JUVENILE FIREARM OFFENDERS IN FLORIDA: PROFILES AND PATHWAYS TO REFERRAL

Research Brief

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November 25, 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project used data provided by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and was supported by Award No. 15PNIJ-24-GG-03092-MUMU, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice. Points of view and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

We would like to acknowledge the following group of dedicated individuals who have contributed to this project by assisting with literature reviews, developing project tables, or contributing to the writing process.

Mia Caccavale

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To better understand the treatment needs and risk factors of youth firearm offenders, this study analyzes statewide and county-level data from 2019 to 2025 on 3,027 Florida youth with characteristics that would have made them eligible for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's upcoming firearm recidivism prevention program. Using administrative records and a validated risk-needs assessment tool, the study identifies the most prevalent criminogenic needs, describes patterns of juvenile justice system involvement, and highlights county-level similarities and differences across eight pilot counties.

Findings show clear consistency in treatment needs across the state. Youth involved in firearm offending exhibit their highest dynamic risk in three core domains: use of free time, relationships, and education. These domains also appear most frequently as top-three needs used to guide case planning. Although problems in domains like attitudes/behavior and family functioning are less common, they still affect meaningful subsets of youth and signal the need for a broad, flexible service array. The sample also reflects extensive prior system involvement, averaging around 5 prior referrals, most of which were felonies. Demographically, the youth were predominantly male, Black, and around age 16. Exposure to violence and adversity was widespread: most youth had witnessed violence, over half had witnessed community violence, and many had experienced multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

County-level analyses revealed variation in demographics, prior referrals, and violence exposure, but the pattern of core treatment needs remained highly consistent. Across the eight pilot counties, relationships, free time, and education were the most prominent dynamic risk domains, with only modest differences in risk levels. While local contexts varied for select characteristics, such as racial and ethnic composition or ACE prevalence, these factors did not materially change the overarching intervention priorities across counties.

Overall, the study demonstrates that juvenile firearm offenders across Florida share a common set of treatment needs. As a result, programming and statewide juvenile justice services can confidently prioritize interventions focused on relationships, free time, and educational needs. At the same time, maintaining a diverse service array is essential to support individualized case planning. These findings provide a strong foundation for the implementation and evaluation of the planned intervention program across the eight pilot counties and inform broader statewide strategies to reduce youth firearm offending.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Firearms are the leading cause of death among children and teens in the U.S. (Gramlich, 2023). In 2022, nearly one-third of deaths among youth ages 15-17 involved firearms (Villarreal et al., 2024). Thousands more youth experience nonfatal firearm injuries, live in areas impacted by exposure to community gun violence, and become involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems due to firearm-related offending (Bancalari et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2022; Song et al., 2023). Gaining an understanding of risk factors for, and pathways to, youth firearm involvement is thus a pressing public health concern.

Broad efforts to reduce youth violence involvement have centered on the modification of changeable risk factors for this behavior. To this end, juvenile justice intervention efforts

increasingly use the risk-needs-responsivity approach (Brogan et al., 2015; Sullivan & Childs, 2021). This approach, which was originally developed for adult offenders, involves the identification, prioritization, and treatment of the individual's most pressing dynamic targets for intervention (Andrews & Bonta, 2017). The approach has been used in areas of juvenile justice with which firearm offenders are likely to come into contact, such as juvenile probation (Miller & Maloney, 2020). However, there have been few systematic studies of the most prevalent dynamic treatment needs, specifically of juvenile firearm offenders.

The present study addresses this knowledge gap by identifying the most prevalent risk factors and treatment needs among a sample of youth who were under juvenile justice community-based supervision for firearm offenses over a five-year period with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The examined factors include not only the risk and protective factor domains routinely examined by the supervising agency under study, but also adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and additional predictors drawn from the literature on risk factors for firearm offending. The study also describes the youth's juvenile justice referral and service histories. Together, the findings yield a description of factors and pathways that may warrant additional attention when developing and implementing prevention and intervention efforts for youth firearm offending.

