

# The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

*Service Score Results:* Baseline

**Name of Program and Service:** Justice Works YouthCare, Inc. - Violation Initiative Program (VIP®)

Cohort Total: 25

SPEP ID: 67-T1

Selected Timeframe: Aug. 1, 2012 - Aug. 31, 2013

Date(s) of Interview(s): Sep. 27, 2013

Lead County & SPEP Team Representatives: Tracie Davies, Lehigh Co. & Lisa Freese, EPISCenter

Person Preparing Report: Lisa Freese

**Description of Service:** *This should include a **brief** overview of the service within the context of the program, the location and if community based or residential. Indicate the type of youth referred, how the service is delivered, the purpose of service and any other **relevant** information to help the reader understand the SPEP service type classification. (350 character limit)*

The Violation Initiative Program (VIP®), operated by Justice Works YouthCare, Inc. is a community-based program for youth in Lehigh County who are at high risk of re-offending. VIP® is one of several services offered by Justice Works YouthCare, Inc. in Lehigh County. Staff includes a Program Director, Supervisor and 3 Family Resource Specialists (FRS). VIP® can also function as an alternative to placement for youth who are at risk of removal from the home for probation violations or as a re-entry component to supervision following an out-of-home placement. The VIP® Family Resource Specialist (FRS) provides supervision at varying levels of service. Standard VIP® is 2 hours per week of face to face youth monitoring, Intensive VIP® is 4 hours per week, and Full VIP® is a minimum of 5 hours over a minimum of 5 days per week. The FRS has a full time caseload with a maximum of 10 clients and has a minimum of 30-33 hours of contact hours each week. The caseload is mixed with Standard, Intensive and Full VIP clients. The average age of each client is between 15-17 yrs of age, but there is no specific targeted age. Both male and female clients are accepted and bi-lingual staff are available. There is no wait list for referrals and VIP® services are typically provided for 3 - 6 months.

Once the referral is received the referral source as well as the referred family will be contacted within 24 hours. The probation office staff decide what level of service will be provided. The YLS (Youth Level of Service) is required with each referral, along with the Face Sheet, PSI (Problem Severity Index), Case Plan, where the top three target areas (domains, for example peer relations, attitudes/orientation, personality/behavior, etc.) are identified. All identified domains can be addressed. The FRS is responsible for monitoring each youth at home, school, community, work (when applicable), and "leisure time" activities. The FRS provides assistance with, but not limited to: transportation of clients to and from probation required activities, aid in job search as well as some soft skills in completing an application and preparing for an interview, coordination and attendance at meetings with probation, school, community based services for D&A and MH, finding community service opportunities, discussion of clients interest and finding prosocial activities for engagement. The FRS overall offers guidance and assistance to the juvenile in a supportive manner in completing their conditions of probation while remaining in the community.

## The four characteristics of a service found to be the most strongly related to reducing recidivism:

### 1. **SPEP™ Service Type:** Mentoring

Based on the meta-analysis, is there a qualifying supplemental service? Yes

If so, what is the Service type? Behavioral Contracting/Management

Was the supplemental service provided? No      Total Points Possible for this Service Type: 30

Total Points Earned: 25      Total Points Possible: 35

### 2. **Quality of Service:** Research has shown that programs that deliver service with high quality are more likely to have a positive impact on recidivism reduction. Monitoring of quality is defined by existence of written protocol, staff training and supervision, and how drift from service delivery is addressed.

Total Points Earned: 20      Total Points Possible: 20

3. **Amount of Service:** Score was derived from examination of weeks and hours each youth in the cohort received the service. The amount of service is measured by the target amounts of service for the SPEP service categorization. Each SPEP service type has varying amounts of duration and dosage. Youth should receive the targeted amounts to have the greatest impact on recidivism reduction.

Points received for Duration or Number of Weeks: 0

Points received for Dosage or Number of Hours: 0

Total Points Earned: 0 Total Points Possible: 20

4. **Youth Risk Level:** The risk level score is compiled by calculating the total % of youth that score above low risk, and the total % of youth who score above moderate risk to reoffend based on the results of the YLS.

