



San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families Justice Services Participation and Implementation Report

Evaluation Period: July 1, 2018—December 31, 2020

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Forward

Authored by the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families

At the onset of the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) 2018–23 funding cycle, partnered staff from the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (SFJPD), San Francisco Adult Probation Department (SFAPD), San Francisco District Attorney’s Office (SFDA), and San Francisco Sheriff’s Department (SHF) collaboratively selected the American Institutes for Research to lead an evaluation of the DCYF Justice Services portfolio of grants. Evaluation goals include the merging and analysis of interdepartmental administrative records and the collection of new data to identify trends in program participation, successes and challenges in service implementation, and justice involvement and academic and career outcomes among program participants. Evaluation findings from this and additional reports are intended to support interdepartmental reflection on the quality of services and inform policies and plans aimed at strengthening collective supports provided to the city’s in-risk and high-risk youth. DCYF is committed to ongoing collaboration with SFJPD, SFAPD, SFDA, and SHF staff in support of continuous improvements to our collective services for the city’s youth with the highest justice-system involvement risks and experiences.

Introduction

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is providing the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) with an evaluation of its Justice Services programs. Justice Services is one of seven DCYF service areas. The other DCYF service areas are Educational Supports, Enrichment, Leadership and Skill Building, Family Empowerment, Mentorship, Out of School Time, and Youth Workforce Development. DCYF also supports the San Francisco Unified School District Wellness Initiative.

Within Justice Services, DCYF aims to support youth who have had any justice system contact. The Justice Services programming is designed to meet this need and comprises four strategies—Cultural Programming, Detention-Based Services, Girls’ and Young Women’s Programming, and Multi-Service—and three initiatives: the Community Assessment and Referral Center (CARC), Young Adult Court Case Management, and Expeditor Program.

In this report on program participation and implementation, AIR presents findings to address the following research questions: (1) How did participation in Justice Services vary by participant and program characteristics as well as over time? (2) How has COVID-19 changed the type of services provided? (3) How do providers encourage program participation?

Data are examined for all participants and specifically for justice-involved participants.

Methods

To address the research questions, we present findings from analyses designed to address the research questions. These analyses utilized data from DCYF contact management data and interviews with DCYF Justice Services providers.

DCYF contact management data. We present counts of unique (unduplicated) participants in each of the 10 quarters in the evaluation period (July 1, 2018–December 31, 2020). Counts are provided for all DCYF service areas and the Justice Services area alone. Counts are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, service area, and Justice Services strategy. Counts are also provided for justice-involved youth who are identified using SFJPD, SFDA, or Community Assessment and Referral Center records.

Interviews with DCYF Justice Services providers. We present preliminary findings and relevant quotes from 17 interviews. Interviewees include program leaders and case managers serving youth and TAYA in Justice Services programs. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, qualitatively coded, and synthesized.

Definitions

Findings are presented for two participant groups:

1. Youth in Justice Services—individuals aged 17 years and younger who participated in DCYF Justice Services programs between FY 2018-19 Q1 (July – September 2018) and FY 2020-21 Q2 (October – December 2020).
2. Youth in Justice Services who are Justice-Involved—individuals aged 17 years and younger who participated in DCYF Justice Services programs between FY 2018-19 Q1 (July – September 2018) and FY 2020-21 Q2 (October – December 2020) and who were involved in the San Francisco justice system (as identified by SFJPD, SFDA, or CARC records) between FY 2018-19 Q1 (July – September 2018) and FY 2020-21 Q2 (October – December 2020).