These findings are intended to inform social service provision and case management planning for a firearm violence prevention that is planned to be implemented by DJJ and evaluated by the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida State University. The Decisive Interventions to Strengthen Alternatives to Reoffending for Minors (DISARM) program will be piloted in the following eight counties across the state of Florida: Alachua, Broward, Duval, Hillsborough, Marion, Palm Beach, Pinellas, and Polk. Therefore, this study describes statewide and county-specific factors for the sample youth.

DATA AND ANALYSES

Sample

Several DJJ administrative data sources were appended to assess risk factors and treatment needs of the population. DJJ's Juvenile Justice Information System serves as a repository for information on a host of youth information, including demographics, referral history, placement history, and social risk factors derived from risk-needs assessment instruments. This centralized information system contains unique youth identifiers that facilitate matching these data across the agency's various data collection mechanisms. DJJ implemented the Community Assessment Tool (CAT) in June 2019 to serve as its risk-needs assessment instrument for youth receiving community-based services (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2024). The full version of this instrument, which comprises 79 static and dynamic factors organized into 12 domains, was used to describe the risk factors and treatment needs of juveniles with firearm offenses.

The study sample comprised individuals who met select criteria. First, it was restricted to youth who had at least one new law referral between June 1, 2019, and June 30, 2025, who would have been eligible for DJJ's DISARM program had it been implemented at the time of their referral. Consistent with program policies, eligibility was defined by supervision status and offense history. Youth placed on probation were considered eligible if they had a prior adjudicated firearm charge and scored in the moderate-high or high range on the risk assessment.

Youth placed on post-commitment supervision were considered eligible if they had a history of an adjudicated firearm charge, regardless of risk score. For youth with multiple eligible placements during the study period, their first eligible placement was retained for analysis. The Full CAT assessment administered closest to the start date of this index placement was used in the analysis.[1] Application of these criteria resulted in a total sample of 3,027 DISARM-eligible placements across the state. Analyses focused on the eight pilot counties had sample sizes ranging from 85 to 319 in Marion and Duval counties, respectively.

Measures

At the center of this study, it was critical to operationalize youth treatment needs in a manner consistent with DJJ's method for identifying top criminogenic needs and guiding case management decisions. Therefore, two measures were utilized to represent these treatment needs for the population: criminogenic domain dynamic risk scores and domain representation as a top-three criminogenic need. As previously discussed, the CAT assessment is oriented around 12 domains. Ten of these domains reflect distinct criminogenic needs, largely consistent with Andrews & Bonta's (2017) concept of the Big Eight social risk factors that drive offending. Each domain consists of multiple items that are scored to indicate the extent of both static and dynamic risk within the domain. Consistent with the Risk-Needs-Response (RNR) model (Brogan et al., 2015), dynamic risk scores are utilized to identify the degree of need within each domain, as these are items responsive to effective treatment. These criminogenic domain dynamic risk scores are calculated by dividing the total of dynamic risk scores observed in a domain by that domain's maximum possible risk score.

Next, RNR model best practices and DJJ policy require that treatment and case management decisions attempt to address the most pressing or most pronounced criminogenic needs, as determined by the CAT or other risk-needs assessment instruments (Brogan et al., 2015; Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2024). In both community-based and residential commitment placements, DJJ requires or recommends that youth receive referrals to services that address at least one of the youth's top-three criminogenic needs. The top-three criminogenic needs are determined by first calculating domain-specific dynamic risk scores and then rank-ordering the domains. A series of measures reflects the proportion of youth who were classified as having a top-three need in each domain. Notably, the mental health domain did not contain any dynamic risk factors, and, consequently, it was not possible to determine the criminogenic domain dynamic risk scores or representation of this domain as a top-three criminogenic need.

In addition to these two characteristics reflecting treatment needs, several measures were examined in the study to describe additional factors among youth who engage in firearm offending. Three youth demographic characteristics were considered. This includes the age of youth at the time of their first program-eligible placement during the study period, a dichotomous measure of youth sex, and a four-category measure of juvenile race and ethnicity, which consists of white, black, Hispanic, or other.

