FY22 Restorative Justice Panel Survey Data

Background:
During FY22 (July 2021 - June 2022) the Essex Community Justice Center received **154 Restorative Justice Panel referrals** (143 in FY21) for our service area. These cases were staffed along with 30 cases that were rolled over from the previous fiscal year. Of the new referrals;

- **92% came directly from law enforcement** (89% in FY21)
- **5% came from Probation and Parole/Youthful Offender** (3% in FY21)
- **The remaining 3% came from a variety of sources** including schools, community organizations, the courts, and the State Attorney's Office

Of the cases that entered into a restorative process and completed during the fiscal year, **85% successfully completed (90% in FY21)** meaning the responsible party took accountability for their actions, had a discussion on the impact of the incident, and completed a plan for repair and skill building.

Analysis Summary:
After every panel completion, all panel parties are provided with a survey to offer feedback. We are continually striving to increase the response rate in order to have the most data possible that will inform our work. During the past year, we implemented the following strategies to increase response rate: raising the gift card amount from $5 to $10, offering paper or electronic survey submission, and adding a survey for support people.

In FY22, the responses from panel surveys highlight the overwhelmingly positive outcomes of the work. Below is a snapshot of the surveys collected. While the majority of data points show positive trends it is worth noting that the Affected Party data had some conflicting data. *There were some negative ratings on the process, however, all of the quotes speak to satisfaction with the process. These results tied with feedback that the scaling system on the evaluation form may be confusing, reinforces our desire to review the survey format and consider edits to make it more user friendly. We will continue to monitor these trends in future data evaluations.*

PART 1: Responsible Party Surveys. 23 Surveys collected. (11 in FY21)

86% of Responsible Party respondents AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that they achieved the following through their Restorative Justice (RJ) Panel Experience (91% in FY21):

- Learned how their actions impacted others
- Learned how to decrease the chances they would commit another offense
- Repaired some of the harm they caused
- Felt more connected to the community
- Felt they were able to resolve the incident

94% of Responsible Party respondents AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that the CJC Staff and Volunteers (100% in FY22):

- Prepared them for the meeting
- Handled things fairly
- Treated them and others were treated with respect
- Supported them through the meeting
- Gave them a chance to say what they needed to say
- Gave them the information they needed
- Encouraged them to share their ideas

Responsible Party respondents reported the following as the most **valuable components** of the process:

1. Conversations with members of the CJC (90%)
2. Restorative Justice Panel Meetings (90%)
3. Written or verbal apologies (76%)
4. Educational/Community Activities (24%)
5. Financial Restitution (19%)
6. Thank you letters (14%)
7. Meeting with those affected by my actions (9%)
8. Writing Projects (9%)

When asked to comment on what part of the process was most helpful, the answers given most frequently were:

- Writing letters of apology or gratitude (6)
- Conversation with the group (5)
- Community/Educational activity (2)
- Safe Driving Course (1)
- Writing activity (1)

Sample of Quotes from Responsible Party Surveys:

"When I first arrived to my very first meeting, I walked in expecting to be judged and unheard. About halfway through my first meeting, I began to settle down and realized they were there for my best interest and I was in a judge free zone. By my second meeting, I was completely comfortable and walked into my meeting with a very warm welcome. Through the whole process never once did I feel singled out or unheard. Which is greatly appreciated."

"Thank you for this alternative form of Justice it was very helpful."

"I think that the CJC really makes you understand how people's actions are connected to the community."