22 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

3 youth in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 0 points

Total Points Earned: 10 Total Points Possible: 25

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**Basic SPEP™ Score:** 55 total points awarded out of 100 points. Compares service to any other type of SPEP therapeutic service. (eg: individual counseling compared to cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, mentoring, etc.)

*Note: Services with scores greater than or equal to 50 show the service is having a positive impact on recidivism reduction.*

**Program Optimization Percentage:** 58% This percentage compares the service to the same service types found in the research. (eg: individual counseling compared to all other individual counseling services included in the research)

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## The SPEP and Performance Improvement

The intended use of the SPEP is to optimize the effectiveness of reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders. Recommendations for performance improvement are included in the service feedback report, and these recommendations are the focus of the performance improvement plan, a shared responsibility of the service provider and the local juvenile court. The recommendations for this service included in the feedback report are:

1. The addition of a supplemental service: behavioral contracting/management. The research demonstrates that the capacity of mentoring style programs to reduce recidivism is enhanced by the addition of behavioral contracting or behavioral management programs. These programs generally include a token or reward basis set of incentives which are granted when the juvenile reaches certain program or case plan milestones. Youth agree to a contract which specifies certain rewards for certain positive behaviors. Non-achievement of agreed upon goals results in loss of privileges and/or incentives.
2. Increase the duration of the program to provide 26 weeks of service. The importance of duration cannot be underestimated with the youth referred to VIP®. Quite often, these youth lack a community connection and engagement with positive role models. While the dosage target is 26 weeks, permanent community connection and mentoring by adults who role model positive behavior is the ultimate desired outcome post VIP®.
3. Increase the dosage or number of contact hours to be no less than 78 total service hours.
  - Some youth engaged in the program are meeting this mark; further analysis may be necessary to determine the differing characteristics associated with those who exceed 78 hours of service, and those who did not.
  - Additional examination of the youth who are unsuccessfully discharged from the program and placed out of the home.
  - Examine whether there are specific points of time or levels of engagement where these transitions may be predictable.
4. Review the YLS results of all referrals and target youth who are of moderate or higher risk for VIP®.
5. Documented “quality assurance” calls to youth and their families during or, at completion of service could enhance the evaluation of VIP® service as a continuous quality improvement measure.
6. Track recidivism after discharge at specific intervals, for example, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year .

# The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

*Service Score Results:* Reassessment

**Name of Program and Service:** Justice Works YouthCare, Inc. - Violation Initiative Program (VIP®)

Cohort Total: 35

SPEP ID: 67-T2

Selected Timeframe: Nov. 1, 2014 –Dec. 31, 2015

Date(s) of Interview(s): Mar. 10, 2016

Lead County & SPEP Team Representatives: Tracie Davies, Lehigh Co. & Lisa Freese, EPISCenter

Person Preparing Report: Lisa Freese

**Description of Service:** *This should include a **brief** overview of the service within the context of the program, the location and if community based or residential. Indicate the type of youth referred, how the service is delivered, the purpose of service and any other **relevant** information to help the reader understand the SPEP service type classification. (350 character limit)*

The Violation Initiative Program (VIP®), operated by JusticeWorks YouthCare, Inc. is a community-based program for youth in Lehigh County who are at high risk of re-offending. VIP® is one of many services offered by JusticeWorks YouthCare, Inc. in Lehigh County. Staff includes a Program Director, Supervisor and 2 Family Resource Specialists (FRS). One VIP® can also function as an alternative to placement for youth who are at risk of removal from the home for probation violations or as a re-entry component to supervision following an out-of-home placement. The VIP® Family Resource Specialist (FRS) provides supervision at varying levels of service. Standard VIP® is 2 hours per week of face to face youth monitoring, Intensive VIP® is 4 hours per week, and Full VIP® is a minimum of 5 hours over a minimum of 5 days per week. The FRS has a full time caseload with a maximum of 10 clients and has a minimum of 30-33 hours of contact hours each week. The caseload is mixed with Standard, Intensive and Full VIP clients. The average age of each client is between 15-17 yrs of age, but there is no specific targeted age. Both male and female clients are accepted and bi-lingual staff are available. There is no wait list for referrals and VIP® services are typically provided for 3 - 6 months. Lehigh County Juvenile Probation determines the level of service.

