Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board

Community Based Interventions Subcommittee Meeting
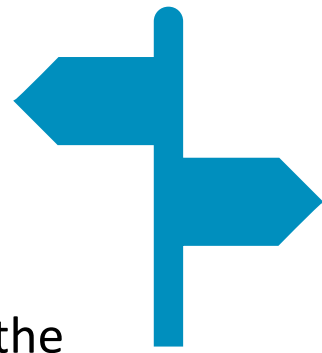
July 20, 2023

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Agenda

1. Introductions

2. Approval of June Meeting Minutes

3. Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program (MYDP) Learning

   Lab Impact Report

4. Q&A

Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program (MYDP) Learning Lab Impact Report

MYDP Background

A partnership:

- Between the OCA and the Department of Youth Services (DYS), the MYDP was developed based on a recommendation to create a statewide diversion program in the JJPAD's [2019 report](#)

Designed:

- **For youth with first-time and/or lower-level** offenses, & cases where a youth's **unmet needs** may be driving the delinquent behavior
- To accept **referrals from police, clerks, DAs and judges**

Program includes:

- Evidence-based intake and assessment process
- Program requirements and services tailored to individual needs of youth
- Case management provided by community-based organizations

Program Goals

| Reduce the likelihood of future offending by youth in the program and increase public safety | Support positive youth development | Hold youth responsible for their actions | Promote and ensure equity in the process |

MYDP Background, continued

In Fall of 2021, DYS issued a Request for Response that led to the selection of three community-based providers to pilot the state model in three counties in a "Diversion Learning Lab"

Essex

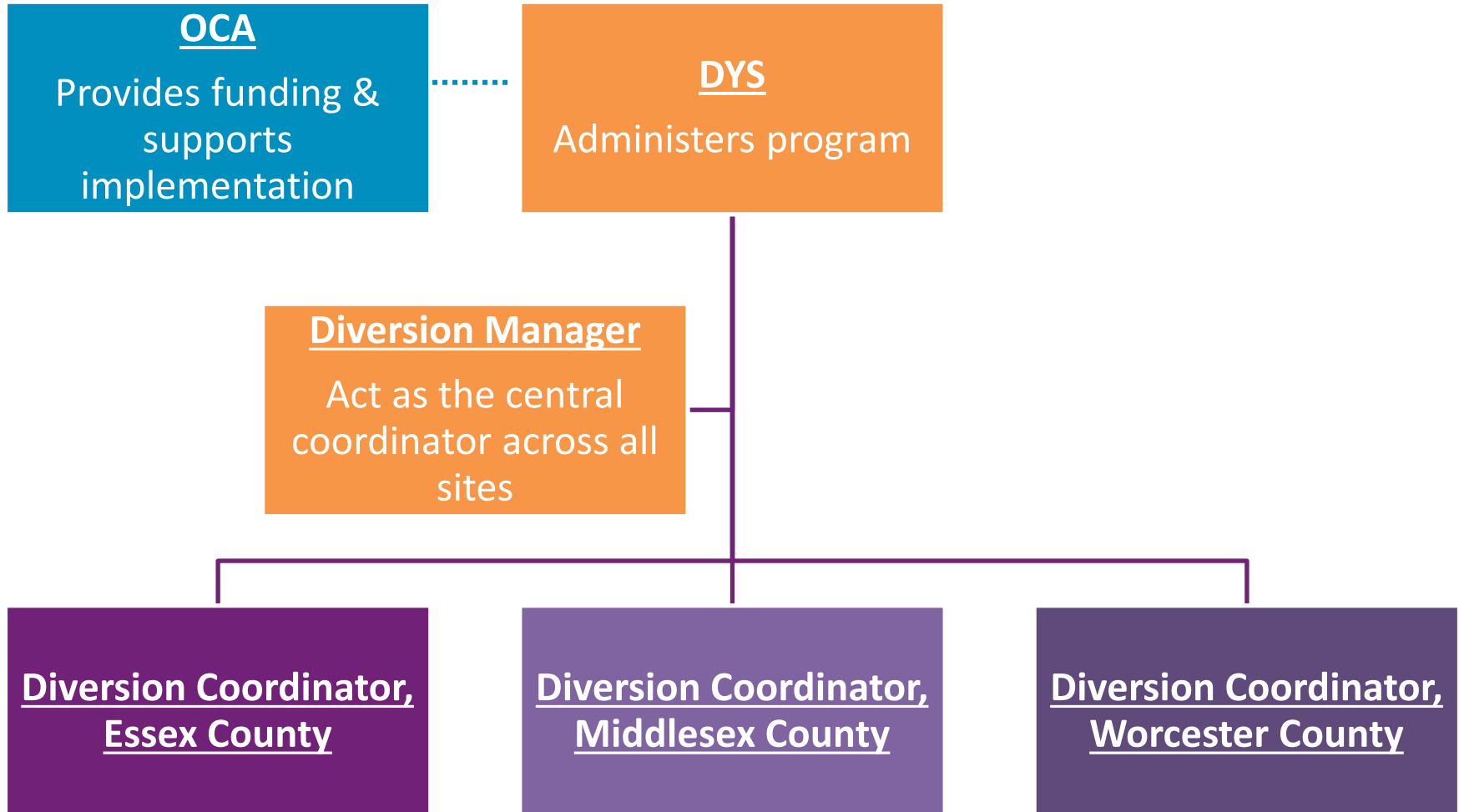Diversion services provided by Family Services of the Merrimack Valley

Middlesex

Diversion services provided by NFI Massachusetts

Worcester

Diversion services provided by Family Continuity

MYDP Program Structure

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Provides funding & supports implementation

DYS

Administers program

Diversion Manager

Act as the central coordinator across all sites

Diversion Coordinator, Essex County

Diversion Coordinator, Middlesex County

Diversion Coordinator, Worcester County

Diversion coordinators accept referred youth to the program, conduct necessary assessments and intake, work with the youth and their family to develop a diversion agreement, match the youth with services, and providing ongoing mentoring and case management.

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Diversion Program Process

Referral

Police, court magistrates, district attorneys, and judges refer youth to program

Creating a Diversion Agreement

DC use information gathered during intake and input from youth/family to create diversion requirements

Case Management

DC connects youth to any agreed upon services and monitors youth's progress.

