

Longitudinal Study of Youth Identified in Utah's 2013 IGP Cohort

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SUMMARY

In an attempt to better understand the challenges facing families and youth identified as members of the Utah's Intergenerational Poverty (IGP) Cohort, this study explored the experiences of IGP youth with Utah's juvenile justice system. The individuals studied were members of the 2013 IGP Cohort who reached the age of 12 between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012 (IGP youth). These youth were followed through their 18th birthdays. Results for the group were compared with results for other Utah youth who turned 12 years of age during the same time period but were not members of the IGP Cohort (non IGP youth).

In general, IGP youth: (1) were more likely than non IGP youth to have had contact with Utah's juvenile justice system; (2) were more likely to be female, Native American, or Hispanic than non IGP youth; (3) were more likely to be charged with a serious offense than non IGP youth; (4) were more likely than non IGP Youth to have received a disposition placing them in state custody or on probation; (5) were more likely than non IGP youth to have received a delinquency risk assessment and had a higher risk to reoffend than non IGP youth. It also appears that IGP youth who were identified in the juvenile justice system were more likely to be enrolled in the 2018 IGP Cohort than IGP youth who were not identified in the juvenile justice system. That is, IGP youth who have contact with the juvenile justice system are less likely to move out of IGP status.

INTRODUCTION

The 2012 Utah Legislature enacted the Intergenerational Poverty Mitigation Act¹. The legislation directed that a system be developed to track families experiencing intergenerational poverty. Families qualify for the status of intergenerational poverty if they have a history of receiving government assistance across two or more consecutive generations. The purpose of the effort was to better understand the conditions that lead families to intergenerational poverty and to support the development of programs to help families extricate themselves from the status. The current study explored the experiences of youth identified in the 2013 Utah Intergenerational Poverty (IGP) Cohort

¹ https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title35a/Chapter9/C35A-9_1800010118000101.pdf

with Utah's juvenile justice system. Although it seems unlikely that involvement of one or more family members in the juvenile justice system would be the sole reason for a family to move into IGP status, there is little doubt that having a family member involved is a source of additional stress that potentially can negatively impact the family's financial, emotional, and other resources² and, hamper efforts to leave the IGP status.

Broadly, Utah's juvenile justice system is the collection of public and private agencies that serve juveniles charged with violations of law. Juvenile Court Probation (Probation) and the Division of Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) are two of the system's lead agencies. In general, Probation provides supervision and other services to youthful offenders who remain in their homes. JJS provides residential care and rehabilitative services for the most serious delinquent youth who require removal from home for extended periods. In addition, JJS provides a variety of preventive and rehabilitative services for youth in early stages of delinquency. Services arranged and delivered directly by the two agencies form a continuum of care that allows Utah's Juvenile Court Judges to make graduated responses to youth in proportion to the severity of their behavior and their needs for services.

For this study, involvement with Utah's juvenile justice system is defined as enrollment in the Courts and Agency's Record Exchange (CARE) database. CARE is a statewide information system developed and shared by the Utah Juvenile Court and the JJS. CARE has extensive information about individual youth who have had contact with the juvenile justice system either for delinquency or child-welfare issues. This includes records of their legal involvement with the Juvenile Court, documentation of the services provided by Probation and JJS case workers, and results of delinquency risk assessments. The specific questions investigated are:

1. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to have interactions with Utah's juvenile justice system?
2. Are there demographic differences between IGP and non IGP youth who had interactions with Utah's juvenile justice system?
3. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to collect delinquent charges?
4. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to receive a Juvenile Court disposition placing them in the custody of a state agency or that placed them on Formal Probation with the Juvenile Court?
5. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to receive services from JJS?
6. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to receive a delinquency risk assessment? And, for those tested, how did their risk scores and areas of risk differ from those of non IGP youth?

² Family Engagement in Juvenile Justice. **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.**
<https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/Family-Engagement-in-Juvenile-Justice.pdf>

7. Are IGP youth who had interactions with Utah's juvenile justice system more or less likely than IGP youth who did not have interactions with the juvenile justice system to be enrolled in the 2018 IGP Cohort?