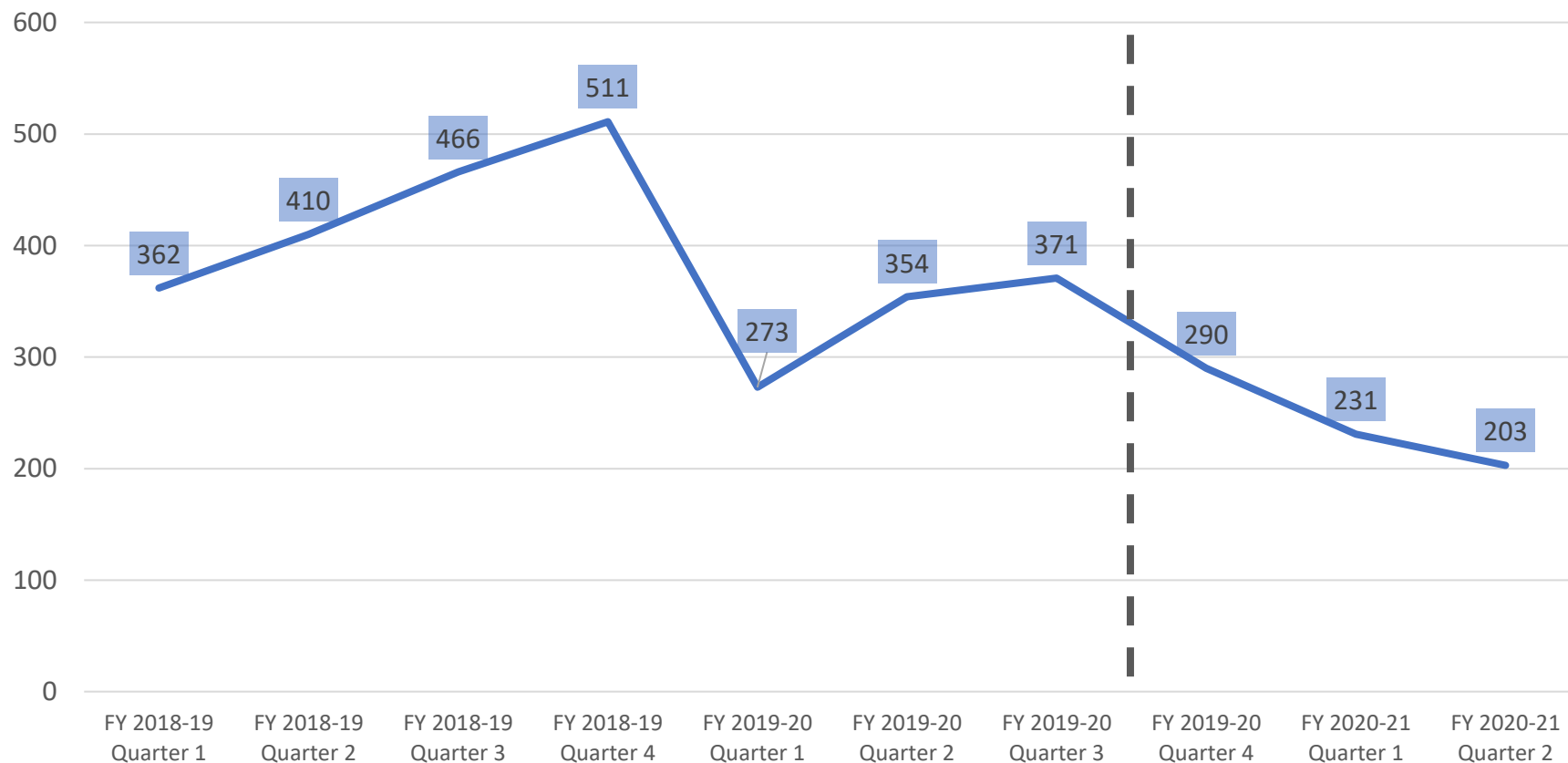
Youth Justice Services Participants

KEY FINDINGS

- Youth Justice Services participation peaked around Quarter 4 of fiscal year (FY) 2018–2019 and declined sharply thereafter. At the close of FY 2018–2019, DCYF launched its Connective Services portfolio to support grantees describing enrollment challenges posed by justice-involvement and systems referral conditions. While AIR is still conducting additional analyses, DCYF suspects Connective Services program participation may offset the apparent decline in Justice Services participation.
- Participation declined further following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the pandemic, entire agencies pivoted services toward crisis response and addressing basic needs as well as virtual programming. With pivots in service models and largely waived reporting requirements for the majority of 2020, DCYF suspects that grantee inability to collect data may be a significant driver behind data trends perceived as participation declines.
- Participation trends were similar across racial/ethnic groups, with slightly more Black youth participating over time and slightly fewer Asian, White, Other, and Unknown youth.
- Participation declines following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic were somewhat larger for males although participation parity returned in the most recent quarter (Quarter 2 of FY 2020-21).
- Participation in San Francisco Justice Initiatives and Detention Based Services had larger declines following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic than other strategies.

For Youth in Justice Services, participation declined after the peak in FY 2018–19 Q4 and further following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Number of Youth Justice Services Participants