Case Closure

DC determine if the youth has made meaningful progress towards their diversion requirements

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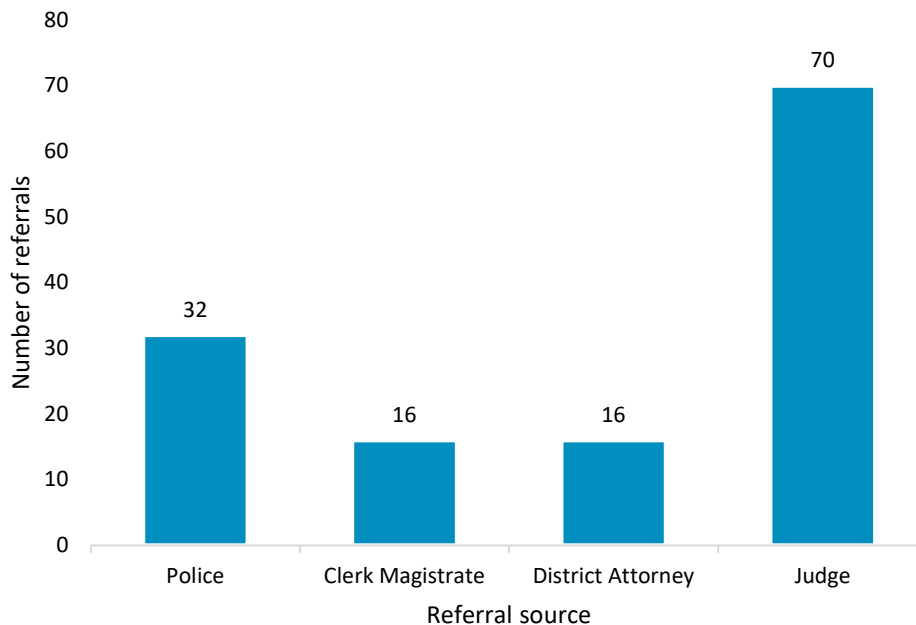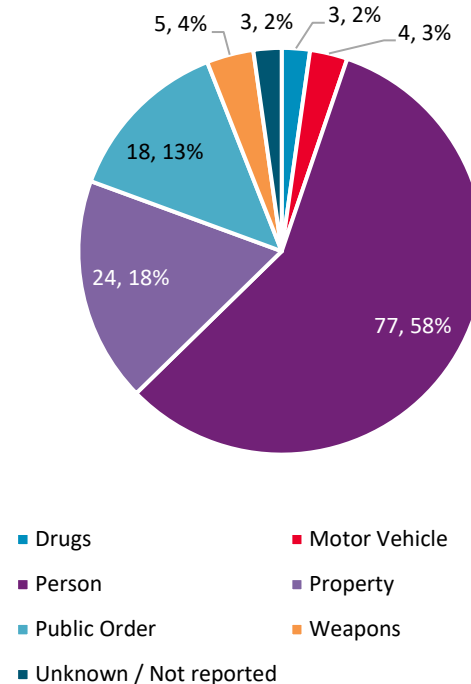
About the Data
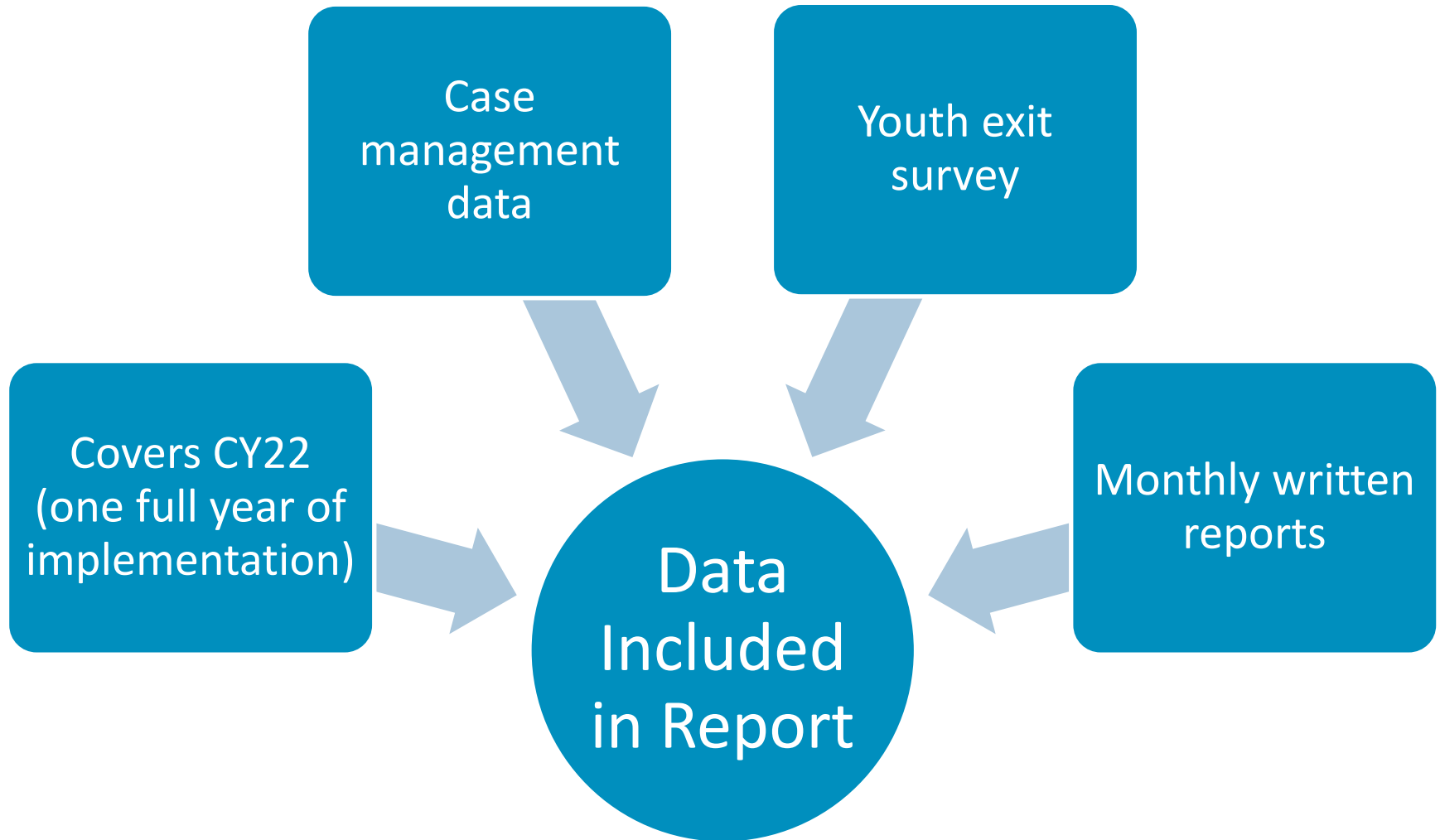
Referrals