"Going through this process has brought peace to me knowing that there are other options available to us then just the ones we may know of CJC Staff is awesome & makes sure you are fully aware & explains how the process will go so you are comfortable"

PART 2: Affected Party Surveys. 3 surveys collected (2 in FY21)

67% of Affected Party respondents AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that during their experience with the Restorative Justice Process:

- They got to tell their story and how they were impacted by the incident
- Their concerns were heard and considered

0% of Affected Party respondents AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that during their experience with the Restorative Justice Process:

- The person who harmed them did something to help make things better for them

100% of Affected Party respondents Agreed that the CJC staff and volunteers:

- Prepared them for the meeting
- Helped them feel comfortable
- Handled things fairly
- Treated them and others with respect
- Supported them through the meeting
- Gave them a chance to say what they needed to say
- Gave them the information they needed
- Encouraged them to share their ideas

67% of Affected Party respondents are satisfied with the conclusion of the restorative process

Sample Quote from Affected Party Surveys:

"Although I do think this process forced the person responsible to reflect on their mistakes, I believe they have not fully accepted responsibility for their actions, nor do they appear to fully understand what they did wrong."

PART 3: Parent / Guardians Surveys. 4 Surveys collected (5 in FY21)

100% of Parents / Guardians AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that during their experience with the Restorative Justice Process:

- Their child's individual needs were considered
- The agreement addressed the incident in question
- They felt the incident was resolved

75% of Parents / Guardians AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that during their experience with the Restorative Justice Process:

- They felt more connected to their community

100% of Parents/ Guardians AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that the CJC Staff and volunteers:

- Prepared their child for the meeting
- Helped their child feel comfortable in the meeting
- Handled things fairly
- Treated their child and others with respect

- Supported their child through the meeting
- Gave their child a chance to say what they needed to say
- Gave their child the information they needed
- Encouraged their child to share their ideas

Parent / Guardian respondents reported the following as the most **valuable components** of the process:

- Letters or verbal apologies (100%)
- Restorative Justice Panel Meetings (100%)
- Conversations with members of the CJC (75%)
- Educational Activities (25%)
- Financial Restitution (25%)
- Meeting with those affected by the responsible party (25%)

Sample Quote from Parent / Guardian Surveys

"Our son shared with us before the last meeting that he was not worried about this last meeting and actually was looking forward to it. Prior to the first meeting, he did not know what to expect and was worried that he was going to be lectured and shamed. He felt supported and heard in the first meeting and therefore looked forward to that same feeling in the second meeting, which he received. The process was a relief for him, educational for him, and very reflective for him. He and both of us parents feel that it was the perfect response from the officer and the committee to allow him to take this path and we are all grateful to the officer and to the panel members."

"All of the volunteers were very concerned over what my son needed to help him with the process. They listened and gave feedback. They were a very friendly group."

PART 4: Support Person Surveys 1 Collected (N/A in FY21)

The Support Person Survey collected AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that the following was achieved through the Restorative Justice (RJ) Panel Experience:

- the needs of the person I was supporting were considered
- my concerns and the concerns of the person I was supporting and considered
- the agreement addressed the incident in question
- the incident was resolved

The Support Person Survey collected AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that the CJC Staff and volunteers:

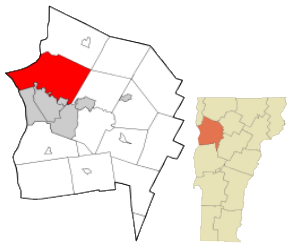
- Prepared the person being supported for the meeting
- Helped the person being supported feel comfortable in the meeting
- Handled things fairly
- Treated the person being supported and others with respect
- Supported the person being supported through the meeting
- Gave the person being supported a chance to say what they needed to say
- Gave the person being supported the information they needed
- Encouraged the person being supported to share their ideas

The Support Person respondent reported the following as the most **valuable components** of the process:

- Letters or verbal apologies (100%)
- Restorative Justice Panel Meetings (100%)
- Other: Meeting 1:1 to prepare prior to meeting (100%)