Once the referral is received the referral source as well as the referred family will be contacted within 24 hours. The probation office staff decide what level of service will be provided. The YLS (Youth Level of Service) is required with each referral, along with the Face Sheet, PSI (Problem Severity Index), Case Plan, where the top three target areas (domains, for example peer relations, attitudes/orientation, personality/behavior, etc.) are identified. All identified domains can be addressed. The FRS is responsible for monitoring each youth at home, school, community, work (when applicable), and “leisure time” activities. The FRS provides assistance with, but not limited to: transportation of clients to and from probation required activities, aid in job search as well as some soft skills in completing an application and preparing for an interview, coordination and attendance at meetings with probation, school, community based services for D&A and MH, finding community service opportunities, discussion of clients interest and finding prosocial activities for engagement. The FRS overall offers guidance and assistance to the juvenile in a supportive manner in completing their conditions of probation while remaining in the community

## The four characteristics of a service found to be the most strongly related to reducing recidivism:

### 1. **SPEP™ Service Type:** Mentoring

Based on the meta-analysis, is there a qualifying supplemental service? Yes

If so, what is the Service type? Behavioral Contracting/Management

Was the supplemental service provided? No      Total Points Possible for this Service Type: 30

Total Points Earned: 25      Total Points Possible: 35

### 2. **Quality of Service:** Research has shown that programs that deliver service with high quality are more likely to have a positive impact on recidivism reduction. Monitoring of quality is defined by existence of written protocol, staff training and supervision, and how drift from service delivery is addressed.

Total Points Earned: 20      Total Points Possible: 20

3. **Amount of Service:** Score was derived from examination of weeks and hours each youth in the cohort received the service. The amount of service is measured by the target amounts of service for the SPEP service categorization. Each SPEP service type has varying amounts of duration and dosage. Youth should receive the targeted amounts to have the greatest impact on recidivism reduction.

Points received for Duration or Number of Weeks: 0

Points received for Dosage or Number of Hours: 2

Total Points Earned: 2 Total Points Possible: 20

4. **Youth Risk Level:** The risk level score is compiled by calculating the total % of youth that score above low risk, and the total % of youth who score above moderate risk to reoffend based on the results of the YLS.

35 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 12 points

13 youth in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 13 points

Total Points Earned: 25 Total Points Possible: 25

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**Basic SPEP™ Score:** 72 total points awarded out of 100 points. Compares service to any other type of SPEP therapeutic service. (eg: individual counseling compared to cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, mentoring, etc.)

*Note: Services with scores greater than or equal to 50 show the service is having a positive impact on recidivism reduction.*

**Program Optimization Percentage:** 76% This percentage compares the service to the same service types found in the research. (eg: individual counseling compared to all other individual counseling services included in the research)

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## The SPEP and Performance Improvement

The intended use of the SPEP is to optimize the effectiveness of reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders. Recommendations for performance improvement are included in the service feedback report, and these recommendations are the focus of the performance improvement plan, a shared responsibility of the service provider and the local juvenile court. The recommendations for this service included in the feedback report are:

1. The addition of a behavioral contracting for all youth receiving VIP® to supplement the mentoring service type.
2. Including a written description of VIP® in the JusticeWorks policies and procedures, as well as evidence that the service description can be referenced during service delivery, and that it is reviewed and updated at routine intervals.
3. Consideration to extend the service to 26 weeks in length. Increasing the duration of the service will positively impact dosage as well; increasing the number of youth who meet the targeted 78 hours for mentoring. Alternatively, if duration cannot be increased, another option could be to increase the number of face-to-face contact hours during the time period the youth is receiving the service (e.g. lengthening the existing meetings or meeting more times per week).