134 youth were referred in CY22

- 52% (n=70) of all referrals came from judges
- More than half of all referrals (59%, n=77) were for persons related offenses
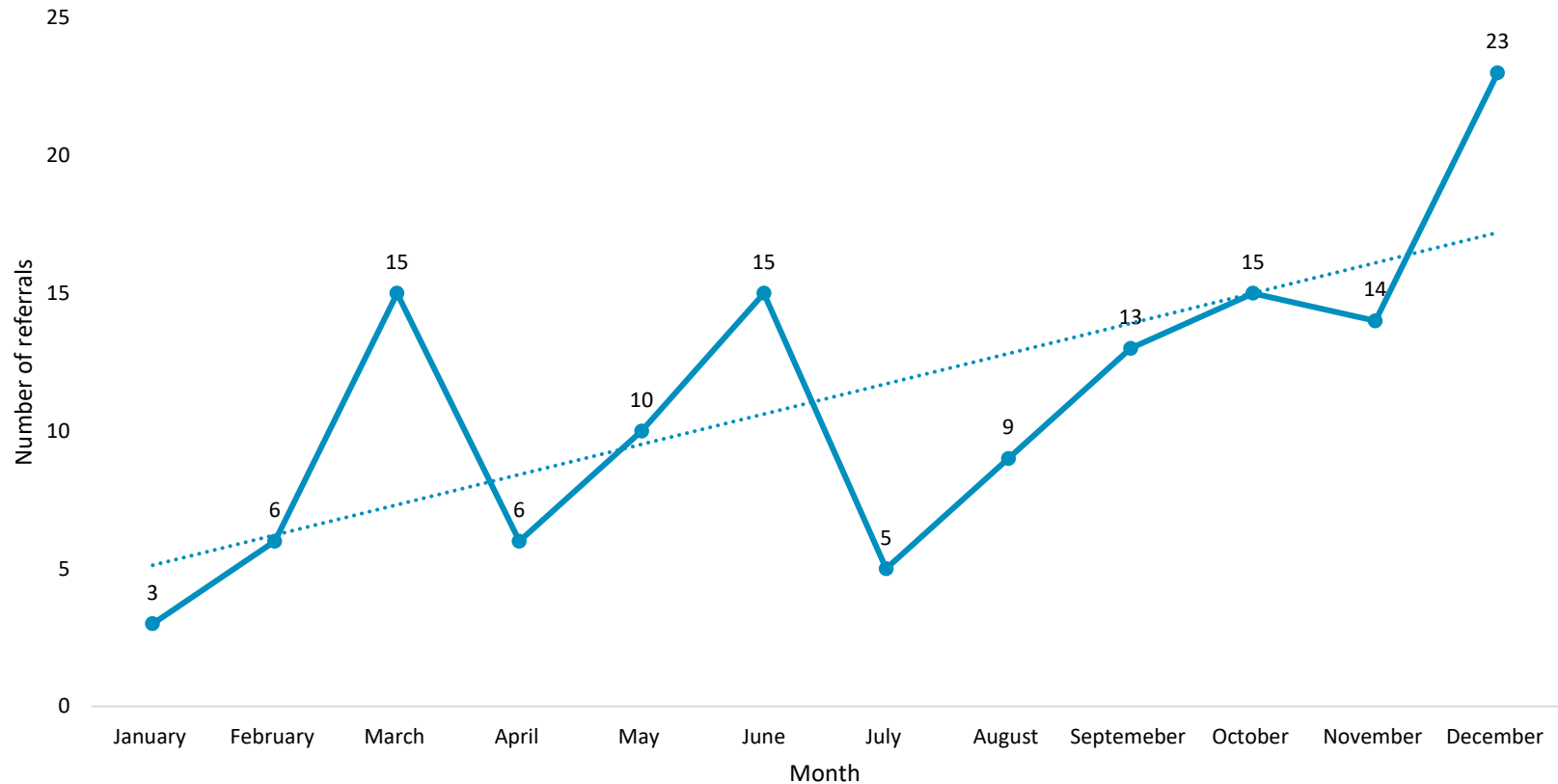
Referrals by referral source

Referrals by offense type

Referrals, continued

CY22 Learning Lab referrals, month by month

Number of referrals (y-axis), Month (x-axis)

Data points:
- January: 3
- February: 6
- March: 15
- April: 6
- May: 10
- June: 15
- July: 5
- August: 9
- September: 13
- October: 15
- November: 14
- December: 23

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Referrals by county

Essex

Total referrals: 39

Most frequent referrer: judge

Most frequently referred offense: persons offense

Middlesex

Total referrals: 34

Most frequent referrer: district attorney

Most frequently referred offense: persons offense

Worcester

Total referrals: 61

Most frequent referrer: police

Most frequently referred offense: persons offense

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Demographic* profile of Learning Lab

Age
- Average age of a participant was 15

DCF Involvement Type
- 23% of participants had current DCF involvement

Primary Language
- 94% of participants reported English as their primary language

Sexual Orientation
- 10% of participants identified as LGBTQ+

Race/Ethnicity
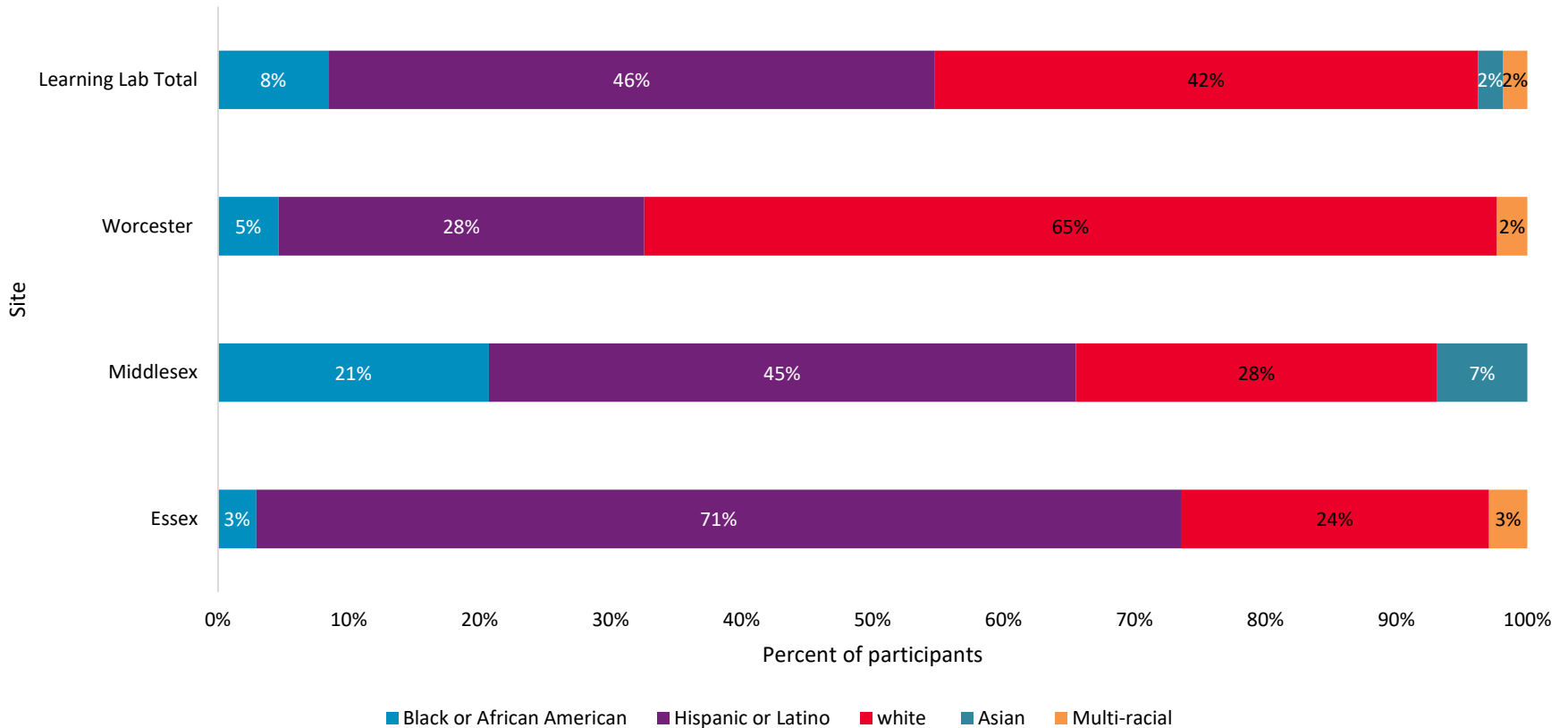- 46% of participants identified as Hispanic / Latino