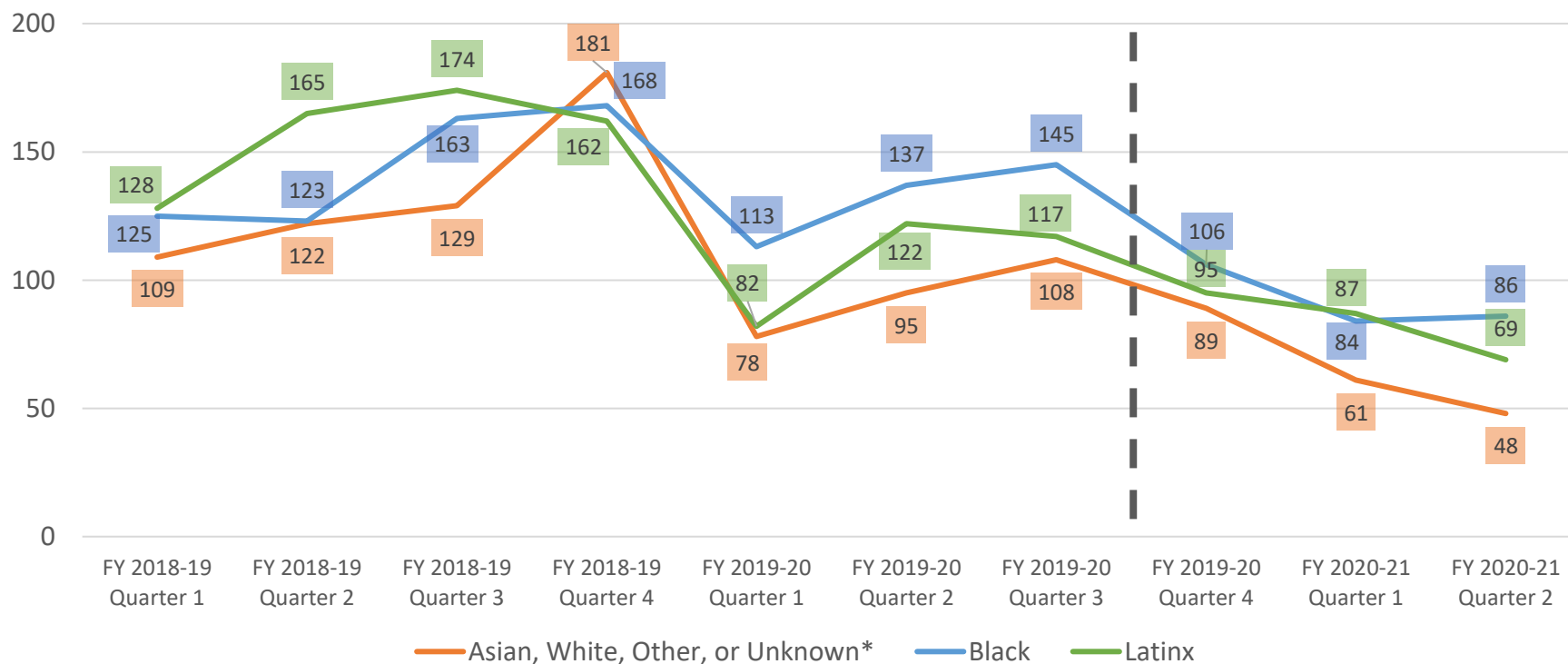


Source: Contract management system data files provided by DCYF.

Note: FY 2019–2020 Quarter 4 covers the months of April, May, and June 2020. The vertical dashed line represents the approximate start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Youth in Justice Services, participation declined in similar patterns among the various racial/ethnicity groups, first sharply after FY 2018–19 Q4 and then slightly following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Number of Youth Justice Services Participants

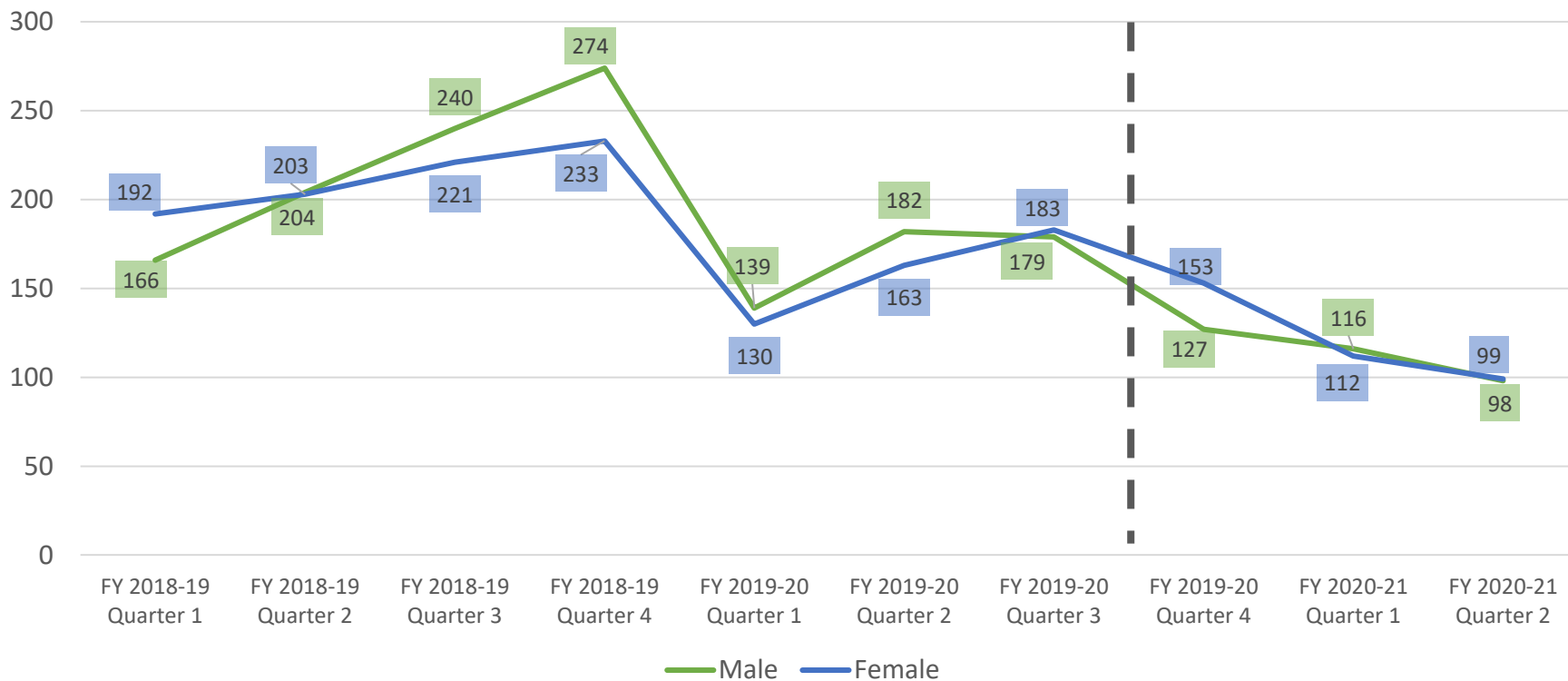


Source: Contract management system data files provided by DCYF.

Note: FY 2019–2020 Quarter 4 covers the months of April, May, and June 2020. The vertical dashed line represents the approximate start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Information on race/ethnicity is from CMS. The numbers for Asian, White, and Other or Unknown are combined because the data for Asian and White have sample sizes that are too small to meet the privacy standards of the City's Chief Data Officer.

For Youth in Justice Services, male and female participation declined after FY2018-19 Q4 and following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic with male participation declining more than female participation until the most recent quarter in which parity was attained.

