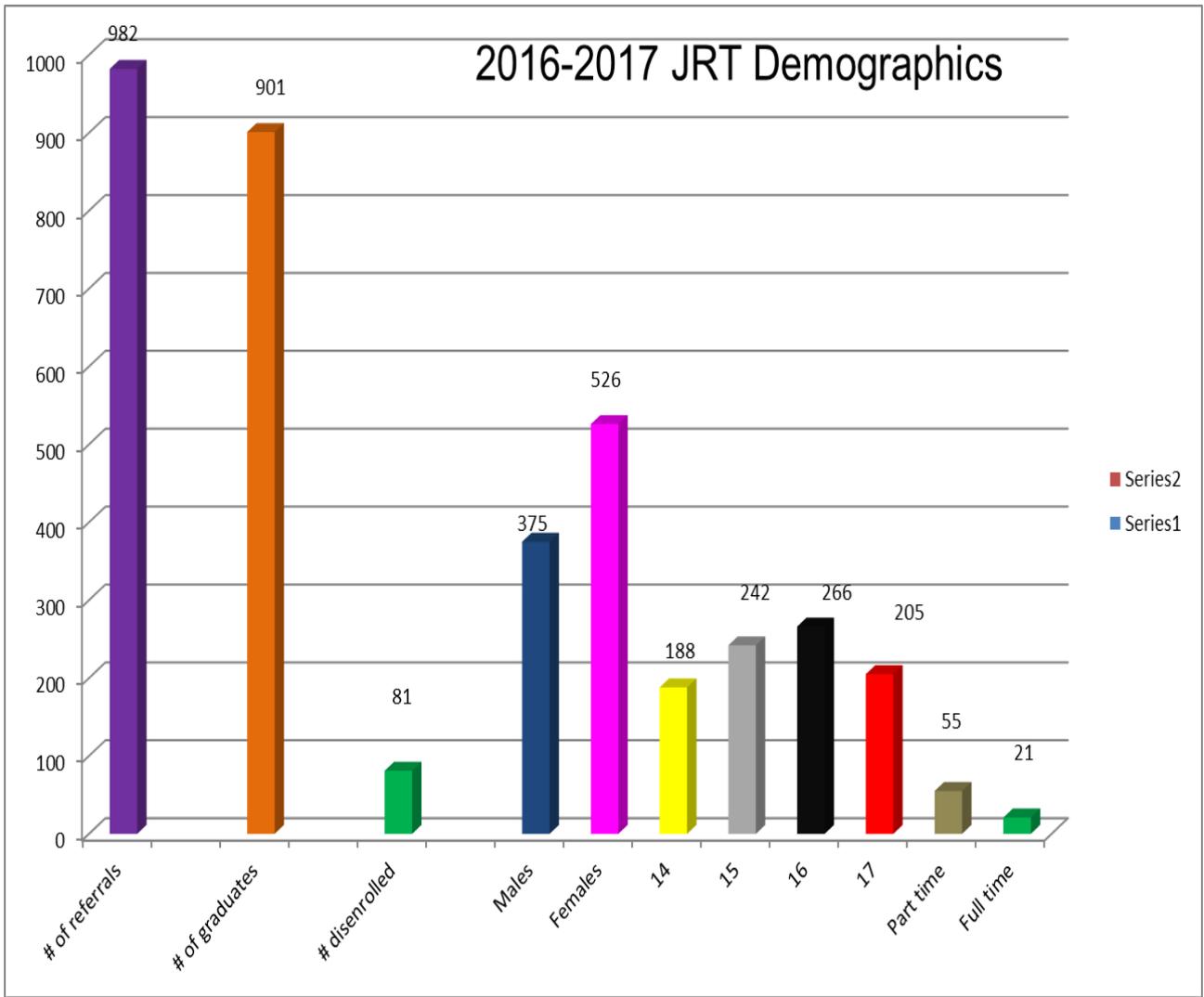
Data Collection

A comprehensive database and evaluation plan for JRT has been developed by DJJ staff. JRT Coordinators at each program site will be trained to enter information on a database and submit monthly progress reports to DJJ, along with reimbursement forms for student's stipend and expenditures. Students time-cards are retained by the JRT facility and reviewed by DJJ Prevention staff quarterly or as needed. DJJ staff will compile a combined quarterly Progress Report for all JRT sites and work collaboratively with DJJ's Office of Research and Statistics to complete a year end evaluation of the program's performance.