Gender Identity
- 62% of participants identified as male

*Demographic data is taken as part of the intake process, 106 referred youth had reached the intake process at the end of the Learning Lab phase. Of the remaining 28 referrals, 24 had agreed to participate and were in the process of scheduling their intake with the diversion coordinator. 4 youth had indicated that they were not interested, and their case was returned to the referring source.
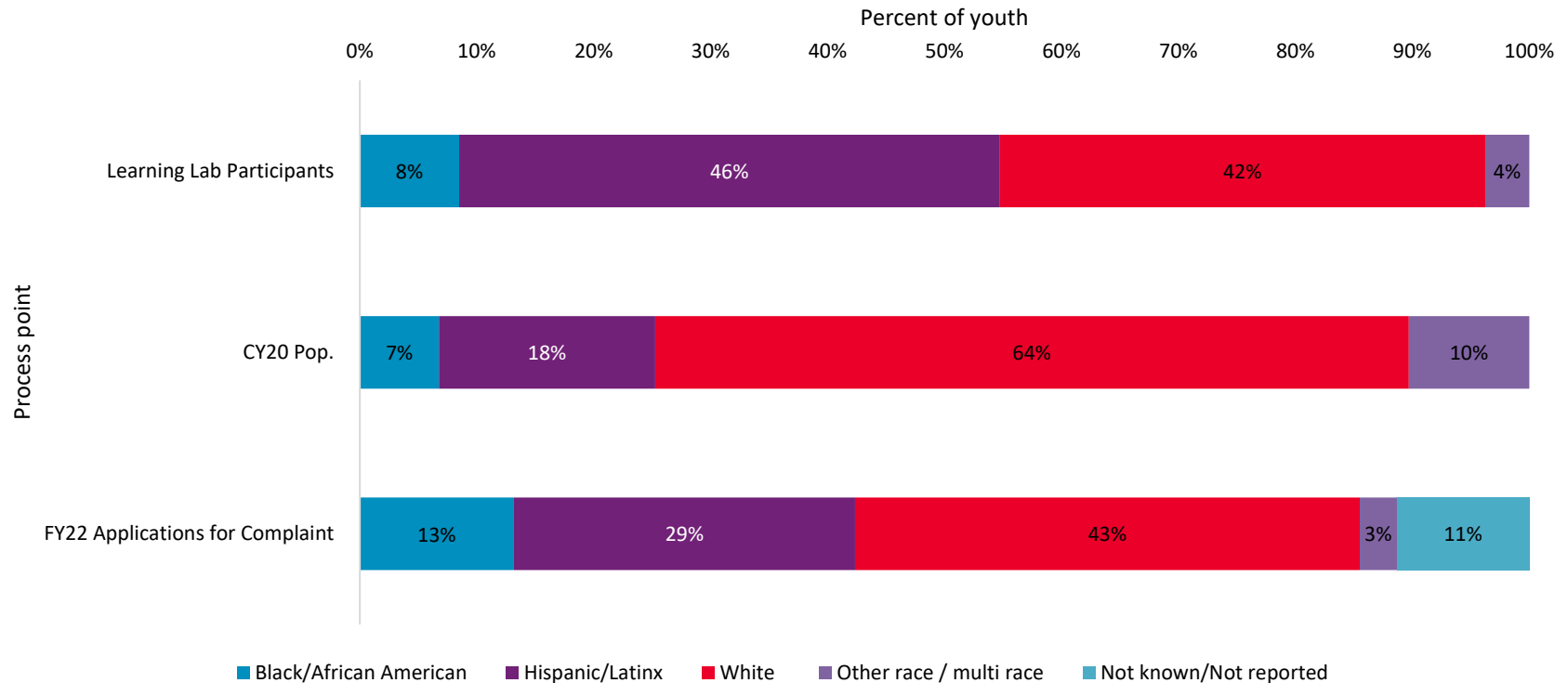Demographic information is self-reported by the youth.

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Demographic profile of Learning Lab

Learning Lab participants by race/ethnicity

Demographic profile of Learning Lab

Race/ethnicity breakdown of Learning Lab participants

Percent of youth

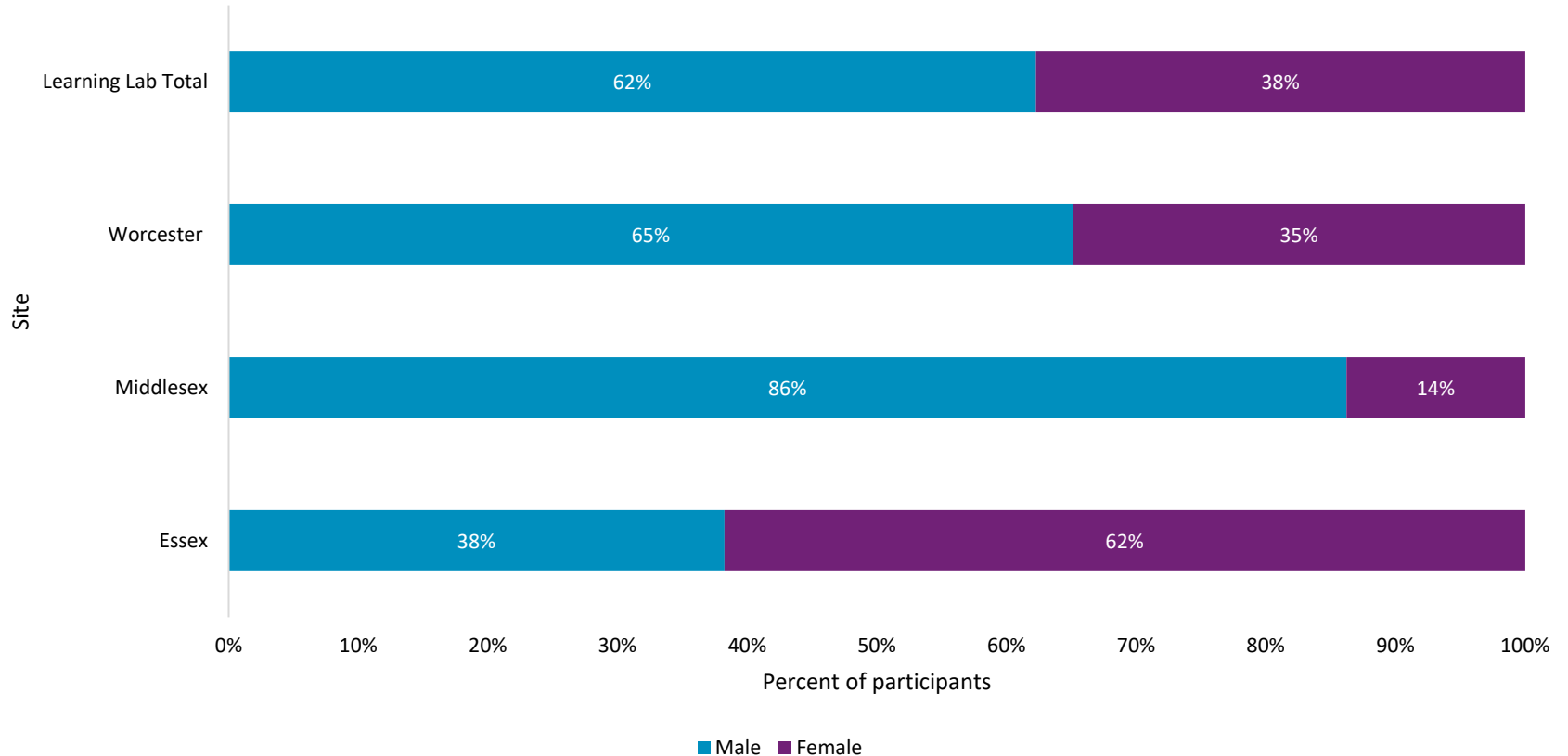| Process point	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latinx	White	Other race / multi race	Not known/Not reported
Learning Lab Participants	8%	46%	42%	4%	
CY20 Pop.	7%	18%	64%	10%	
FY22 Applications for Complaint	13%	29%	43%	3%	11%