Number of Youth Justice Services Participants

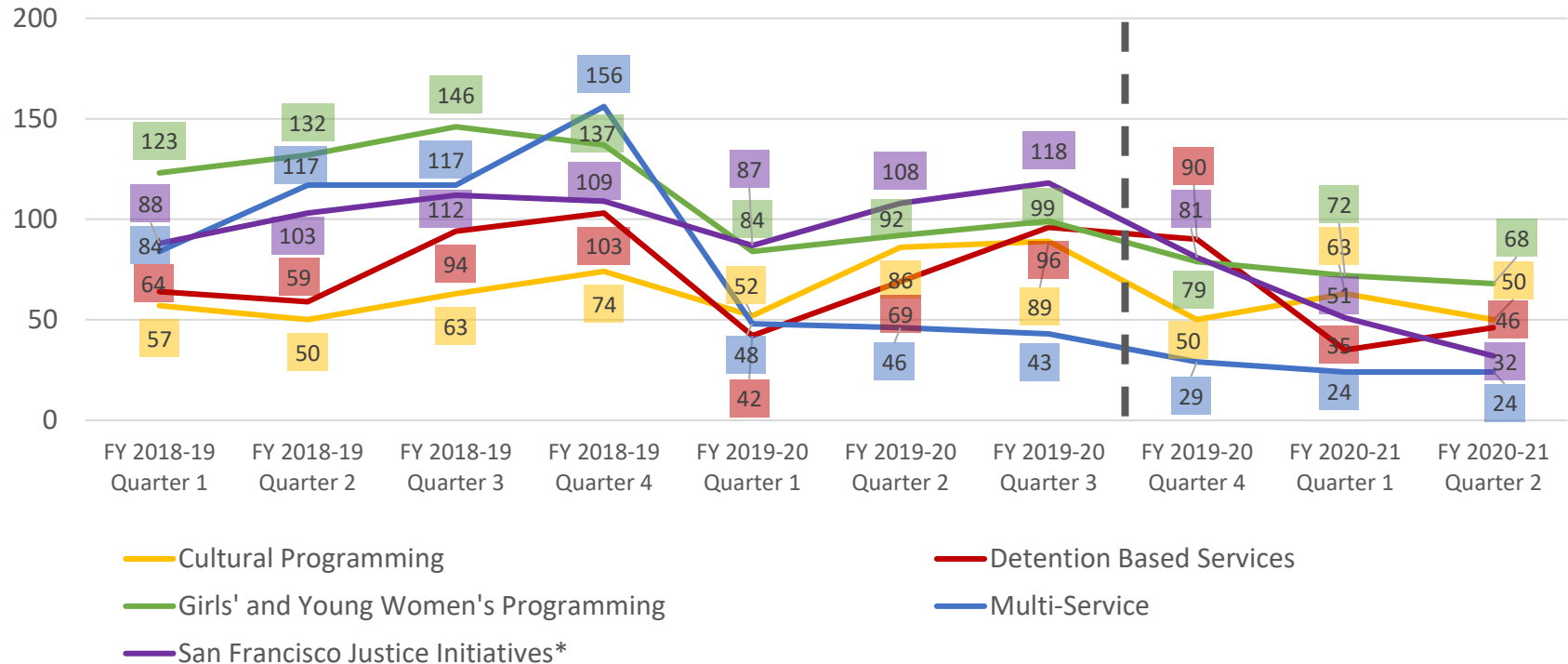


Source: Contract management system data files provided by DCYF.

Note: FY 2019–2020 Quarter 4 covers the months of April, May, and June 2020. The vertical dashed line represents the approximate start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Information on gender is from CMS. The number for Other or Unknown is not shown because the data for Other or Unknown have sample sizes that are too small to meet the privacy standards of the City's Chief Data Officer.

For Youth in Justice Services, participation in *San Francisco Justice Initiatives* (■) and Detention Based Services (■) had larger declines following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic than other strategies.

Number of Youth Justice Services Participants



Source: Contract management system data files provided by DCYF.

Note: FY 2019–2020 Quarter 4 covers the months of April, May, and June 2020. The vertical dashed line represents the approximate start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Information on strategies is from CMS. The numbers for Community Assessment and Referral Center, Expeditor, and Young Adult Court Case Management are combined into San Francisco Justice Initiatives because the data for these strategies have sample sizes that are too small to meet the privacy standards of the City's Chief Data Officer.