Youth referral history indicated the extent of prior involvement in the Florida juvenile justice system at the time of their first DISARM-eligible placement. Six continuous measures indicate counts of various types of referrals that resulted in dispositions of adjudication or

[1] Among the final study sample, 49 youth (1.62%) did not have a full CAT assessment. These were retained in the analyses; however, they were omitted when describing the characteristics of youth derived from CAT items.

adjudication withheld. These include total, firearm, felony, violent, nonviolent, and misdemeanor referrals and include the presenting offense for the current DISARM-eligible placement.

Finally, a series of youth factors identified by prior research as salient for firearm offending was drawn from the CAT assessment (Oliphant et al., 2019; Schmidt et al., 2019; Sweeten & Fine, 2021). This includes experiences with any or weapon victimizations, witnessing any or community violence, gang associations, the number of unique Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) exposures (an additive index of ten ACEs), and current use of alcohol and drugs.

Analytical Strategy

The descriptive analysis proceeds in two stages. First, statewide characteristics for the study sample are presented. Second, descriptive statistics for youth in each county-specific subsample across the eight pilot counties in the DISARM program are discussed, with a key emphasis on deviations from statewide trends.

RESULTS

Statewide Treatment Needs and Youth Characteristics

Juvenile firearm offenders throughout Florida show varying levels of risk across treatment domains at the time of their first eligible placement. Table 1 presents the average proportion of dynamic risk for each domain at the time of their first eligible placement. Across the state of Florida, the highest average risk levels appear in use of free time (44%), relationships (33%), and education (32%). Other criminogenic domains appear to be comparatively less pronounced, such as Family (11%) and Attitudes/Behavior (12%) needs, which represent the two lowest proportions of dynamic risk in the statewide sample.

Table 1. Statewide and County-Specific Average Proportion of Dynamic Risk by CAT Domain for Juvenile Firearm Offenders

CAT Domains	Statewide N=3,027	Alachua N=95	Broward N=251	Duval N=319	Hillsborough N=215	Marion N=85	Palm Beach N=144	Pinellas N=153	Polk N=191
School	32.40%	23.78%	29.72%	31.61%	40.42%	33.61%	27.68%	36.83%	28.80%
Use of Free Time	44.26%	25.53%	46.49%	45.27%	43.27%	40.59%	39.24%	60.78%	33.25%
Vocation	13.34%	8.16%	11.43%	9.46%	12.33%	15.29%	14.31%	17.21%	12.04%
Relationships	33.34%	21.88%	27.45%	31.86%	34.68%	33.95%	31.15%	42.48%	24.16%
Family	11.34%	5.94%	8.06%	9.40%	12.60%	12.89%	11.98%	13.53%	8.68%
Alcohol and Drugs	12.60%	6.74%	8.68%	8.36%	18.67%	11.57%	13.19%	18.85%	12.13%
Attitudes/Behaviors	12.23%	6.23%	7.59%	9.24%	13.87%	15.80%	12.35%	20.31%	7.59%
Aggression	12.68%	10.31%	10.15%	14.04%	12.65%	12.06%	13.45%	14.95%	9.13%
Skills	20.15%	14.73%	11.98%	14.29%	21.97%	29.86%	20.30%	29.01%	14.38%

Assessing how frequently these various domains represent a top-three need among the sample offers an alternative view of treatment needs that is consistent with DJJ case management policies. To this end, Table 2 provides the percentage of youth for whom each domain is identified as a top-three need among the statewide and county-specific samples. Relationships represent the most critical need, identified as a top-three priority for approximately 67% of youth, followed by use of free time (58%), and education needs (52%). Meanwhile, criminogenic needs associated with Attitudes/Behavior are comparatively rare, and represent a top-three need for only 9% of youth.

Table 2. Statewide and County-Specific Average Representation of CAT Domains as a Top-Three Need for Juvenile Firearm Offenders