^Total applications for complaint for Essex, Middlesex and Worcester Counties
*CY20 youth population (12-18) for Essex, Middlesex and Worcester Counties

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Demographic profile of Learning Lab

Learning Lab Participants by gender identity

Site	Male	Female
Learning Lab Total	62%	38%
Worcester	65%	35%
Middlesex	86%	14%
Essex	38%	62%

Percent of participants

■ Male ■ Female

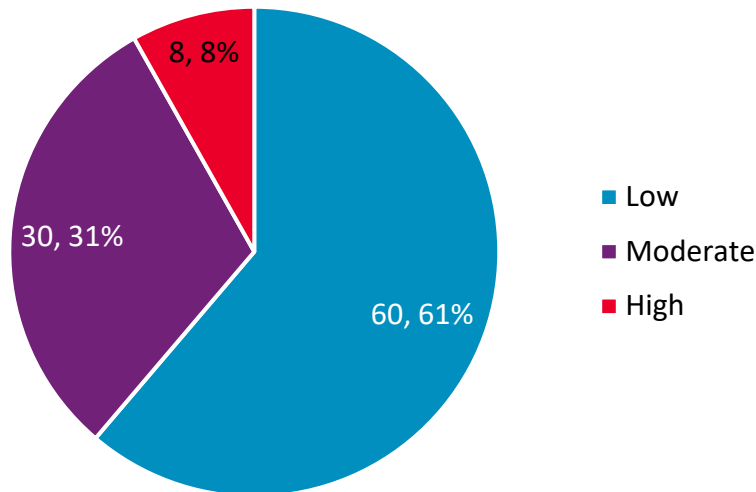OCA MASSACHUSETTS
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Risk/need profile

The MYDP uses the YLS to:
- match youth with interventions based on their risk level
- set the target length* of the diversion program

Risk/Need Level
(n=98)^

- Low
- Moderate
- High

8, 8%
30, 31%
60, 61%

At the end of CY22, there were 8 participants at the intake stage that were in the process of scheduling their YLS screener.

*Length of Diversion

The MYDP Model Program Guide provides the following general guidelines to be used when initially setting diversion timelines:

Less than 3 months: Youth with low risk/needs should typically participate in diversion no longer than 3 months.

3 months – 6 months: Youth with moderate to high risk/needs should typically participate in diversion programming between 3 and 6 months.

6 months – 9 months: Youth with particularly high needs that require longer-term interventions may need to participate in diversion programming for 6 to 9 months.
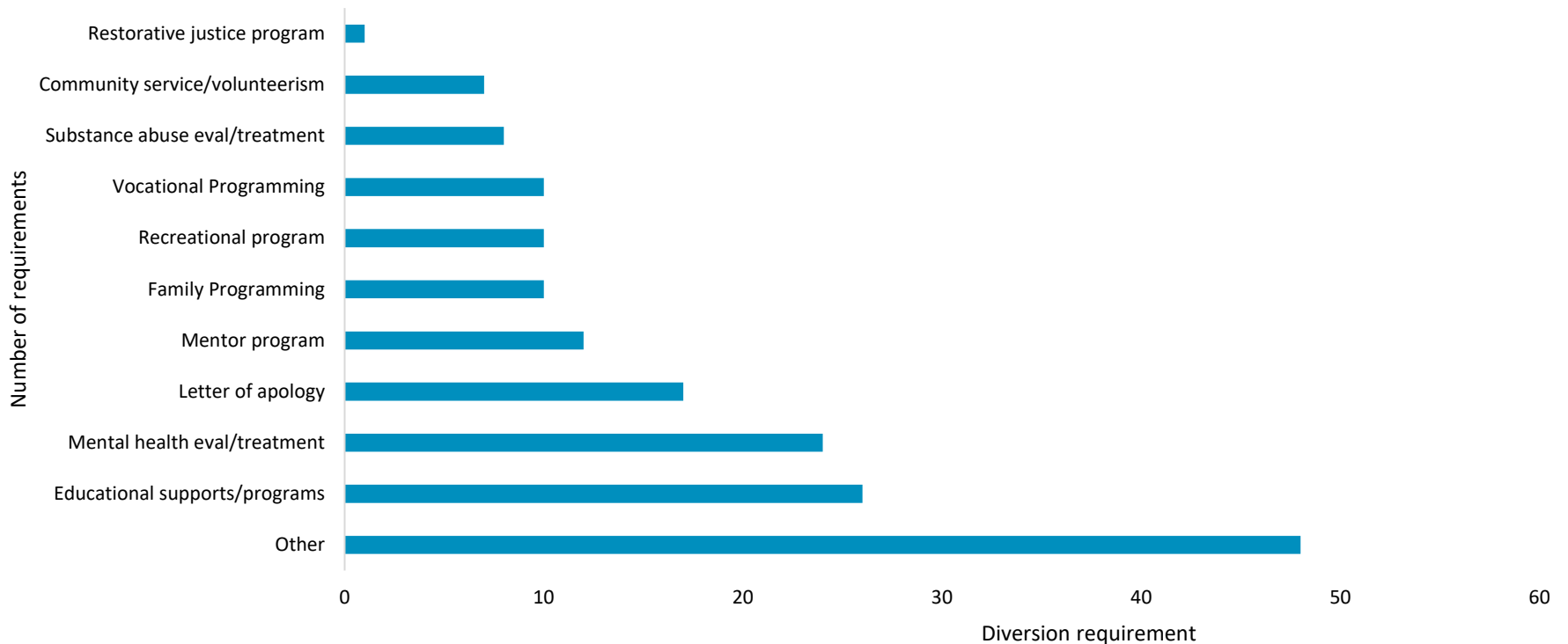
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Risk/need profile