METHOD

Matching. Individuals who qualified for the 2013 Intergenerational Poverty (IGP) Cohort were identified in a list provided by the Department of Workforce Services (DWS, March 12, 2019). Individual identifiers were (a) a unique client identification number, (b) first name, (c) last name, (d) date of birth, and (e) gender. DWS and juvenile justice information sources do not share a common client identifier, so the enrollment of particular IGP youth in CARE was established through a matching process based on (a) first name, (b) last name, (c) date of birth, and (d) sex. First and last names supplied by DWS and first and last names from CARE were encoded using a soundex algorithm³ for the matching process. CARE case records flagged as "Adopted," "Sealed," or "Expunged" were excluded. When an individual from the DWS list matched with multiple cases from CARE, the first matching case from CARE was selected. Individuals who were matched through the process were further limited to those with who turned 12 years of age between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012.

Race and Ethnicity. Information available for the study regarding the racial and ethnic characteristics of the 2013 IGP Cohort is incomplete because these demographics were not included in the client descriptions provided. However, comparisons can be made for IGP and non IGP youth who were identified in CARE. For that more limited analysis, the racial and ethnicity indicators in CARE were combined into a single Race and Ethnicity measure. The derived measure classified a youth as Hispanic if the youth's Ethnicity was identified as "Latino/Hispanic" regardless of the value of the Race Indicator. A youth was classified as "Multi-Racial" if two or more racial categories were selected. Racial categories of "Can Not Determine," "No Contact," or "Refused to Disclose" were recoded as "Unknown." Otherwise, the Race and Ethnicity measure was set as the single value that was selected for race (Native American, Asian American, African American, Pacific Islander, or White). A second, related measure, Minority Status, was created by identifying all non-White race and ethnicity categories excluding cases identified as "Unknown."

Rural Urban Analysis. For individuals identified on CARE, a measure was created to roughly distinguish between youth from urban and rural parts of the state based on their home county. The 10 Counties of Davis, Juab, Millard, Morgan, Salt Lake, Summit, Tooele, Utah, Wasatch, or Weber were classified as "predominantly urban areas." These counties correspond to Utah's 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Court Districts. The state's remaining 19 Counties, corresponding to the 1st, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Court Districts were classified as "predominantly rural areas."

JJS Service Categories. JJS directly provides or contracts for a broad array of services to serve the needs of Utah's families and youth. For this study, JJS programs and services are represented in four general

³ Howard JP (2019). `_phonics: Phonetic Spelling Algorithms in R_`. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.2555492 (URL: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2555492>), R package version 1.3.2. :<URL: <https://github.com/howardjp/phonics>>.

categories: "1. *Youth Services*" are short-term programs such as the juvenile receiving center function and youth services programs that provide short-term support and referrals for youth who are at early stages of delinquency or who are experiencing difficult family situations; "2. *Early Intervention Services programs*" include a number of structured, non-residential programs in the community including (a) Brief Community Intervention (BCI), (b) In-Home Observation & Assessment, (c) School Based Outreach (SBO), (d) Day Skills Intervention (DSI), and (e) Home Detention. These programs provide structured programming to address delinquency issues and are intended to prevent further penetration into the juvenile justice system; "3. *Detention*" programs that provide short-term confinement for youth (a) with new charges, (b) ordered to detention, or (c) waiting for placement; and "4. *Custody*" programs which include both contracted residential group home and family based programs and secure care. Youth in JJS Custody programs typically include the most serious and habitual offenders who pose a risk to themselves and the community and have been removed from the custody of their parents by Court order.

Risk Assessment. Delinquency risk assessment results were collected for this study from assessment results managed on the CARE information system. Utah juvenile justice system workers administer and make use of a standardized risk assessment tool, the Pre-Screen Risk Assessment (PSRA), to predict the likelihood that a juvenile will reoffend. Different versions of this tool have been in general use in Utah for over 15 years.

The PSRA generates a score with values of LOW, MODERATE, and HIGH to indicate the likelihood that a youth will collect new delinquency charges. Historically, the PSRA has been administered most often by Probation Officers to youth who are petitioned to the Juvenile Court when alleged to have committed a delinquent offense. Juvenile justice system workers regularly use the information to make placement decisions and determine a youth's need for services. The Utah PSRA has been found to reliably predict risk of offending in two separate studies.⁴ The current study looked for PSRA assessments documented in CARE both to identify a youth's level of risk to offend and to provide additional context based on answers documented in the assessment. The assessment includes questions of two general types: historical items that describe a youth's past delinquent activities (e.g., "Number of prior adjudications for a person felony") and social history items (e.g., "*Youth's compliance with current parental authority and rules*" and "*Friends the youth spends time with*"). Scores from these items are predict the youth's future risk for delinquency, but the items themselves can also provide important context for understanding the challenges an individual youth faces.