CAT Domains	Statewide N=3,027	Alachua N=95	Broward N=251	Duval N=319	Hillsborough N=215	Marion N=85	Palm Beach N=144	Pinellas N=153	Polk N=191
School	**52.13%**	**50.53%**	**53.39%**	**56.74%**	**62.33%**	**49.41%**	**45.52%**	**49.67%**	**54.45%**
Use of Free Time	**58.01%**	**36.84%**	**61.75%**	**60.19%**	**56.28%**	**54.12%**	**54.48%**	**73.86%**	**45.03%**
Vocation	17.77%	16.84%	17.53%	14.11%	13.95%	20.00%	20.69%	18.30%	18.85%
Relationships	**66.70%**	**64.21%**	**66.53%**	**71.47%**	**61.40%**	**64.71%**	**64.83%**	**74.51%**	**62.83%**
Family	14.40%	10.53%	10.76%	12.54%	11.16%	12.94%	16.55%	8.50%	20.42%
Alcohol and Drugs	17.81%	11.58%	18.33%	13.17%	28.37%	8.23%	21.38%	18.95%	20.94%
Attitudes/Behaviors	8.66%	6.32%	6.77%	9.72%	8.37%	12.94%	9.66%	11.76%	3.66%
Aggression	18.90%	30.53%	18.33%	25.39%	16.28%	16.47%	20.00%	9.80%	21.47%
Skills	27.22%	30.53%	18.33%	21.00%	26.05%	43.53%	24.83%	34.64%	22.51%

Additional descriptions of demographic and background characteristics of juvenile firearm offenders throughout Florida are shown in Table 3. At first eligible placement, juveniles averaged 16 years old and are predominantly male (96%) and Black (68%). Regarding prior offending, juveniles have an average of around 5 referrals to the juvenile justice system, with most being prior felony referrals. This is indicative of the extensive system contact experienced by firearm offenders. In terms of violence exposure, direct experiences with prior victimization are rare, with only 9% reporting such an experience; However, the majority of sample youth have witnessed some form of violence (64%) and community violence (55%). The prevalence of gang involvement among this population was approximately 5%. The ACE distribution reveals that exposure to adverse experiences is commonplace, as only a quarter of juveniles had zero ACE exposures. Meanwhile, 11% experienced three ACEs, and an additional 13% have a high level of exposure with at least 4 reported ACEs. Finally, reported substance use among juvenile firearm offenders is relatively low, with around 14% reporting drug use and less than 2% reporting alcohol use at the time of first eligible placement.

Table 3. Statewide Firearm Youth Demographics, Referral History, and Firearm-Offending Risk Factors, *N*=3,027

Variable	Mean/%	SD/N	Min, Max
Demographics			
Age at first eligible placement	16.48	1.39	[11, 20]
Sex			
Male	96.33%	2,916	
Female	3.67%	111	
Race/Ethnicity			
White	17.21%	521	
Hispanic	14.44%	437	
Black	67.99%	2,058	
Other	0.36%	11	
Referral Histories			
Prior Referrals (All)	4.67	3.16	[1, 26]
Prior Gun Referrals	1.24	0.53	[1, 5]
Prior Felony Referrals	3.09	2.29	[0, 22]
Prior Violent Felony Referrals	0.92	0.97	[0, 8]
Prior Nonviolent Felony Referrals	1.97	2.03	[0, 20]
Prior Misdemeanor Referrals	1.07	1.33	[0, 13]
CAT Risk Factors			
Any Prior Victimization	8.89%	269	
Prior Weapon Victimization	2.02%	61	
Witnessed Any Violence	63.79%	1,931	
Witnessed Community Violence	55.63%	1,684	
Gang Involvement	4.63%	140	
Number of ACE Exposures			
Zero	23.09%	699	
One	31.38%	950	
Two	21.01%	636	
Three	10.37%	314	
Four or more	12.52%	379	
Current Alcohol Use	1.39%	42	
Current Drug Use	13.91%	421	

County-Specific Findings

The analyses then turned to youth characteristics across the eight pilot counties. As shown in Table 1, the average dynamic risk scores by domain were generally consistent with the statewide patterns, particularly in the ordering of risk levels. In every county, Use of Free Time represented the highest average need, with scores ranging from 61% percent in Pinellas to 26% in Alachua. Relationships and School ranked as the next-highest dynamic-risk domains, though the order of these two domains varied somewhat across counties. While the internal ordering of risk within each county remained relatively stable, there were notable differences in the magnitude of these risks. Youth in Alachua, Broward, and Polk counties were consistently rated as having lower levels of risk compared to both the statewide average and their counterparts in other pilot counties. In contrast, youth in counties such as Hillsborough and Pinellas were rated as having substantially higher risk levels across all domains.