Quote from Support Person Survey

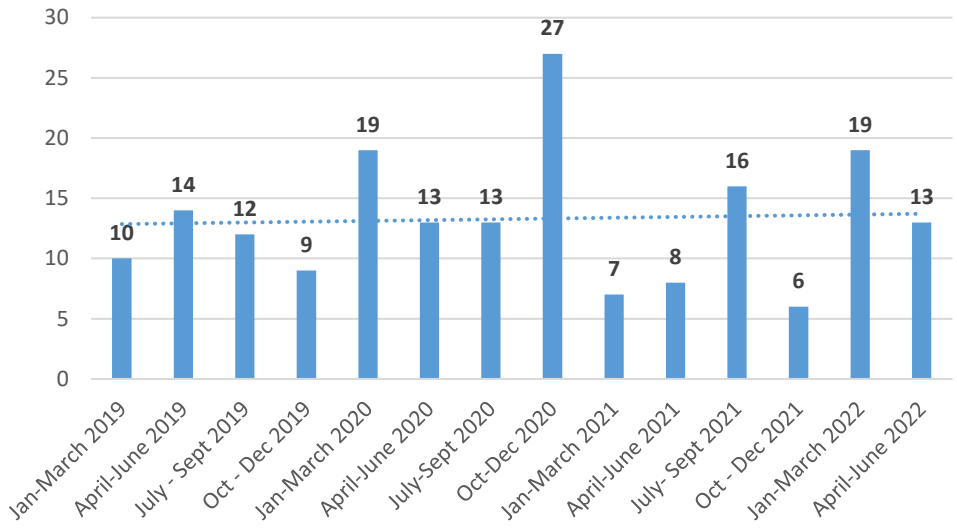
"Thank you so much for letting me be included in this process for my student. I think it was truly helpful for her to use this process to heal and move forward from the event."



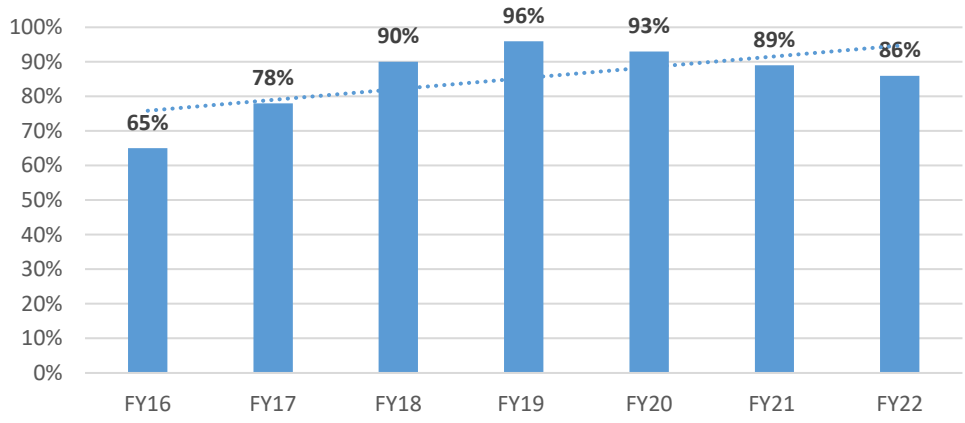
Restorative Justice in Colchester (FY22)

Through a Pre-Charge program, the Colchester Police Department can refer cases to Restorative Justice Panels instead of court. The panels are facilitated by trained community volunteers and serve as a proven and cost-effective means to addressing low level offenses. Through a series of conversations, the panel process holds those responsible for crime accountable for their actions and provides an important opportunity for those affected by crime to share their stories and identify needs for repair.

Colchester PD Quarterly Referrals



RJ Panel Successful Completion Rate for Colchester Completed Direct Referrals



* Of the cases that closed in FY22, 26 of the 30 responsible parties successfully completed a Restorative Justice Panel. Additionally, 23 cases were returned due to an inability to contact the responsible party or the person referred did not take responsibility for the crime.

Community Impact of FY22 Referrals

47 community members affected by the referred crimes were contacted by CJC staff to discuss the referral and how they can be involved.

7 affected parties participated in the restorative justice panels involving their situation.

Colchester residents provided **252 hours of service** through the facilitation of panels in the community.