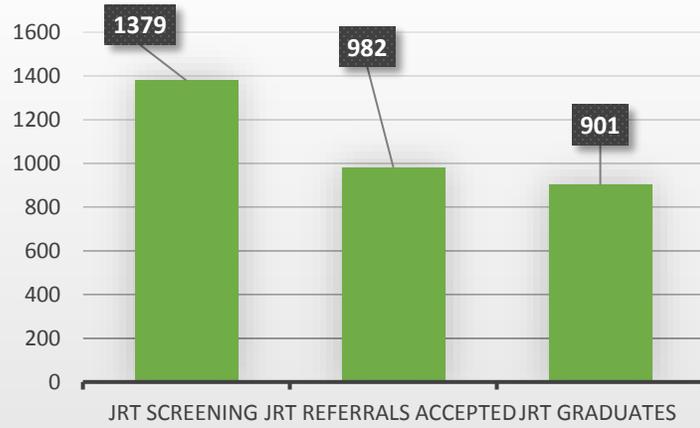
Data Analysis

The data for the JRT program participants is collected one year after the program's three sessions are completion for each site. The program will be measured by youth re-offending/recidivism while in the program and will be tracked after leaving the program by SCDJJ. Youth will attend school

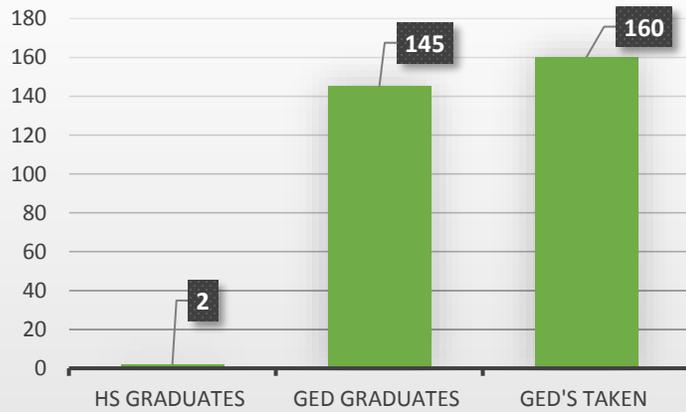
regularly, enroll in college or military, and attain part-time or full time employment. Geographical areas in South Carolina with the highest number of at-risk youth and or high needs will be a priority on the qualified providers list for JRT program considerations and approval. In Monthly Labor Review, Karageorge, E. (2016, March) Growing up in high-poverty areas can affect your employment. Gender differences, particularly related to employment, varied significantly across geographic areas. Men who grew up in low-income families living in high poverty, racially segregated areas were significantly less likely to be employed as adults than their female peers”.



JRT Program Student Participants



DJJ School District Non-JRT Participants



Implementation Plan

SCDJJ has implemented 16 JRT sites throughout the state. Each JRT provider site operates the 10 week program after hours in spring, fall and summer cycles with up to 20 student participants per session. In the fall and spring cycles students attend three days per week for the first four weeks, and then once per week for the final six weeks of the program. Students receive 15 hours of job readiness skills training (20 hours in the summer cycle) using the Tackling the Tough Skills curriculum (this is an evidence based curriculum) earning a stipend of \$7.25 for each successful participation.

Students can be referred and accepted to the JRT program by a variety of sources including Family Court, law enforcement, a local Teen After-School Center site, school Resource Officer, school staff, DJJ staff, the student themselves, or their parents. All of the applications are screened to verify that the students meet the criteria for admission to the program. Once it's determined that the student meets the eligibility criteria, the JRT site coordinator will then provide the following services: An orientation on the program for students and their families; parents or guardian will sign all required consent forms, and transportation arrangements (if the parent cannot provide) with the student and family to ensure the student can safely get to and from the program.