When examining the frequency with which domains appeared among youths' top-three needs, the results—displayed in Table 2—demonstrated considerable consistency across the counties. Relationships, Use of Free Time, and School emerged as the most frequently identified high-acuity needs in all locations. The Relationships domain was the most common top-three need across all counties, while School and Use of Free Time varied in their relative rankings but consistently ranked second or third as the most prevalent needs informing treatment planning.

Table 4 reports demographic, referral, and selected risk factors for youth by county. These findings largely mirror those of the statewide sample: the average age ranged from 16.11 to 17.20, and males comprised the majority of the population. However, more pronounced racial and ethnic differences were evident across counties, likely reflecting the underlying population compositions of the eight communities. Although Black youth represented the majority in every county, there were sizable proportions of White youth in Marion and Polk counties. Additionally, nearly one-fifth of the Polk County youth identified as Hispanic.

Youth in all counties demonstrated extensive prior system involvement before their first eligible placement. The average number of total prior referrals ranged from 3.41 in Duval to 7.37 in Pinellas, and in every county, most of these referrals involved felony offenses. Finally, the analysis incorporated several selected risk factors from the CAT assessment. Prior direct victimization was relatively rare compared to witnessing violence, which varied widely: 88% of youth in Marion reported witnessing violence, while only 35% of youth in Polk did so. Gang involvement was uncommon overall but was more pronounced in Marion and Pinellas, where 7% and 5% of youth, respectively, reported gang affiliation. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) were common across all counties, with especially high exposure in Marion County, where more than one-fourth of youth had four or more ACEs. Across counties, current drug use was more prevalent than alcohol use, with youth in Hillsborough and Pinellas reporting the highest rates—over 20%—of active substance use. Appendix A and the accompanying tables provide additional details about the county-specific results.

Table 4. Firearm Youth Demographics, Referral History, and Firearm-Offending Risk Factors By County

Variable	Alachua (*N*=95) Mean/%	Broward (*N*=251) Mean/%	Duval (*N*=319) Mean/%	Hillsborough (*N*=215) Mean/%	Marion (*N*=85) Mean/%	Palm Beach (*N=145*) Mean/%	Pinellas (*N= 153*) Mean/%	Polk (*N=191*) Mean/%
Demographics								
Age at start of placement	16.38	17.20	16.58	16.59	16.22	16.31	16.11	16.51
Sex								
Male	93.68%	95.62%	95.61%	96.70%	97.65%	97.93%	97.39%	91.62%
Female	6.32%	4.38%	4.39%	3.30%	2.35%	2.07%	2.61%	8.38%
Race/Ethnicity								
White	3.16%	3.19%	13.48%	10.20%	31.76%	8.28%	13.73%	25.65%
Hispanic	0%	15.54%	3.75%	14.40%	8.24%	13.79%	3.27%	19.90%
Black	96.84%	80.48%	82.45%	75.40%	60.00%	77.93%	81.05%	53.93%
Other	0%	0.80%	0.31%	0%	0%	0%	1.96%	.52
Referral Histories								
Prior Referrals (All)	4.03	5.87	3.41	6.14	3.49	5.66	7.37	3.81
Prior Gun Referrals	1.17	1.19	1.21	1.42	1.26	1.26	1.31	1.17
Prior Felony Referrals	2.79	4.38	2.49	3.48	2.21	3.61	4.99	2.27
Prior Violent Felony Referrals	0.78	1.37	.88	0.73	0.71	1.08	0.92	0.54
Prior Nonviolent Felony Referrals	1.82	2.90	1.49	2.50	1.42	2.32	3.88	1.31
Prior Misdemeanor Referrals	0.85	1.03	0.70	1.34	1.08	1.34	1.27	1.10
CAT Risk Factors								
Any Prior Victimization	6.32%	7.97%	10.66%	8.37%	14.12%	4.14%	7.19%	5.76%
Prior Weapon Victimization	3.16%	3.19%	4.70%	1.86%	2.35%	0.69%	1.31%	0.52%
Witnessed Any Violence	60.00%	49.00%	70.85%	65.12%	88.24%	73.10%	69.93%	35.08%
Witnessed Community Violence	51.58%	41.83%	63.32%	58.14%	75.29%	67.59%	59.48%	24.08%
Gang Involvement	1.05%	1.20%	3.45%	4.65%	7.06%	2.76%	5.23%	2.62%
Number of ACE Exposures								
Zero	37.89%	36.65%	24.14%	20.93%	15.29%	21.38%	24.18%	29.84%
One	35.79%	28.29%	36.68%	29.77%	28.24%	33.10%	25.49%	38.22%
Two	14.74%	18.33%	16.93%	25.58%	18.82%	26.21%	24.84%	15.71%