⁴ DeWitt, J., & Lizon, R. (2008). The Utah Pre-Screen Risk Assessment (PSRA) and the Protective and Risk Assessment (PRA) Validation Study. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Administrative Office of the Courts and Division of Juvenile Justice Services; The Utah Pre-Screen Risk Assessment DeWitt, J., Wetherley, E, & Poulson, R. (2016). The Utah Pre-Screen Risk Assessment (PSRA) and Protective and Risk Assessment (PRA) Validation Study II. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Administrative Office of the Courts and Division of Juvenile Justice Services.

Utah's Youth Population. The number of 12-year old youth in the 2012 calendar year (48,891)⁵ was used as the estimate of the number of youth who were 12 years of age during between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012 in Utah's population at large.

Statistical Analysis. Chi Square tests conducted for this study used R software to determine the statistical significance of counts for various measures (e.g., "counts of youth identified by the Race and Ethnicity measure and by IGP status" and "counts of youth receiving custody dispositions by IGP status"). Independent sample t-tests were conducted using R software to determine the statistical significance of the differences in length of stay for youth receiving various types of JJS services.⁶ For this broad and exploratory analysis, missing demographic data were dropped from statistical analyses. For example, approximately 4.2% the "home county" of youth who were identified in CARE as marked as "Unknown."

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to have interactions with Utah's juvenile justice system?

A total of 1,561 different youth whose 12th birthdays were between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012 were identified in the 2013 IGP Cohort. Overall, this number represents an estimated 3.2% of the 48,891 Utah youth who turned 12 years of age between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012. A search of CARE records found 12,015 youth who turned 12 years of age during the same time period. This number represents 24.6% of all Utah youth who turned 12 during the same time period. Using the matching process, 799 IGP youth were identified in CARE. This number represents over 6.7% of all youth identified in CARE for the age group and, over half (51.2%) of all 2013 IGP youth. Strikingly, both percentages are more than double the values that would be expected based on the proportion of IGP youth in the population at large.

2. Are there demographic differences between IGP and non IGP youth who had interactions with Utah's juvenile justice system?

Gender. IGP girls were overrepresented in CARE compared to non IGP youth. IGP girls represented 49.6% of IGP youth identified in CARE; whereas, only about 40.1% of non IGP youth identified in CARE were girls ($\chi^2(1, N = 12,011) = 15.69, p < .05$).

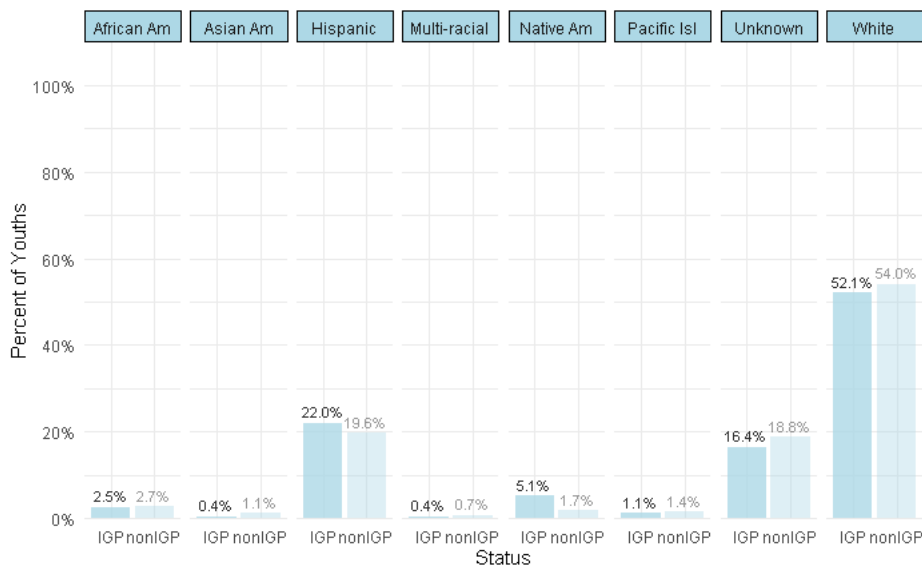
Race and Ethnicity. As mentioned above, minority status of IGP youth was only available for individuals from the IGP Cohort who were identified in CARE. For that group, there was a small but statistically

⁵ Gardner-Policy-Institute-State-and-County-Projections-Data-2017.xlsx, retrieved from <https://gardner.utah.edu/projections-estimates-archive/>, 7/16/2019.