Each selected JRT site receives funding and support of up to \$60,000 per year (contingent on available funding in future years) to provide job readiness skills training for 60 students completing the program, along with contractual responsibilities and program requirements. Additionally, each contract JRT site coordinator receives initial training provided by DJJ before beginning work at their respective locations. Additional JRT training for coordinators will be required as identified by DJJ's regional Prevention Specialists.

Contractors will recruit local businesses to offer internship opportunities and provide an internship orientation to the business/individuals that will supervise youth internships. Local business cannot pay any of the stipends for the student internships. Contractors will employ only staff/volunteers who have been screened by SCDJJ and approved by the National Crime Information Center and the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

Contractors will provide a building and specific room (s) for youth to participate in JRT activities. The room will be used for academic classroom instruction. The contractor will also be responsible for providing supplies that youth can use to assist them in their job readiness enrichment.

Contractors will provide staff and volunteers to work with youth. Each site should have at least two adults in the classroom working with the youth. Staff and volunteers will attend a one day training event for working with at-risk youth that's offered by SCDJJ.

Contractors will provide or have access to a kitchen to prepare healthy snacks for the youth participating in the program for each session.

Contractors will provide the Prevention Specialist or Program Manager for SCDJJ with written monthly reports regarding financial and programmatic outcomes. Based on the SCDJJ's assessment of performance, reimbursement payments will be made on a quarterly basis. Monthly JRT providers will submit an itemized expense report of personnel cost and operating expenses. A program progress report must also be submitted on a monthly basis.

Contractors will provide liability insurance for staff/volunteers who work with youth as well as coverage for the program. A copy of the insurance provider and certificate must be submitted prior to juveniles being referred to the program.

JRT bidders must be placed on the Qualified Providers List for SCDJJ JRT Program. Program providers must describe their experience and qualifications of all staff assigned to the JRT to demonstrate you have the necessary experience in working with at-risk youth. A resume, three references with contact name, email address, address, and telephone number must be included for the JRT Coordinator/Facilitator. Program Coordinators must also describe in detail how they will comply with each program's responsibilities and requirements.

Each Contractor or Facilitator must use the Tackling the Tough Skills for Teens Curriculum for all of the JRT classroom instruction portion of the 3 yearly sessions. Tackling the Tough Skills Curriculum is an evidence based curriculum from the University of Missouri Extension. The curriculum is based on the principle that learning does not have to be painful to be effective. Each JRT Contractor or Facilitator will incorporate interactive teaching techniques that encourages students to explore and express their thoughts and feelings.

Evaluation Method

DJJ staff has developed a comprehensive evaluation plan for JRT. The program coordinator will be trained to enter program information for each session and submit progress report to DJJ staff monthly. These reports will be gathered to be submitted to DJJ's Office of Research and Statistics to complete a year end evaluation of the programs performance.

JRT program evaluations will include demographics, number of training hours completed, number of internship hours completed, and JRT Pre and Post test scores. Outcome data includes: referral screenings and acceptance, or non-acceptance, new referrals to DJJ, and re-arrest

rates/recidivism. Geographical areas in South Carolina with the highest number of at-risk youth and or high needs will be a priority on the qualified providers list for JRT program considerations and approval.

All JRT sites prior to being placed on the qualified providers list must adhere to a complete site visit evaluation survey and receive positive recommendation. Each JRT site and project bidder must describe their experience and qualifications, as well as all staff assigned to the JRT program. All personnel must complete a DJJ Volunteer application and be approved before working with students in the program. Qualifications will include necessary experience working with at-risk youth, resume with work history, and at least three references. All bidders must address each of the program responsibilities and requirements provided under the scope of services porting on the Fixed Price Bid application.

JRT program goal is to have student participants increase their attendance and graduate from high school. In 2016-17 school year, approximately 900 students who participated in the JRT program graduated from high school in comparison to our DJJ School Districts non-JRT participant's graduation of 2 high school graduates out of 20 students on HS diploma track. 145 students received GED's out of 160 students who took their GED. The JRT program indicates a positive overall impact on students who participate and complete JRT and high school graduation.