Three	6.32%	8.76%	12.23%	10.70%	11.76%	9.66%	13.07%	5.76%
Four or more	4.21%	4.38%	9.40%	9.77%	25.88%	8.97%	12.42%	10.47%
Current Alcohol Use	0%	1.59%	1.25%	1.40%	3.53%	2.07%	2.61%	0.52%
Current Drug Use	4.21%	10.36%	10.97%	26.05%	18.82%	15.86%	21.57%	10.47%

CONCLUSIONS

This study revealed that juvenile firearm offenders across Florida consistently exhibit a core set of treatment needs centered on relationships, use of free time, and education. These domains emerged as the most prevalent areas of concern statewide and across all pilot counties. Ensuring sufficient availability and access to services that directly target these needs is therefore critical. Because these domains align closely with evidence-based practices shown to reduce recidivism (Baglivio et al., 2018; Lipsey et al., 2010), prioritizing these programs should be a key focus for stakeholders in all pilot counties. Strengthening statewide and county-level capacity to deliver high-quality, research-supported services in these core areas would provide the greatest immediate impact for the largest share of youth.

Although relationships, free time, and education represent the most common treatment needs, the analysis also revealed meaningful variation among youth across other criminogenic domains. Needs related to family functioning, attitudes and behavior, and other dynamic risk factors appeared in sufficient numbers to justify maintaining a diverse menu of services that can be matched to the unique profiles of individual youth. This variation highlights the importance of preserving flexibility in case management practices and avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches. While the short-term priority should involve strengthening services associated with the highest-frequency needs, long-term planning will require broader service development to ensure individualized treatment plans can be effectively implemented for all youth, not only those whose needs fall into the most common categories.

Despite differences in county demographics, referral histories, and selected CAT risk factors, cross-county comparisons revealed a remarkable degree of consistency in the core treatment needs of juvenile firearm offenders. The similarity of top needs across diverse communities suggests that statewide policy approaches and resource allocation strategies can be aligned around a shared set of priorities without disadvantaging specific counties. The observed between-county differences—such as county variation in racial and ethnic makeup, prior system contact, or exposure to violence among firearm offenders—were relatively minor in relation to the overarching patterns of treatment need. As a result, while local context should continue to inform service delivery, the consistency across counties reinforces the importance of services that address relationships, the use of free time, and educational risks as foundational components of effective programming for this population.

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APPENDIX A

Alachua

Table 1 presents the average proportion of risk that juvenile firearm offenders in Alachua County present with at the time of their first eligible placement. The highest average risk levels appear in use of free time (26%), school (24%), and relationships (22%). Table 2 provides the percentage of youth for whom each domain is identified as a top-three need. Relationships

represent the most common critical need, identified as a top-three priority for around 64% of youth, followed by school (51%), and use of free time (37%).

Additional descriptions of demographic and background characteristics of juvenile firearm offenders in Alachua County are shown in Table A1. At first eligible placement, juveniles averaged 16 years old and are predominantly male (94%) and Black (97%). Regarding prior offending, juveniles have an average of around 4 referrals to the juvenile justice system, with most being prior felony referrals. In terms of violence exposure, Table 2 shows that relatively few juveniles experienced direct victimization (6%), but most have witnessed some form of violence (60%). Gang involvement among this population is relatively low (1%). The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) distribution reveals that fewer than 40% of juveniles had zero ACE exposures, with the majority reporting at least one form. Finally, reported substance use among juvenile firearm offenders is relatively low, with around 4% reporting drug use and 0% reporting alcohol use at the time of first eligible placement.