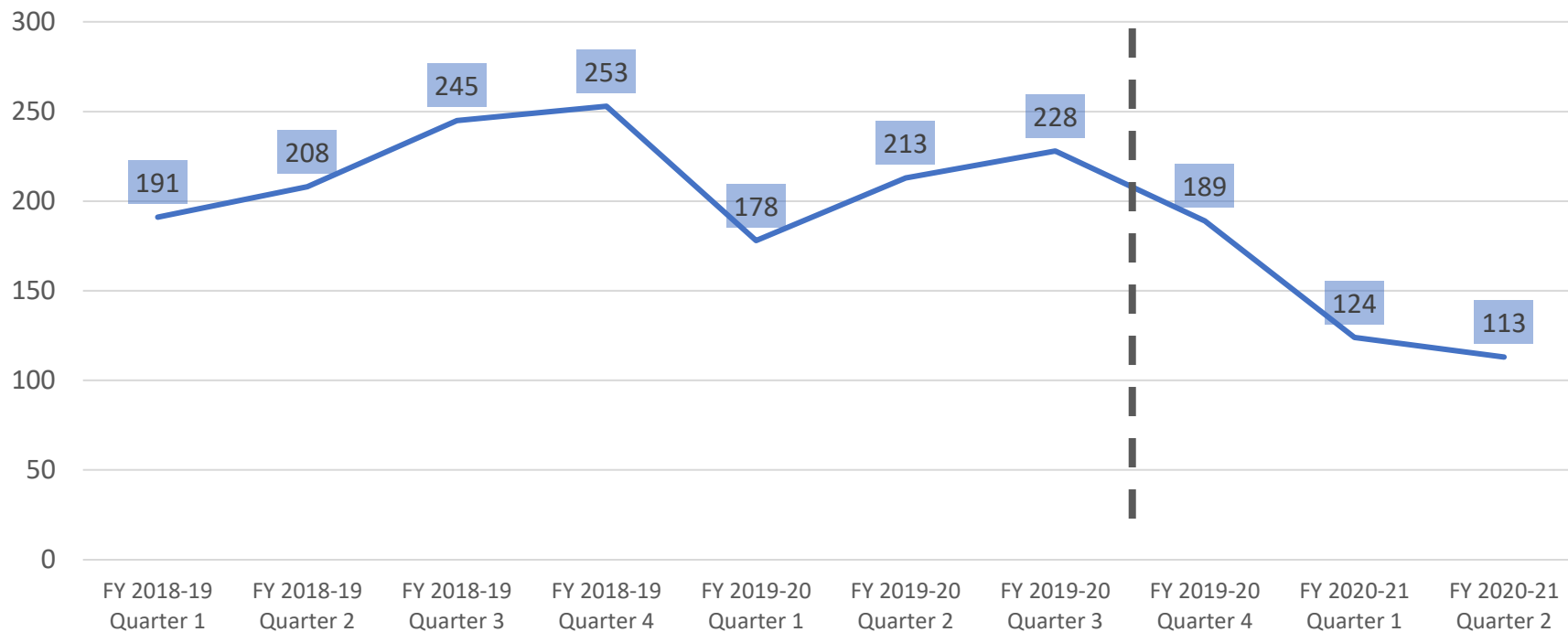
Youth Justice Services Participants who are Justice-Involved

KEY FINDINGS

- Justice Services participation among youth who are justice-involved peaked around Quarter 4 of fiscal year (FY) 2018–2019 and declined sharply thereafter. At the close of FY 2018–2019, DCYF launched its Connective Services portfolio to support grantees describing enrollment challenges posed by justice-involvement and systems referral conditions. While AIR is still conducting additional analyses, DCYF suspects Connective Services program participation may offset the apparent decline in Justice Services participation.
- Participation declined further following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the pandemic, entire agencies pivoted services toward crisis response and addressing basic needs as well as virtual programming. With pivots in service models and largely waived reporting requirements for the majority of 2020, DCYF suspects that grantee inability to collect data may be a significant driver behind data trends perceived as participation declines.
- Participation trends were similar across racial/ethnic groups, with slightly more Black youth participating over time and slightly fewer Asian, White, Other, and Unknown youth.
- Participation declines following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic were somewhat larger for males.
- Participation in San Francisco Justice Initiatives had larger declines following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic than other strategies.

For Youth in Justice Services who are Justice-Involved, participation peaked around FY 2018–19 Q3/4, declined following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Number of Youth Justice Services Participants who are Justice-Involved