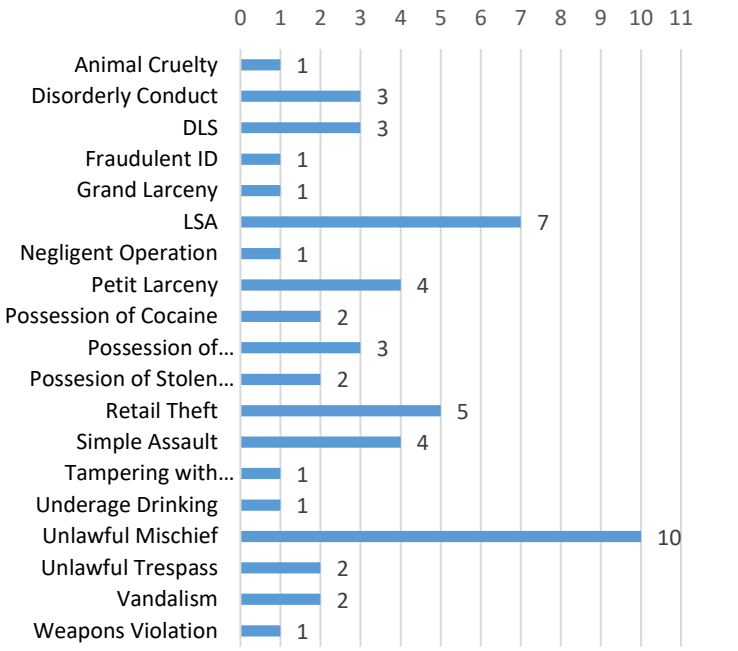
$7,137 in restitution was resolved through the panel agreement process by those responsible for the crime.

Quote from Responsible Party:
"When I arrived to my very first meeting, I walked in expecting to be judged and unheard. About halfway through, I began to settle down and realized I was in a judge free zone. By my second meeting, I was completely comfortable and walked into my meeting with a very warm welcome. Through the whole process never once did I feel singled out or unheard. Which is greatly appreciated."