Summary and Recommendations

The Job Readiness Training (JRT) is an employability training program of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) designed for at-risk high school students. Our mission of the program is to improve the overall functioning of at-risk high school students at home, in school, and the community. The program provides exposure and community internship/work experience for all student participants at each of the now current 16 site locations throughout the state of South Carolina. Recommendations would be to increase the number of JRT sites throughout the state of SC, increase the age limit requirement and allow students between ages 14-18 years old the ability to apply. Recommendations would also consist of partnering with other youth serving state agencies and organizations to assist with internship, stipends and employment training site locations through the state.

The JRT program is currently geared towards high school at risk students, I would recommend exploration of Middle School at-risk youth to be included, in job readiness and development training of soft skills. This could provide some entry level development, and preparation for JRT once promoted to High School.



**Job Readiness Training Site (JRT)
Site Visit Evaluation Survey Rating**

Date of Visit: _____ County: _____

JRT Site Name: _____

JRT Site Director/Program Manager: _____

DJJ Staff Name: _____

JRT Site Survey Rating Below DJJ Prevention Staff Only

1. Rate the cleanliness/organization of the JRT site.
4-Excellent 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Poor
2. Rate the size/comfort of the JRT room (**must accommodate 20 students**)
4-Excellent 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Poor
3. Is there a working computer lab/area.
4-Excellent 3- Good 2-Fair 1-Poor
4. Rate the demeanor/professionalism of the JRT site Director.
4-Excellent 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Poor
5. Rate the JRT Director knowledge/description of the program.
4-Excellent 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Poor
6. Does the JRT site have the Tackling the Tough Skills Curriculum?
Yes ___ **No** ___
7. Does the JRT site currently have liability insurance for staff/volunteers? **yes** ___ **no** ___ will they provide coverage for the youth in their program? **yes** ___ **no** ___

Briefly explain how the JRT Director described the program, and how it will be conducted for each session, fall, summer and spring.

Briefly explain your recommendation for this site.

**DJJ Staff: Please forward your complete survey to Deborah Lakin at dalaki@scdjj.net.
Office Phone: (803) 896-4082 Fax: (803) 896-6917**



Name: _____ Date: _____ Session: _____

JRT Pre Test

(Answer True or False for all questions)

Tackling the Tough Skills for Pre-Teens Curriculum

Part I – Attitude

1. Our attitude determines our responses to just about everything in our lives.

True or false

2. A person's view of self will affect life choices.

True or False

Part II – Responsibility

3. We can change everyone's behavior; except our own.

True or False

4. A very important component of responsibility is making and keeping of commitments.

True or False

Part III – Communication

5. Communication is crucial to every relationship that touches our lives.

True or False

6. Body language is never a way to communicate.

True or False

Part IV– Problem Solving

7. Being creative means, thinking outside the box.

True or False

8. The best way to determine options or gather possible solutions is to brainstorm.

True or False

Part V – Preparing for the workplace

9. We rely on our jobs so our friends will think we are good people.

True or False

10. Martin Luther King Said, “If you are going to be a street sweeper, be the best street sweeper you can be”.

True or False

Name: _____ Date: _____ Session: _____

JRT Post Test

(Answer True or False for all questions)

Tackling the Tough Skills for Pre-Teens Curriculum

Part I – Attitude

T	F	1. Our attitude determines our responses to just about everything in our lives.
T	F	2. A person’s view of self will affect life choices.

Part II – Responsibility

T	F	3. We can change everyone’s behavior; except our own.
T	F	4. A very important component of responsibility is making and keeping of commitments.