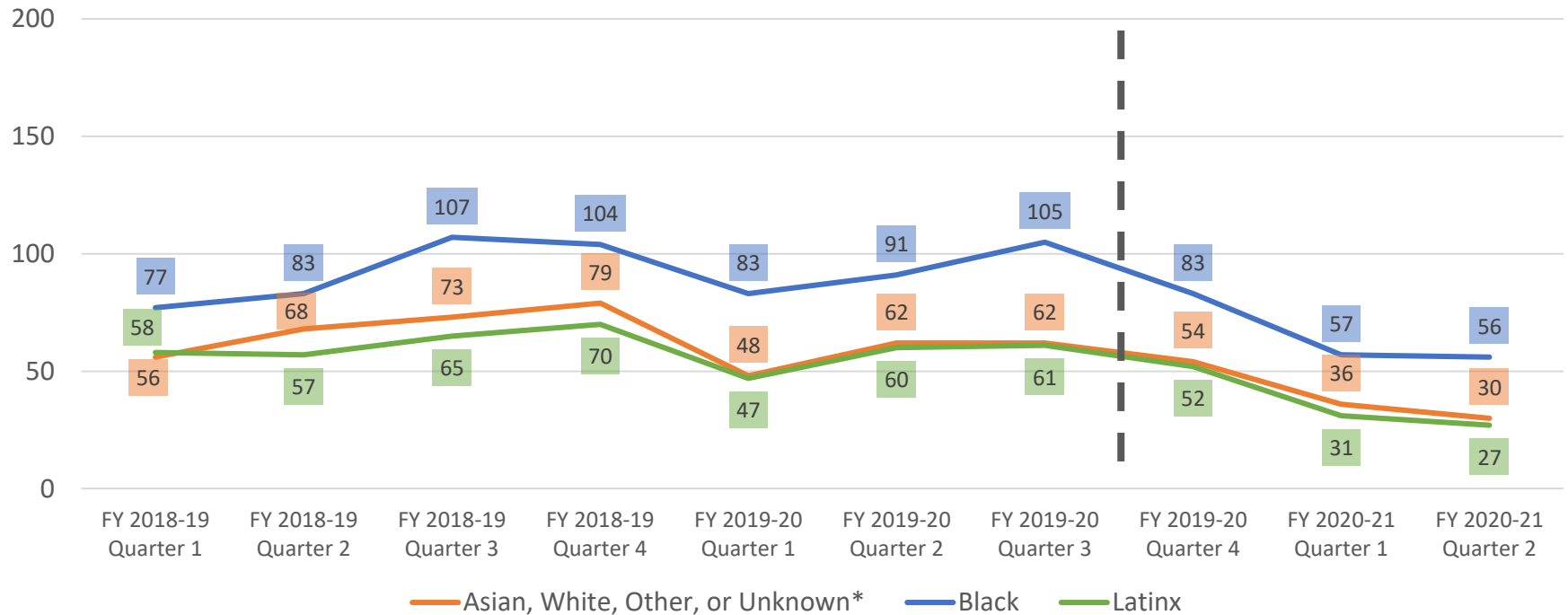


Source: Contract management system data files provided by DCYF. Justice-involved records provided by the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (SFJPD) and the San Francisco District Attorney's Office (SFDA).

Note: "Justice involvement" is a designation that is determined based on any record in SFJPD, SFDA, or Community Assessment and Referral Center records between July 1, 2018, and December 31, 2020. FY 2019–2020 Quarter 4 covers the months of April, May, and June 2020. The vertical dashed line represents the approximate start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Youth in Justice Services who are Justice-Involved, participation declined in similar patterns among the various racial/ethnicity groups following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Number of Youth Justice Services Participants who are Justice-Involved

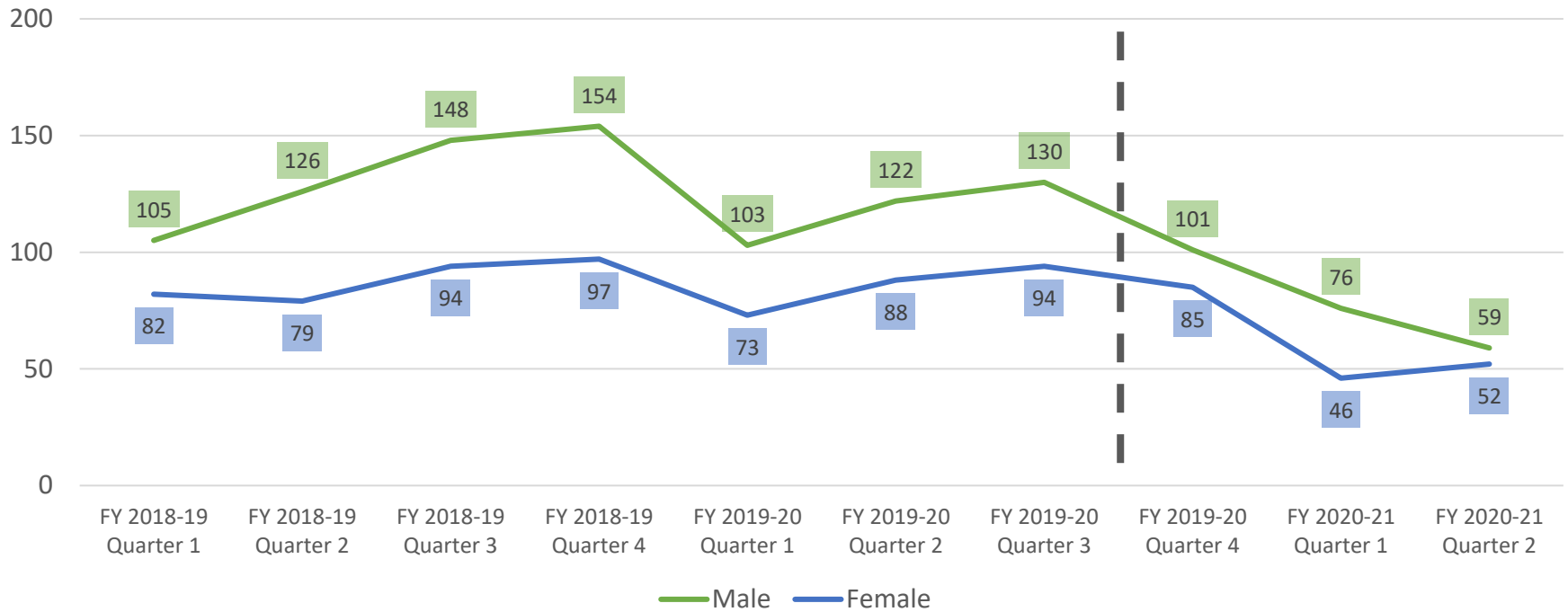


Source: Contract management system data files provided by DCYF. Justice-involved records provided by the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (SFJPD) and the San Francisco District Attorney's Office (SFDA).

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For Youth in Justice Services who are Justice-Involved, male and female participation declined following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic particularly for males.