ESSEX COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER
SERVING NORTHERN CHITTENDEN COUNTY

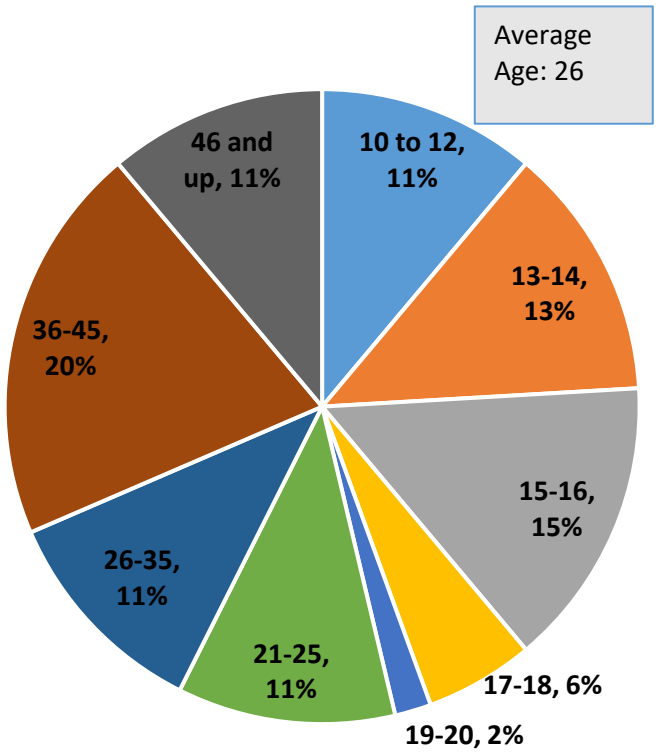
COLCHESTER POLICE

Colchester PD FY22
Direct Referrals by Crime Type

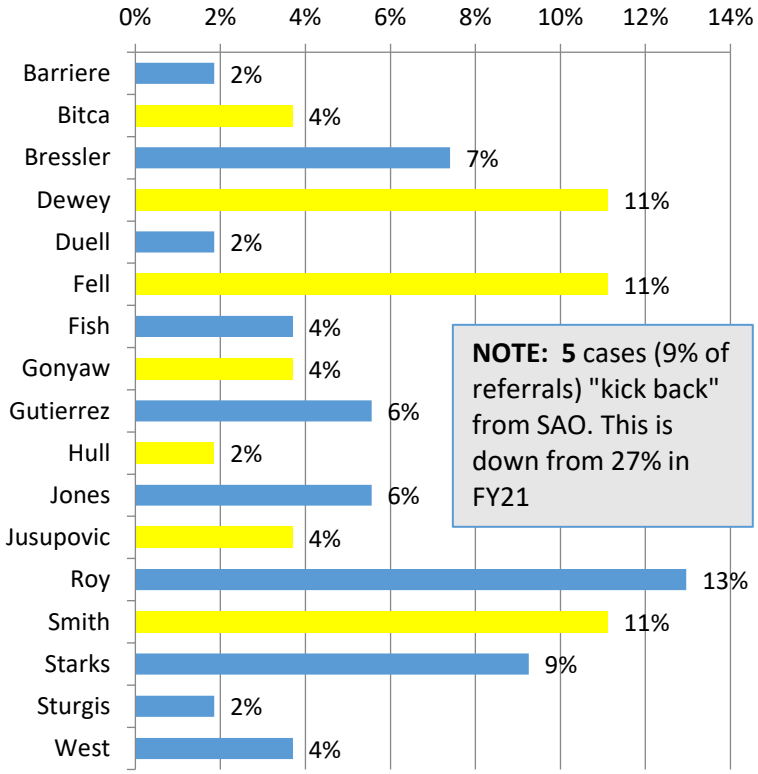


DLS = Driving with License Suspended
LSA = Leaving the Scene of an Accident

Responsible Party Ages of
Colchester PD FY22 Direct Referrals

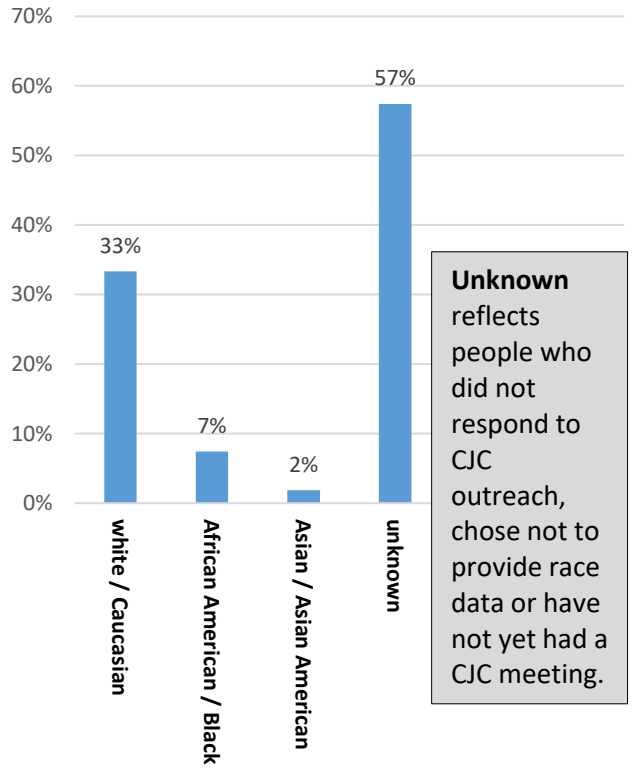


Percentage of Colchester PD FY22
Referrals by Officer



NOTE: 5 cases (9% of referrals) "kick back" from SAO. This is down from 27% in FY21

Self-Reported Race of Colchester
PD Direct Referrals FY22



Unknown reflects people who did not respond to CJC outreach, chose not to provide race data or have not yet had a CJC meeting.