⁶ R Core Team (2019). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. URL <https://www.R-project.org/>.

significant overrepresentation of minority youth compared to non IGP youth identified on CARE ($\chi^2(1, N = 9,773) = 4.73, p < .05$). As may be seen in Figure 1, percentages of IGP and non IGP youth differed for several Race and Ethnicity categories. The largest discrepancy was for Native American youth. About 5.0% of IGP youth found on CARE were identified as Native American, compared to 1.7% of non IGP youth. A smaller difference was found for Hispanic youth. About 22.0% of IGP youth found in CARE were classified as Hispanic, while 19.6% of non IGP youth were in the category. A statistical analysis revealed only two reliable differences between IGP and non IGP youth for specific categories of the Race and Ethnicity measure: (1) IGP Native American youth were more likely than non IGP Native Americans to be identified in CARE (Native American: ($\chi^2(1, N = 9,773) = 41.386, p < 0.05$) and (2) White IGP youth were less like to be represented on CARE than White non IGP youth ($\chi^2(1, N = 9,773) = 4.73, p < 0.05$). It should be noted that, while these differences may be important, they should be interpreted with caution because of the large number of IGP and non IGP youth labeled as "Unknown." Better information for those cases could yield different conclusions.

Figure 1 Percentages of IGP and non IGP youth by Race-Ethnicity

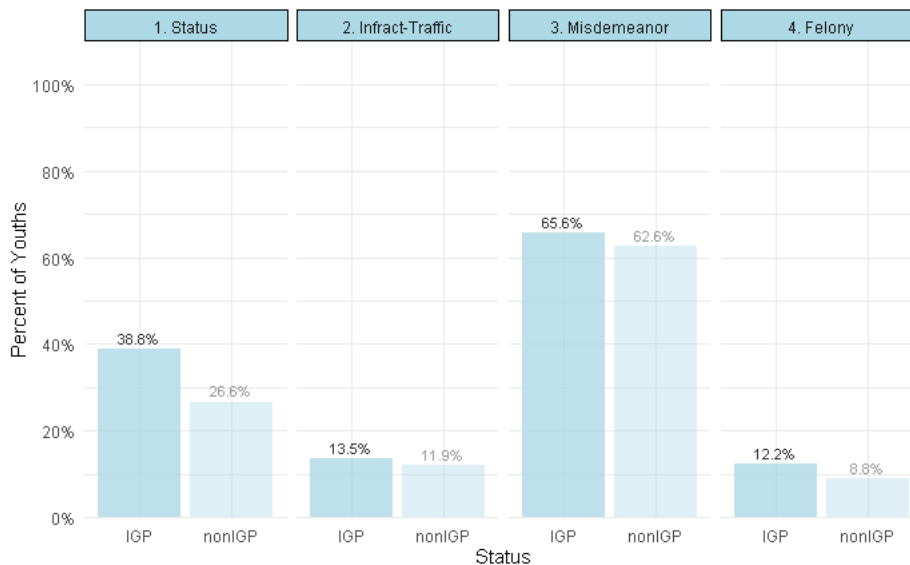


Urban-Rural Status. IGP Youth identified in CARE (26.5%) are more likely come from rural counties than non IGP youth (23.3%; $\chi^2(1, N = 12,011) = 18.09, p < .05$).

3. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to collect delinquent charges?