Number of Youth Justice Services Participants who are Justice-Involved

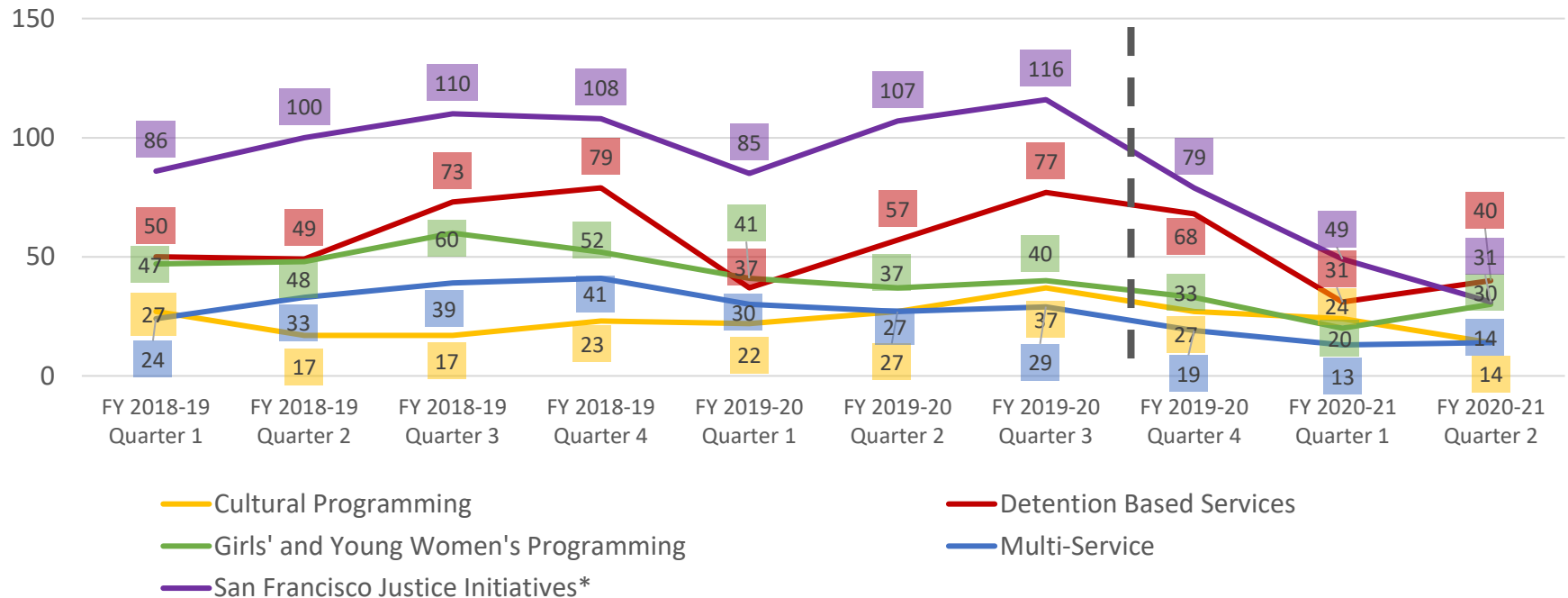


Source: Contract management system data files provided by DCYF. Justice-involved records provided by the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (SFJPD) and the San Francisco District Attorney's Office (SFDA).

Note: "Justice involvement" is a designation that is determined based on any record in SFJPD, SFDA, or Community Assessment and Referral Center records between July 1, 2018, and December 31, 2020. FY 2019-20 Quarter 4 covers the months of April, May, and June 2020. The vertical dashed line represents the approximate start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Information on gender is from CMS. The number for Other or Unknown is not shown because the data for Other or Unknown have sample sizes that are too small to meet the privacy standards of the City's Chief Data Officer.

For Youth in Justice Services who are Justice-Involved, participation in *San Francisco Justice Initiatives* (■) declined more following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic than in other strategies.

Number of Youth Justice Services Participants who are Justice-Involved



Source: Contract management system data files provided by DCYF. Justice-involved records provided by the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (SFJPD) and the San Francisco District Attorney's Office (SFDA).

Note: "Justice involvement" is a designation that is determined based on any record in SFJPD, SFDA, or Community Assessment and Referral Center records between July 1, 2018, and December 31, 2020. FY 2019–2020 Quarter 4 covers the months of April, May, and June 2020. The vertical dashed line represents the approximate start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Information on strategies is from CMS. The numbers for Community Assessment and Referral Center, Expeditor, and Young Adult Court Case Management are combined into San Francisco Justice Initiatives because the data for these strategies have sample sizes that are too small to meet the privacy standards of the City's Chief Data Officer.

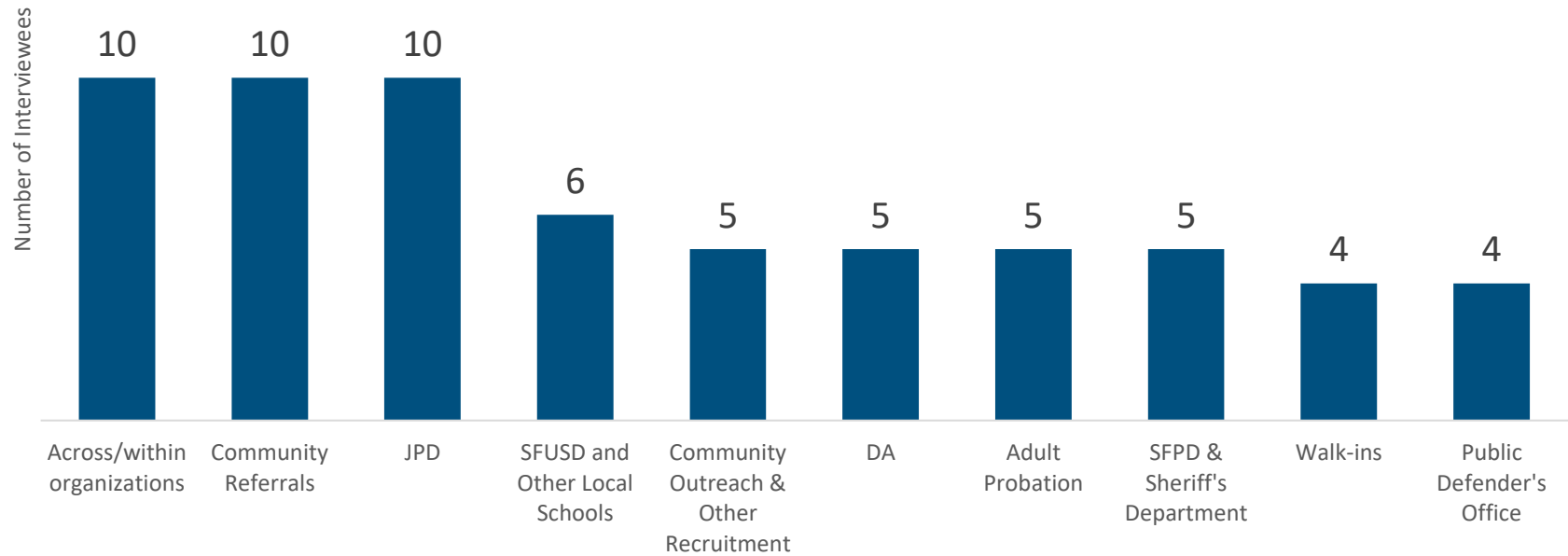
The provider's perspective on how the COVID-19 pandemic changed referrals, services, and participation