Part III – Communication

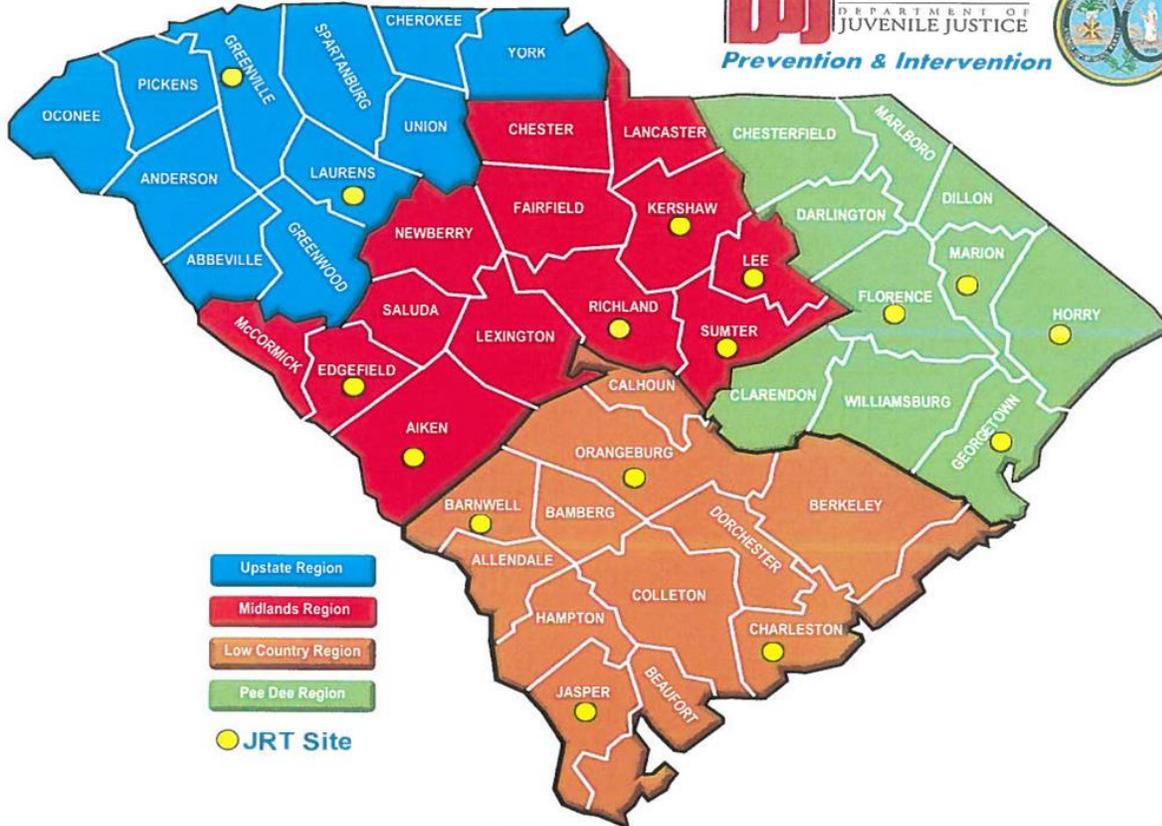
T	F	5. Communication is crucial to every relationship that touches our lives.
T	F	6. Body language is never a way to communicate.

Part IV– Problem Solving

T	F	7. Being creative means, thinking outside the box.
T	F	8. The best way to determine options or gather possible solutions is to brainstorm.

Part V – Preparing for the workplace

T	F	9. We rely on our jobs so our friends will think we are good people.
T	F	10. Martin Luther King Said, “If you are going to be a street sweeper, be the best street sweeper you can be”.



- Upstate Region
- Midlands Region
- Low Country Region
- Pee Dee Region
- JRT Site

JRT Job Readiness Training

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aiken County • The Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club of Aiken • Barnwell County • Boys & Girls Club of Southern Carolina (Serving Barnwell and Allendale) • Charleston County • Carolina Youth Development Center • Edgefield County • Edgefield Co. Youth Empowerment Center • Florence County • Boys & Girls Club of the Pee Dee Area • Georgetown County • M.K., Inc. • Greenville County • Upstate Circle of Friends • Horry County • Boys and Girls Club of the Grand Strand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jasper County • Kingdom Touch Destiny Center • Kershaw County • Kershaw County School District • Lee County • Lee County School District • Laurens County • SC Empowerment Centre • Marion County • Marion County Youth Day Program • Orangeburg County • Greater Miracle Temple of Worship • Richland County • Boys and Girls Club of the Midlands • Sumter County • South Sumter Resource Center |
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For more information contact:

Elaunda Jenkins
SC Department of Juvenile Justice, 4900 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC 29212
Phone: 803.896.4082
DJJ Website: www.state.sc.us/djj/

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Citations

www.bls.gov/opub/bls/growingup (pg.4)

Tackling the Tough Skills for Teens (pg.7)