Figure 2 represents the percentages of IGP and non IGP youth who collected a delinquency charge from one of four general categories. Categories are ordered based on offense severity. Status offenses, the least serious category of offense, includes offenses like "possession of tobacco" that are only offenses for minors. At the other extreme, felonies represent the most serious offenses. The category labelled "2. Infract-Traffic" represents offenses for a limited number of serious traffic offenses and for infractions. Although not represented on the graphic, an overall measure was created to identify the likelihood that a youth was charged with any offense from the four categories. Overall, about 78.4% of all IGP youth and about 75.0% non IGP Overall Offenses identified on CARE were charged with one or more charges from one or more of the four categories. Though this difference is relatively small, it was a statistically reliable difference ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 4.58, p < 0.05$). As may be seen from the Figure 2, a higher percentage of IGP youth were identified as having been charged for each of the four general categories of offense. Differences between IGP and non IGP youth were only statistically significant for two of the offense categories, "1. Status" ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 53.96, p < 0.05$) and "4. Felony" ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 10.04, p < 0.05$). Differences for "2. Infract-Traffic" ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 1.68, p > 0.05$) and "3. Misdemeanor" ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 2.65, p > 0.05$) were not reliably different.

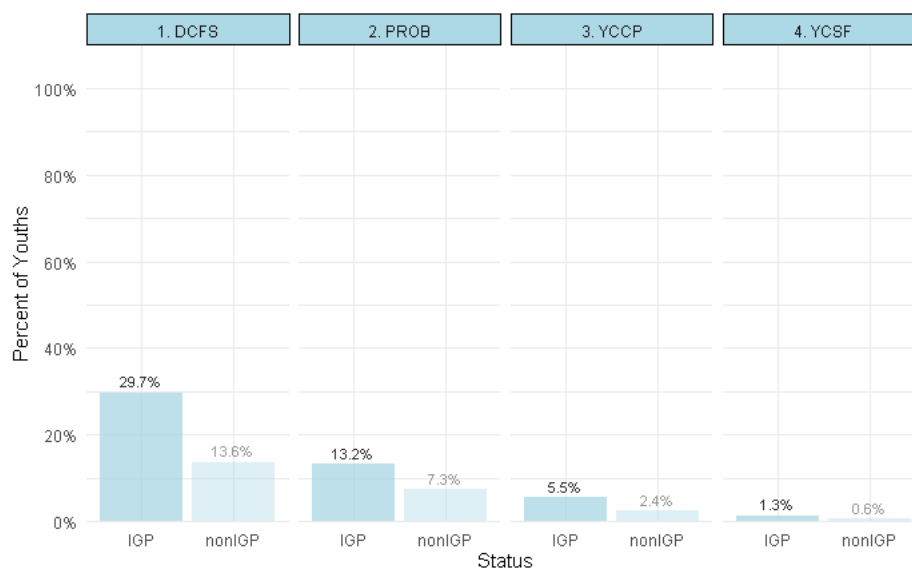
Figure 2 Percentages of IGP and non IGP youth charged with one or more offenses



4. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to receive a Juvenile Court disposition placing them in the custody of a state agency or that placed them on Formal Probation with the Juvenile Court?

IGP youth identified in the juvenile justice system were much more likely than non IGP youth to receive a disposition removing them from parental custody or placing them on supervision. As represented in Figure 3, there were large differences between percentages for IGP and non IGP youth for each of the four general categories represented. Statistical significance was found overall ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 167.92, p < 0.05$) and for each of the categories. In each case, the percentage of IGP youth who received a one or more dispositions was close to or more than twice the percentage for non IGP youth. The "1. DCFS" category involves the greatest proportion of IGP and non IGP youth. This category represents youth who have received one or more dispositions that transfer custody or guardianship to or provide supervision by the Utah Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). About 29.7% of IGP youth identified on CARE received one or more DCFS dispositions as opposed to 13.6% of non IGP youth ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 152.55, p < 0.05$). The second category "2. PROB" represents numbers of IGP and non IGP youth paced under Formal Probation with Juvenile Court Probation. The percentage of IGP youth receiving disposition from this category was nearly twice the percentage as for non IGP youth ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 35.92, p < 0.05$). The final two categories represent dispositions that transfer custody to JJS either for Community Placement in the case of "3. YCCP" or for Secure Care in the case of "4. YCSF." In both cases, IGP youth were more than twice as likely to receive a disposition as were non IGP youth (YCCP: $X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 26.41, p < 0.05$; YCSF: ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 4.47, p < 0.05$)).