Risk/Need level by referral source
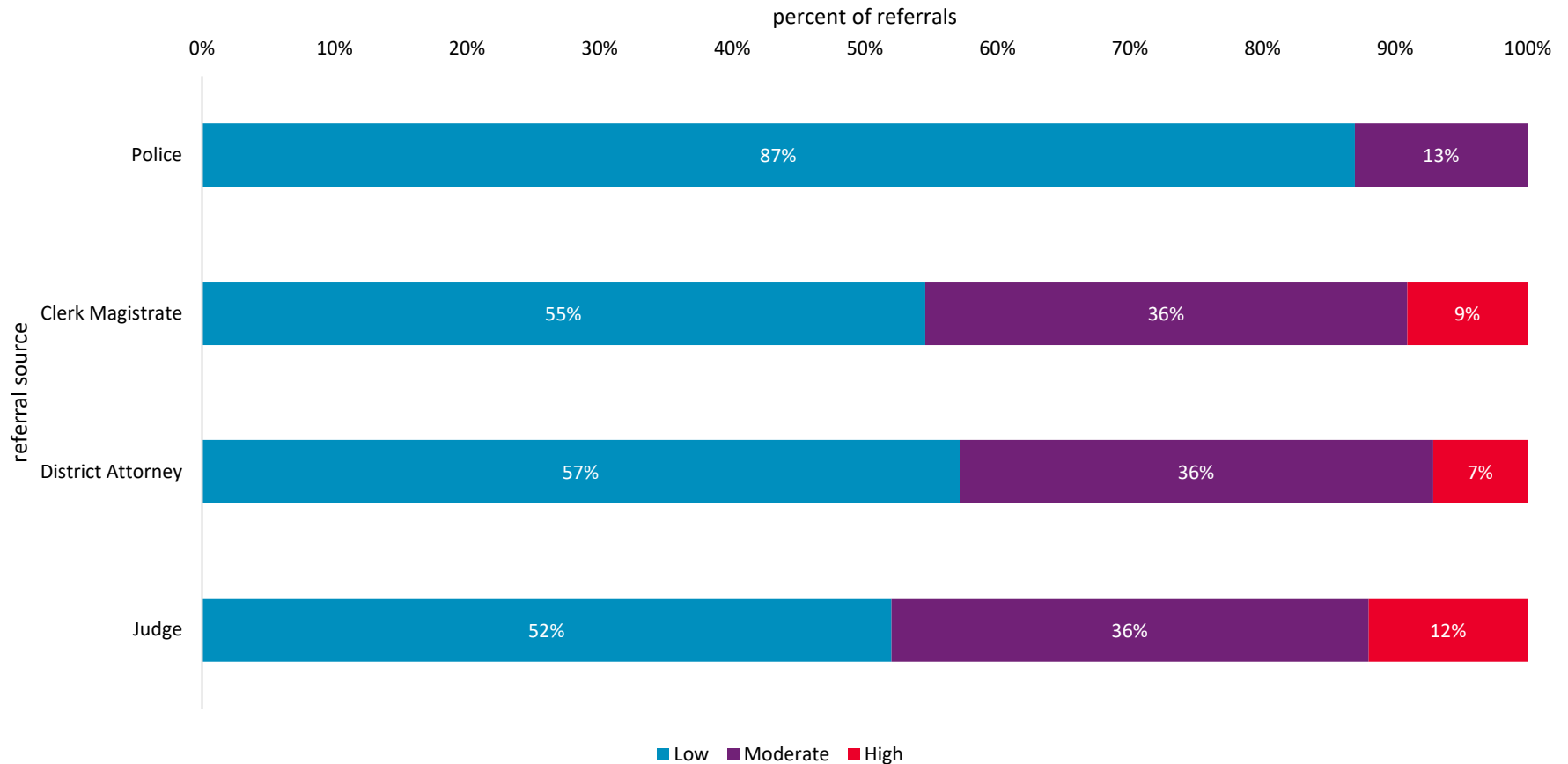
Diversion Requirements

CY22, Diversion requirements

Case closures

During the Learning Lab Phase (CY22), 71 cases were closed.

Cases by case closure status

Case Closure Status

Successful: Youth makes meaningful progress on/complete most of their diversion requirements and avoid other unlawful activities

Unsuccessful: youth was arrested or charged with a new offense and the referrer did not recommend continuing with diversion or youth did not make meaningful progress on their diversion requirements
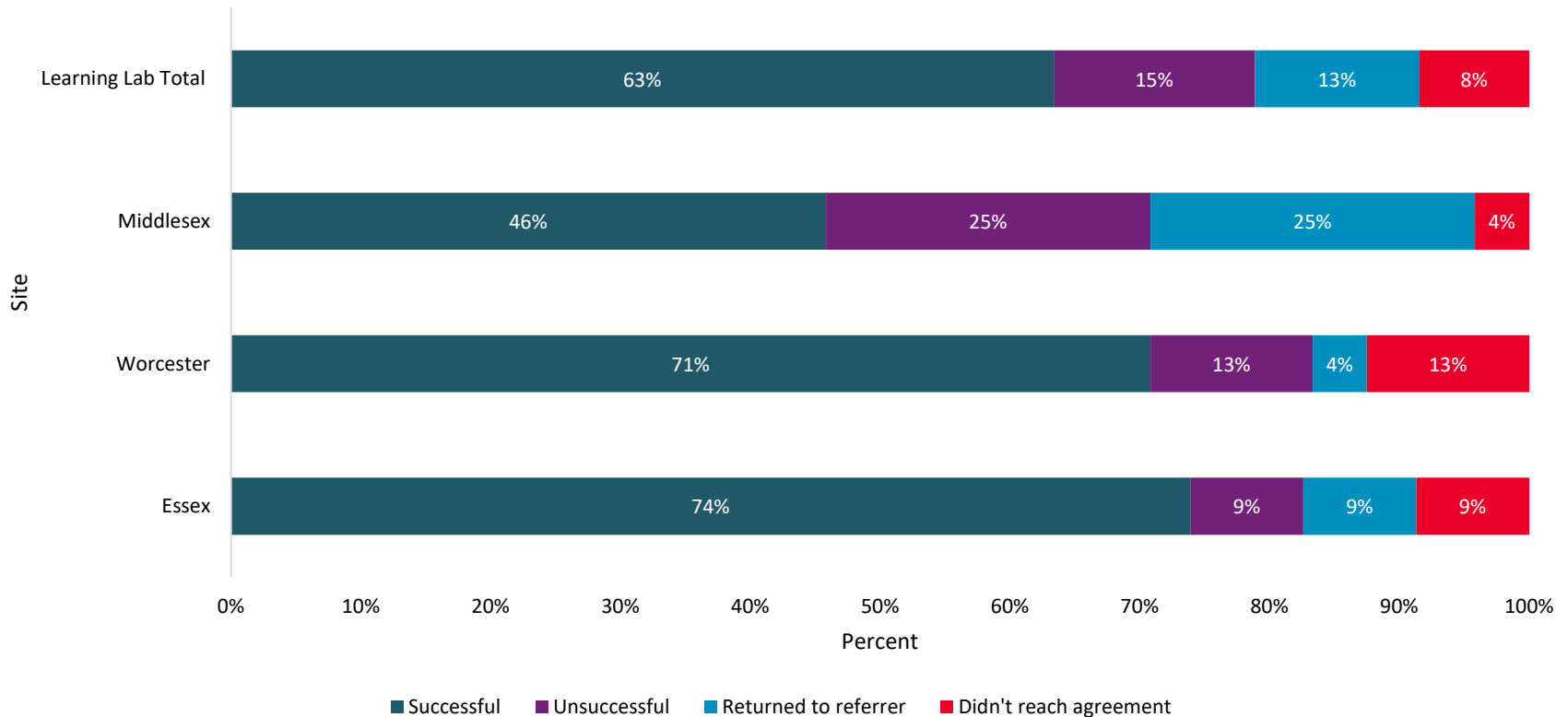
Returned to referrer: Youth wishes to continue with court process after reaching diversion agreement, or referrer withdraws a case from the diversion process