Broward

Table 1 presents the average proportion of risk that juvenile firearm offenders in Broward County present with at the time of their first eligible placement. The highest average risk levels appear in use of free time (46%), school/education (30%), and relationships (27%). Table 2 provides the percentage of youth for whom each domain is identified as a top-three need. Relationships represent the most common critical need, identified as a top-three priority for approximately 67% of youth, followed by use of free time (62%), and school needs (53%).

Additional descriptions of demographic and background characteristics of juvenile firearm offenders in Broward County are shown in Table A2. At first eligible placement, juveniles averaged 17 years old and are predominantly male (96%) and Black (80%). Regarding prior offending, juveniles have an average of around 6 referrals to the juvenile justice system, with most being prior felony referrals. In terms of violence exposure, Table A2 shows that relatively few juveniles experienced direct victimization (8%), but approximately half have witnessed some form of violence (49%). Gang involvement among this population is relatively low (1%). The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) distribution reveals that fewer than 40% of juveniles had zero ACE exposures, with the majority reporting at least one form. Finally, reported substance use among juvenile firearm offenders is relatively low, with around 10% reporting drug use and less than 2% reporting alcohol use at the time of first eligible placement.

Duval

Table 1 presents the average proportion of risk that juvenile firearm offenders in Duval County present with at the time of their first eligible placement. The highest average risk levels appear in use of free time (45%), relationships (32%), and education (32%). Table 2 provides the percentage of youth for whom each domain is identified as a top-three need. Relationships represent the most common critical need, identified as a top-three priority for 71% of youth, followed by use of free time (60%), and school needs (57%).

Additional descriptions of demographic and background characteristics of juvenile firearm offenders in Duval County are shown in Table A3. At first eligible placement, juveniles averaged 17 years old and are predominantly male (96%) and Black (82%). Regarding prior offending, juveniles have an average of around 3 referrals to the juvenile justice system, with

most being prior felony referrals. In terms of violence exposure, Table A3 shows that relatively few juveniles experienced direct victimization (11%), but most have witnessed some form of violence (71%). Gang involvement among this population is also relatively low (3%). The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) distribution reveals that fewer than 25% of juveniles had zero ACE exposures, with the majority reporting at least one form. Finally, reported substance use among juvenile firearm offenders is relatively low, with around 11% reporting drug use and less than 2% reporting alcohol use at the time of first eligible placement.

Hillsborough

Table 1 presents the average proportion of risk that juvenile firearm offenders in Hillsborough County present with at the time of their first eligible placement. The highest average risk levels appear in use of free time (43%), education (40%), and relationships (35%). Table 2 provides the percentage of youth for whom each domain is identified as a top-three need. Education represents the most common critical need, identified as a top-three priority for around 62% of youth, followed by relationships (61%), and use of free time (56%).

Additional descriptions of demographic and background characteristics of juvenile firearm offenders in Hillsborough County are shown in Table A4. At first eligible placement, juveniles averaged 17 years old and are predominantly male (97%) and Black (75%). Regarding prior offending, juveniles have an average of around 6 referrals to the juvenile justice system, with most being prior felony referrals. In terms of violence exposure, Table A4 shows that relatively few juveniles experienced direct victimization (8%), but most have witnessed some form of violence (65%). Gang involvement among this population is observed for around 5% of juveniles. The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) distribution reveals that fewer than 21% of juveniles had zero ACE exposures, with the majority reporting at least one form and over a quarter of youth reporting at least two exposures. Finally, while alcohol use is rare at the time of first placement (1%), current drug use is reported by over 25% of juveniles.

Marion

Table 1 presents the average proportion of risk that juvenile firearm offenders in Marion County present with at the time of their first eligible placement. The highest average risk levels appear in use of free time (40%), relationships (34%), and education (34%). Table 2 provides the percentage of youth for whom each domain is identified as a top-three need. Relationships represent the most common critical need in Marion County, identified as a top-three priority for around 65% of youth, followed by use of free time (54%), and use of education (49%).