Figure 3 Percentage of IGP and non IGP youth who received one or more Court custody or supervision dispositions

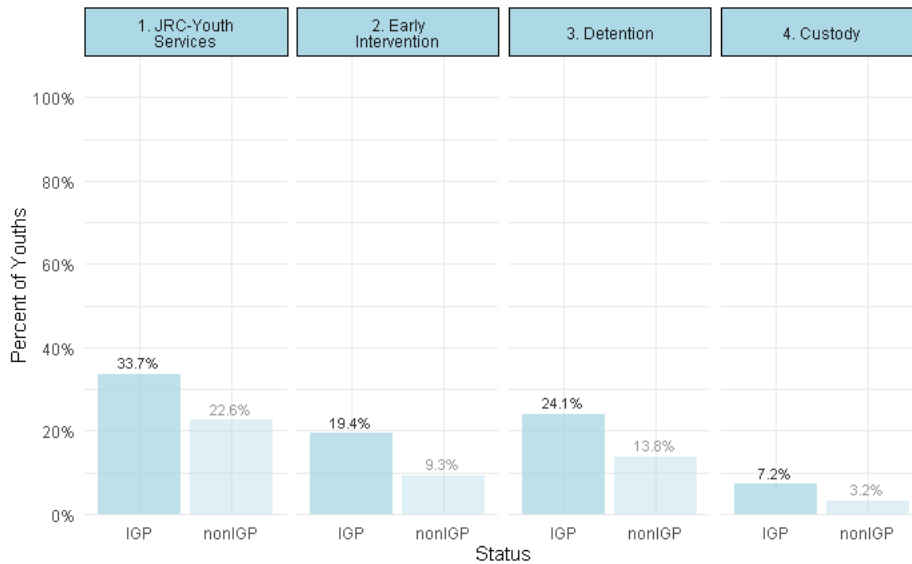


5. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to receive services from JJS?

As mentioned, JJS operates a wide range of services to meet the varied needs of youth at different levels of delinquency. Figure 4 identifies four general categories. Overall, and for each category, IGP youth were more likely to have received one or more services of a particular type than did non IGP youth. Values for IGP youth receiving a particular service ranged from 1.5, for "1. JRC Youth Services," to 2.25, for "4. Custody," times higher than corresponding values for non IGP youth. The overall differences and differences for each service category were statistically significant (0. OVERALL: ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 71.30, p < 0.05$); 1. JRC Youth Services: ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 50.74.47, p < 0.05$); 2. Early Intervention: ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 85.19.47, p < 0.05$); 3. Detention: ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 62.90.47, p < 0.05$); 4. Custody: ($X^2(1, N = 12,015) = 37.24, p < 0.05$)).

As a complement to this analysis, the mean number of days of service for IGP and non IGP youth were calculated for each service category. Importantly, there were no reliable differences between IGP and non IGP youth for any of the four service categories. This indicates that while IGP youth are more likely to receive JJS services of various sorts, their assignments are not longer than those for non IGP youth.

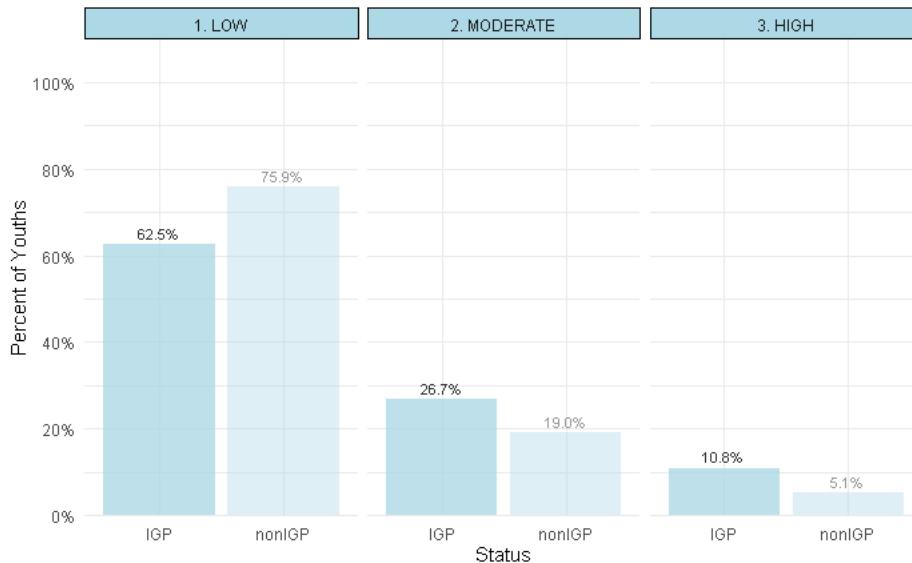
Figure 4 Percentages of IGP and non IGP youth receiving one or more types of JJS services



6. Are IGP youth more or less likely than non IGP youth to receive a delinquency risk assessment? And, for those tested, how did their risk scores and areas of risk differ from those of non IGP youth?