Did not reach a diversion agreement: the referred case was never opened as a diversion case
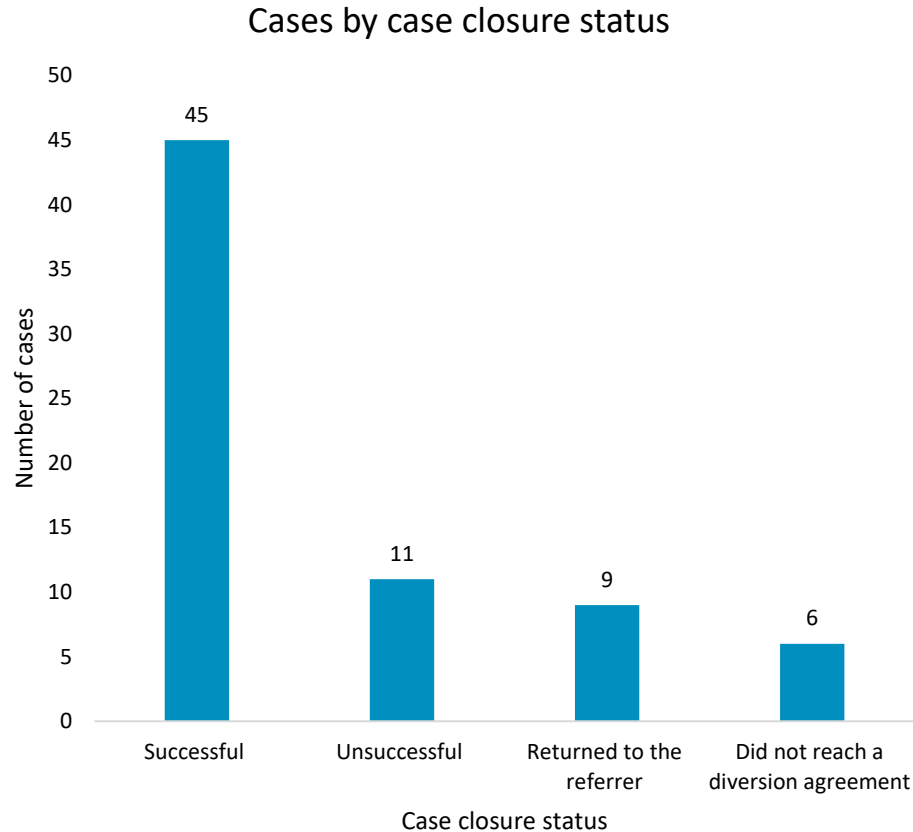
Case closures

Case closures by case closure status

Case length by risk/need

	Referral to Intake (Days)	Intake to Agreement (Days)	Agreement to Case Close (Months)	Total (Months)
All cases				
Low (n=36)	28	16	2.2	3.6
Moderate (n=15)	19	22	3.6	5
High (n=6)	13	33	5.6	7.2
Successful				
Low (n=33)	23	16	2.2	3.5
Moderate (n=9)	14	23	4	5.2
High (n=2)	12	25.5	6	7.3
Unsuccessful				
Low (n=2)	32.5	9	2.9	4.3
Moderate (n=3)	14	14	4.0	5
High (n=2)	9.5	47	5.7	7.5
Returned to referrer				
Low (n=1)	100	49	.9	5.9
Moderate (n=3)	23.3	38.6	2.2	4.3
High (n=2)	6	38	4.8	6.3

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Youth experience

Graduates from the program have reported a positive experience:

- 86% (n=32) of youth agreed that after completing the program, they felt they could stay out of trouble.
- 86% (n=32) noted that the program helped them reflect on any harm they may have caused
- 68% (n=25) reported 8 and above, when asked how valuable the program was (on a scale of 1-10)

"The Diversion program is one that will help you realize your mistakes and learn from them. It helped me admit that I had to change, and it changes a person for the better." - Learning Lab Participant

"The youth diversion program is a program to help you not only not have a record it gives you a chance to be better it opens up your mind and helps you think differently to avoid mistakes in the future." – Learning Lab Participant

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Questions

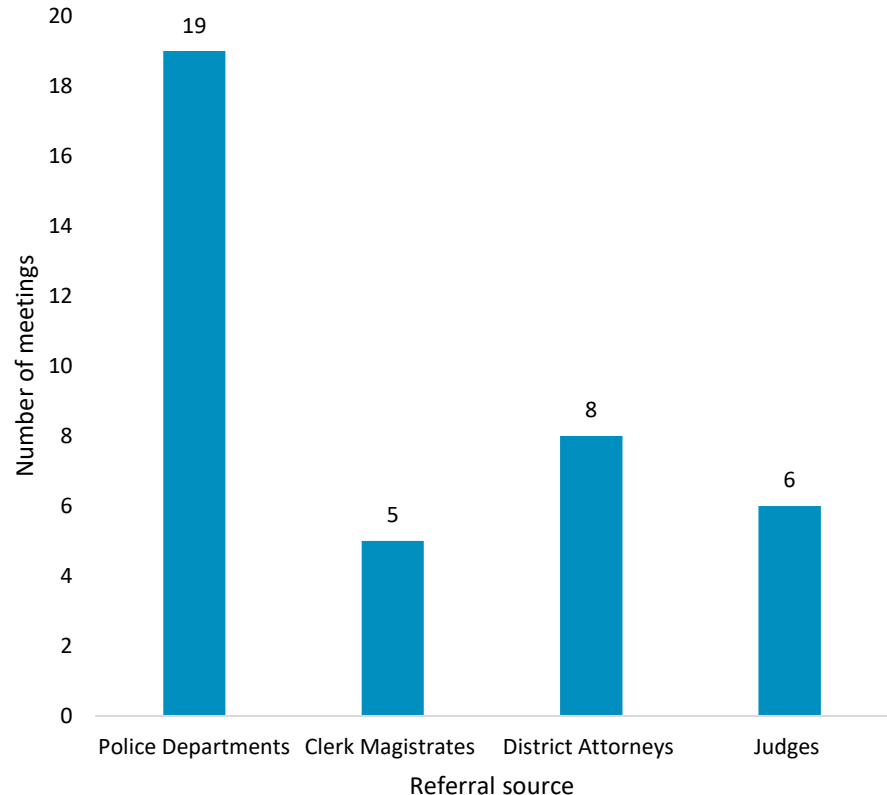- *Did anything surprise you about the first year of data?*