Additional descriptions of demographic and background characteristics of juvenile firearm offenders in Marion County are shown in Table A5. At first eligible placement, juveniles averaged 16 years old and are predominantly male (98%) and Black (60%). Regarding prior offending, juveniles have an average of around 3 referrals to the juvenile justice system, with most being prior felony referrals. In terms of violence exposure, Table A5 shows that relatively few juveniles experienced direct victimization (14%), but most have witnessed some form of violence (88%), especially in the community (75%). Gang involvement among this population is observed for around 7% of juveniles. The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) distribution reveals that fewer than 15% of juveniles had zero ACE exposures, with the majority reporting at least one form, and over a quarter reporting four or more exposures. Finally, alcohol use is rare at the time of first placement (3%), though current drug use is reported by around 19% of juveniles.

Palm Beach

Table 1 presents the average proportion of risk that juvenile firearm offenders in Palm Beach County present with at the time of their first eligible placement. The highest average risk levels appear in use of free time (39%), relationships (31%), and education (28%). Table 2 provides the percentage of youth for whom each domain is identified as a top-three need. Relationships represent the most common critical need in Palm Beach County, identified as a top-three priority for around 65% of youth, followed by use of free time (54%), and education (46%).

Additional descriptions of demographic and background characteristics of juvenile firearm offenders in Palm Beach County are shown in Table A6. At first eligible placement, juveniles averaged 16 years old and are predominantly male (98%) and Black (78%). Regarding prior offending, juveniles have an average of around 6 referrals to the juvenile justice system, with most being prior felony referrals. In terms of violence exposure, Table A6 shows that relatively few juveniles experienced direct victimization (4%) but most have witnessed some form of violence (73%). Gang involvement is observed for only around 2% of juveniles. The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) distribution reveals that fewer than 21% of juveniles had zero ACE exposures, with the majority reporting at least one form. Finally, reported alcohol use among this group is relatively low at the time of first eligible placement (2%), though current drug use is reported by around 16% of juveniles.

Pinellas

Table 1 presents the average proportion of risk that juvenile firearm offenders in Pinellas County present at the time of their first eligible placement. The highest average risk levels appear in use of free time (61%), relationships (42%), and education (37%). Table 2 provides the percentage of youth for whom each domain is identified as a top-three need. Relationships represent the most common critical need in Pinellas County, identified as a top-three priority for around 75% of youth, followed by use of free time (74%), and education (50%).

Additional descriptions of demographic and background characteristics of juvenile firearm offenders in Pinellas County are shown in Table A7. At first eligible placement, juveniles averaged 16 years old and are predominantly male (97%) and Black (81%). Regarding prior offending, juveniles have an average of 7 referrals to the juvenile justice system, with the majority being prior felony referrals. In terms of violence exposure, Table A7 shows that relatively few juveniles experienced direct victimization (7%) but most have witnessed some form of violence (70%). Gang involvement is observed for around 5% of juveniles. The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) distribution reveals that around 24% of juveniles had zero ACE exposures, though the majority report at least one form. Finally, alcohol use is rare at the time of first placement (3%), though current drug use is reported by around 22% of juveniles.

Polk

Table 1 presents the average proportion of risk that juvenile firearm offenders in Polk County present with at the time of their first eligible placement. The highest average risk levels appear in use of free time (33%), education (29%), and relationships (24%). Table 2 provides the percentage of youth for whom each domain is identified as a top-three need. Relationships

represent the most common critical need in Polk County, identified as a top-three priority for around 62% of youth, followed by education (54%), and use of free time (45%).

Additional descriptions of demographic and background characteristics of juvenile firearm offenders in Polk County are shown in Table A8. At first eligible placement, juveniles averaged 16.5 years old and are predominantly male (92%) and Black (54%). Regarding prior offending, juvenile firearm offenders have an average of 4 referrals to the juvenile justice system, with most being prior felony referrals. In terms of violence exposure, Table 2 shows that few juveniles experienced direct victimization (6%), but witnessing violence is more common (35%). Gang involvement is observed for only around 3% of juveniles. The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) distribution reveals that around 30% of juveniles had zero ACE exposures, though most report at least one form. Finally, substance use is rare at the time of first placement, with around 10% of juveniles reporting current drug use and less than 1% reporting alcohol use.