As mentioned above, delinquent youth are routinely given a delinquency risk assessment to assess their risk to reoffend and inform their need for supervision. For this study, risk assessment results were collected from CARE for both IGP and non IGP youth identified in CARE. Overall, IGP youth identified in CARE were more likely (47.1%) to have received one or more PSRA assessments than were non IGP youth (36.8%; $\chi^2(1, N = 12,015) = 33.26, p < 0.05$). Figure 5 presents a summary of risk score results from the first assessment collected for members of each group. As may be seen, IGP youth were less likely to be scored as "1. LOW" risk but more likely to be scored as "2. MODERATE" or "3. HIGH" risk. Differences between IGP and non IGP youth for all risk levels were statistically significant (Low Risk: ($\chi^2(1, N = 4,508) = 32.27, p < 0.05$; Moderate Risk: $\chi^2(1, N = 4,508) = 12.75, p < 0.05$); High Risk: ($\chi^2(1, N = 4,508) = 20.90, p < 0.05$).

Figure 5 Percentages of IGP and non IGP youth who received one or more delinquency risk assessments (PSRA)



As suggested above, an understanding of the conditions and challenges experienced by IGP youth may benefit from a more complete understanding of the specific risk factors that IGP possess. Although this type of analysis is at an early stage and the statistical reliability of observations has not yet been established, information collected for the current study seems promising and may provide important clues about IGP youth and the kinds of support they need. For example, it appears that compared to non IGP youth, IGP youth are (1) less likely to be attending school on a regular basis, (2) more likely to collect reports of school-related behavioral problems, (3) more likely be failing in school, (4) more likely to have

no consistent friends or only anti-social friends, (5) less likely to follow parental rules, and (6) more likely to be suspected victims of physical or sexual abuse or neglect.

7. Are IGP youth who had interactions with Utah's juvenile justice system more or less likely than IGP youth who did not have interactions with the juvenile justice system to be enrolled in the 2018 IGP Cohort?

The last question addressed in this study has to do with whether an IGP youth's involvement with Utah's juvenile justice system is correlated with their IGP status. The intent behind the Intergenerational Poverty Mitigation Act, is, of course, to help families escape the status of intergenerational poverty. As such, one measure of success is whether individuals continue to experience intergenerational from one year to the next. For the youth followed in this study, a final assessment was made to determine whether individuals identified the 2013 Cohort were again identified in the 2018 Intergenerational Poverty Cohort. Overall, about 53% of the individuals who enrolled the 2013 Cohort and were followed in this study were also identified in the 2018 Cohort. There was a small but statistically significant difference in outcome for youth who did or did not have contact with the juvenile justice system. About 50% of the individuals who did not have contact with Utah's juvenile justice system were, again, found in the 2018 Cohort. In contrast, about 55.8% of youth from the 2013 Cohort who did have juvenile justice contact were found in the 2018 Cohort ($\chi^2(1, N = 1,561) = 5.00, p < 0.05$).

CONCLUSIONS

The results described demonstrate very clearly that the juvenile justice system is a prominent feature in the lives of a great many youth who have been identified as members of Utah's Intergenerational Poverty Cohort. A striking 50% of the youth targeted from the 2013 IGP Cohort had contact with Utah's juvenile justice system. As noted above, this is more than twice the number that would be expected based on the number of youth from Utah's youth population who have contact with the juvenile justice system. IGP youth were more likely to be charged with serious offenses; they are more likely to receive a disposition transferring their custody to a state agency or placed on Probation supervision, and they are more likely to receive correctional and youth services from JJS. The last finding was that IGP youth known to Utah's juvenile justice system are more likely than IGP youth who do not have contact to continue to be identified in the intergenerational cohort in a subsequent year. Together these observations and findings should be a clear call to all juvenile justice agencies and workers to strive to better understand and support IGP youth and families.