Lessons Learned

Program Strengths

- Strong, committed diversion coordinators
- Successful long-term relationship with referrers
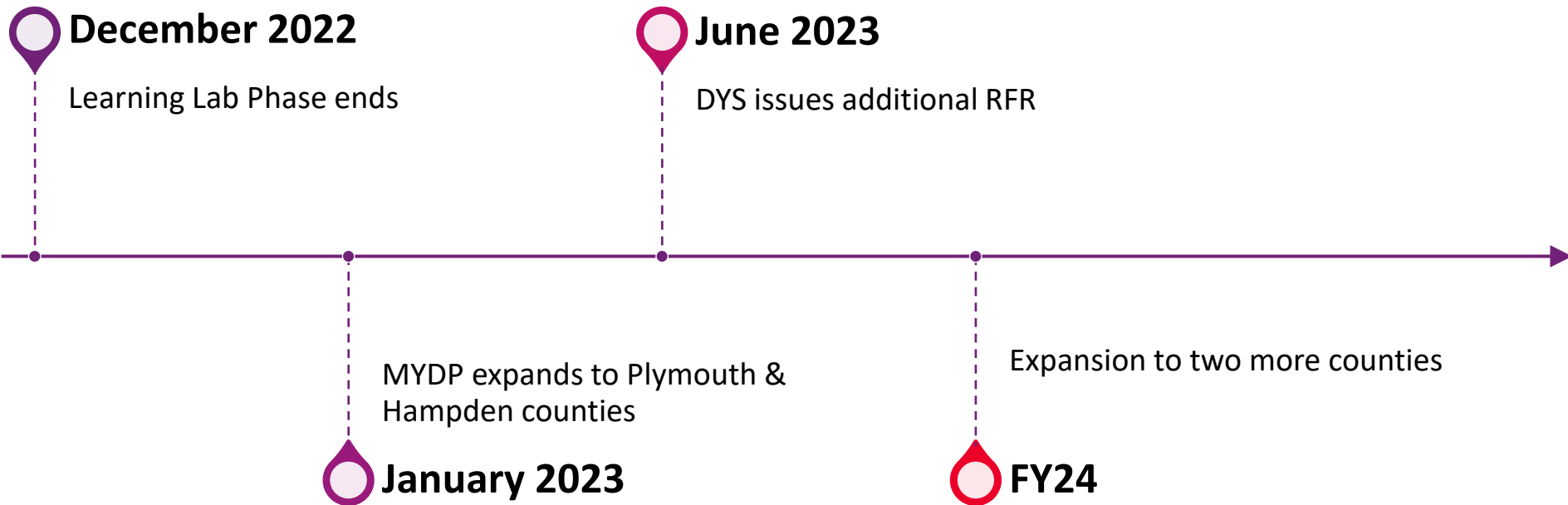
Recruitment meetings by referral source

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Lessons Learned

Challenges

- Establishing buy-in from referrers in each county
- Staff turn over
- Initial connection with youth after referral

Continued Expansion

December 2022

Learning Lab Phase ends

June 2023

DYS issues additional RFR

MYDP expands to Plymouth & Hampden counties

January 2023

Expansion to two more counties

FY24

Current MYDP Case Data*

236 total referrals

- Judges remain most frequent referrer (n=121)
- Persons offenses remain most frequently referred offense (n=126)

182 case starts

- 67% identify as male (n=122)
- 48% identify as Hispanic/Latino (n=88)

135 cases closed

- 99 closed successfully

*Data as of 6/14/2023

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Success stories: Essex

"**Diversion is a program that helps you learn and evaluate your past mistakes. It gives you ways to cope with your emotions that way you don't make the same mistakes you made in the past. I loved my diversion experience; I looked forward to my appointments and knowing that I got to tell my Diversion Coordinator that I was doing good. During my appointments I felt heard.**"

- **Referred by**: Judge
- **YLS risk / need**: Personality / Behavior
- **Interventions made**: Therapy and CBT activities with diversion coordinator to address emotional regulation
- **Achievements**: Youth attended therapy once a week and engaged in CBT activities to enhance emotional regulation. Youth applied and was accepted for a Youth Creative Writing Apprenticeship.

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Success stories: Essex

> **"It's a second chance to make better decisions and clear your record. Now I feel prepared to deal with my emotions."**

- **Referred by**: Judge
- **YLS risk / need**: Personality/Behavior, School
- **Interventions made**: Referral for therapy, CBT activities with diversion coordinator to address emotional regulation and peer relationships
- **Achievements**: Youth identified and practiced strategies for emotional regulation, decision-making and relationship building with his mother. In addition, obtained employment and practiced advocating for his needs in school through healthy dialogue.

Success stories: Worcester

"It is something to keep you out of trouble, but also teaches why you're getting into trouble."

- **Referred by**: Clerk Magistrate
- **YLS risk / need**: Personality/Behavior, School, Family/Parenting
- **Interventions made**: Individual therapy, family therapy, educational supports
- **Achievements**: Connected youth with mental health supports once she turned 18, referred for therapy. Engaged in CBT activities with Diversion Coordinator to work on managing family conflict at home, coping skills, and completed future goal planning activities w/ youth. High School Graduate.

Success stories: Worcester

"to help reflect on past mistakes, and learn on better yourself"

- **Referred by**: Police
- **YLS risk / need**: Peers/ Personality & Behavior
- **Interventions made**: individual therapy, CBT activities with Coordinator reducing impulsivity, making better choices with peers.
- **Achievements**: Engaged in CBT activities with Diversion Coordinator including strategies to avoid peer pressure, how to set boundaries, and manage impulsive thoughts. Parents had been struggling to connect youth with a therapist. DC referred youth for individual counseling to address concerns of depression, anxiety. Youth joined the track team at his school and identified positive healthy relationships.

Success stories: Worcester

""A good way to stop making mistakes."

- **Referred by**: Police
- **YLS risk / need**: Responsivity factor/ behavioral health
- **Interventions made**: individual therapy, letter of apology & community service activity
- **Achievements**: Youth participated in a restorative justice activity as part of his diversion programming. Youth showed responsibility and accountability for his actions by cleaning up the damages at his high school and wrote a letter of apology. Youth screened in on the MAYSI, was not initially open to mental health services. Through conversations with his parent's, they opened up to the idea and DC was able to put in a referral for therapy towards the end of the program to address the MH need.

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Q&A

Next Meeting:

TBD, early Fall

(A doodle will be sent around in August)

Contact

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