KEY FINDINGS

- Despite JPD being one of the most mentioned referral sources, some interviewees described expecting more referrals from the department.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, programs incorporated virtual offerings and also provided services to address participants' basic needs.
- The majority of interviewees mentioned that building relationships with youth has been difficult due to reduced in-person contact.

Referrals from across/within organizations, community, and JPD were most commonly reported to describe *how youth are coming to Justice Services programs*

Referral Sources Described in Interviews



Note: The following sources were mentioned once by interviewees: prison, Young Adult Court, Community Justice Court. The total sample included 17 interviewees.

Interviewees indicate a range of referral sources and a desire for more JPD referrals

- All interviewees (except one) indicated that they obtain referrals from multiple sources in response to the question “How are youth coming to your program?”

“So, it's a variety of different ways...I've seen most of it come from established relationships with school-based wellness centers and the coordinators, relationships we have with other nonprofits, and walk-ins, parents, internal referrals from our legal services or our family wellness services. And also from probation and juvenile probation department... we also get some from adult probation.”

- Despite JPD being one of the most mentioned referral sources, three interviewees ($n=3$) described getting few or no referrals while expecting more from the department.

“I think we have gotten zero since our last contract from DCYF, zero referrals from probation officers.”

Note: The total sample included 17 interviewees.

Interviewees reported incorporating virtual offerings and basic need support to adjust to COVID-19

- The majority of interviewees described their program's incorporation of virtual offerings ($n=12$) in response to the question "How, if at all, has COVID-19 changed the type of services you provide?"

"You have that very first initial contact in person so that the follow-up virtual contacts will then have some kind of a connection and some kind of a meaning for the young people."

"We did once-a-week virtual groups... We try to make it as interactive as possible."

- Programs also attempted to address the basic needs of youth and their families by providing in-kind support ($n=5$) and connecting youth with outside resources ($n=3$). Programs also attempted to address the basic needs of youth and their families by providing in-kind support ($n=5$) and connecting youth with outside resources ($n=3$).

"We have pivoted some of our focus to much more basic needs. We started driving boxes of food to our kids' families, and we still do that... For awhile we were delivering lunch and dinner every day to about 500 people."

- This finding is consistent with the WestEd study which showed that 68% of Justice Services providers were addressing basic needs after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Note: The total sample included 17 interviewees.

Providers reported that **virtual options were not a panacea for providing high-quality programming**

- The majority of interviewees ($n=12$) responded to “What challenges have you experienced offering services?” by explaining that building relationships with youth has been difficult due to reduced in-person contact.

“It has changed, the services we provide. Because a lot of the contact that the case managers are having with our young people have had to be done virtually...And just by nature, young people are more engaged when they're in person with you. So having to do the virtual case management has impacted the relationship building of the case manager with the young person and it is also impacted how a young person follows through with referrals.”

“The interaction, it runs way deeper than just a phone call or a virtual or FaceTime or Zoom. A lot of young people were sharing that they were tired of checking in like that, that they were just over it, that they just didn't want to meet anymore.”

- Interviewees also noted challenges associated with reduced service availability across the city, limits on the capacity of programs to offer in-person services, and lack of participant access to digital devices or motivation to participate virtually.

Note: The total sample included 17 interviewees.

Financial incentives and other basic needs services were the primary strategies interviewees reported for encouraging participation

- Many interviewees described giving some financial incentives ($n=13$) in response to the question “How do you encourage youth to participation in the program?”.

“So some level of monetary incentivizing, but it was the same that we were doing before COVID so that hasn't changed any, we just found ways to pay them to do things at home rather than with us.”

- Programs also talked about motivating participation in other ways including helping them meet their basic needs and through the relationships/community fostered by the program.

“We don't pay you to come to the program...I really firmly believe that young people have the answers for their own lives...If you don't want to get help, you're not going to be successful at it...that's why we really like to meet the young people where they are. And even if what they need to meet is a probation requirement, we can still talk with them about making it theirs instead of having it be this thing that's imposed from the outside, because I feel like they will always be more successful if they're working on something that they want to do for themselves and to improve their lives.”

Note: The total sample included 17 interviewees.



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