

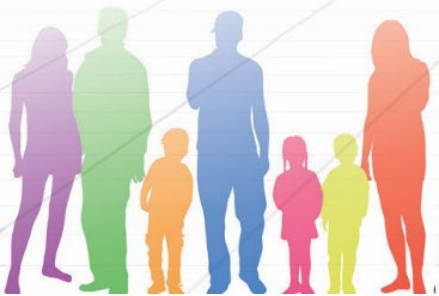
Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood: Outcome Analysis

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Goals for today

1. Evaluation refresher
2. Qualitative findings refresher
3. Quantitative analysis and findings
4. Discussion



Evaluation Team

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Partners

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*Criminal Justice Investment Initiative (CJII) of
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Administration for Children Services (ACS)

CUNY Institute for State and Local Government (ISLG)



Truncated Timeline

- 2019** DANY Funded FYTA
- 2020** Year 1 of Evaluation
Covid-19 Pandemic
- 2021** Year 2 of Evaluation
- 2022** Year 3 of Evaluation
Mid-Evaluation
Report, qualitative
report
- 2023** Year 4 of Evaluation
additional qualitative
report, outcomes
report



Overview of Evaluation Plan

1. Process evaluation

- How does program implementation compare to program plans?
- What challenges do the programs identify, what solutions are developed to address those challenges, and how well do those solutions work?
- Summarized in mid-evaluation report and articles

2. Outcome evaluation

- How do outcomes vary across several domains for youth involved in programming compared to youth with similar characteristics who did not participate in the programs?



Qualitative Overview

- Qualitative data:
 - Interviews: 42 staff interviews over three years at two agencies, 8 youth interviews
 - Quarterly reports filed by programs
 - Updates from programs in meetings with funders
 - Review of older youth literature
 - Two qualitative articles:
 - One concerning providing youth services during Covid
 - The other on youth experiences of receiving services



COVID-19 and Servicing FYTA: Challenges and Opportunities

- This article assessed the challenges, opportunities, and solutions the three programs experienced both prior to and during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This article was published in the Child Welfare League of America's journal *Child Welfare*.*
- 30 total semi-structured interviews with program staff
 - 14 "pre-pandemic" and 16 "in-pandemic"
- **Pre-pandemic strategies:** *building a foundation of trust and developing service engagement strategies that align with program philosophy.*
- **In-pandemic challenges:** *pandemic social isolation, increased housing insecurity, and barriers to education and employment unique to the pandemic.*
- **In-pandemic solutions:** *flexible remote services strategies, teletherapy and virtual education, and direct financial assistance for youth.*

Engaging & Servicing FYTA: Youth Views and Experiences with Transitional Planning

- This qualitative manuscript focuses on youth participants' views and experiences with transitional service planning, engagement strategies, and enduring challenges.
- **Youth views and experiences:** *youth-adult partnerships, empowering youth decision-making, and youth-led groups* were all motivators and drivers for youth engagement and satisfaction.
 - Youth generally credit communication and relationships with staff members as the main facilitator of engagement and satisfaction with the programs.
- **Barriers to Housing and Behavioral Health Services:** *access to stable housing and unmet behavioral health needs* were the two primary challenges youth faced due to systemic limitations and youth reluctance and perceived stigma, respectively.



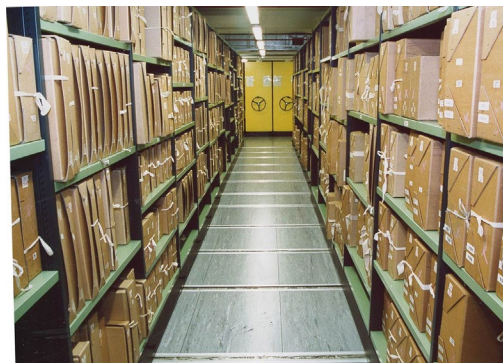
Quantitative methodology overview

- Created a dataset of 7,924 young people born between 1993 and 2007 who experienced a foster care placement in NYC and either aged out or were still in care on July 1, 2020
- Identified children in this cohort who participated in The Door (enrolling between June 1, 2018 and December 31, 2020) and/or Grand SLAM (enrolling between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2020)
- Analyzed each young person's outcomes for one year following their program enrollment, with December 31, 2021 as a final cut off date
- Compared the outcomes of those who participated in The Door and/or Graham SLAM against those who did not, using propensity score matching



Administrative Data Sources and Outcome Domains

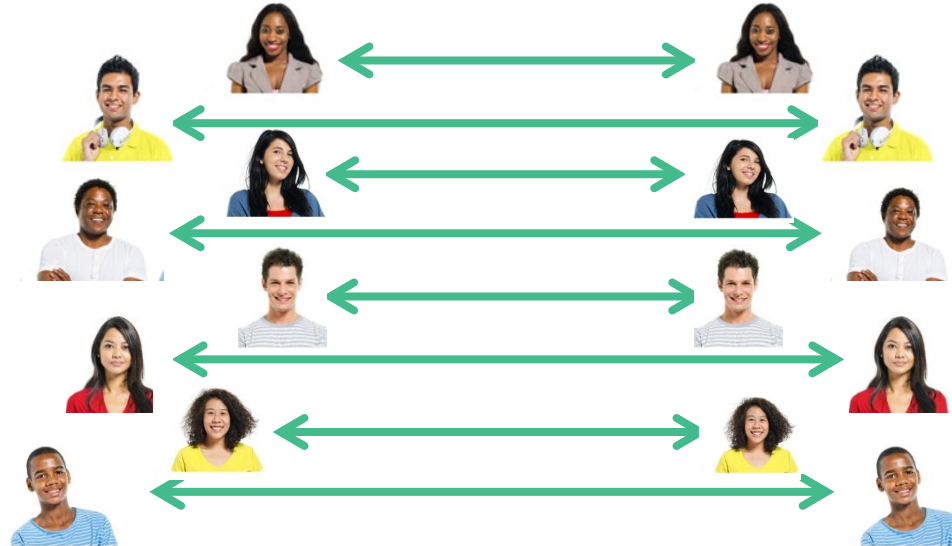
| NYC Administrative Data | Outcome measures |
|--|---|
| Administration for Children's Services (ACS) | Foster care and juvenile detention (ever, spells, total days) |
| Human Resources Administration (HRA) | Cash assistance (y/n) |
| Department of Homeless Services (DHS) | Shelter use (ever, spells, total days) |
| Department of Corrections (DOC) | Jail stays (ever, spells, total days) |
| NY State Department of Labor (DOL) | Employment data (ever, wages) |



Propensity Score Matching

The Door and Graham SLAM Cohorts (treated)

1. Current or former foster youth ages 16 and over
2. ACS between 2016 and 2021
3. Program eligible and served



Control (untreated)

1. Current or former foster youth ages 16 or older
2. ACS between 2016 and 2021
3. Program eligible but not served

This statistical technique allows us to compare youth outcomes among similar youth to examine program impact after accounting for differences in the enrollees each program serves

Rubin & Rosenbaum, 1983

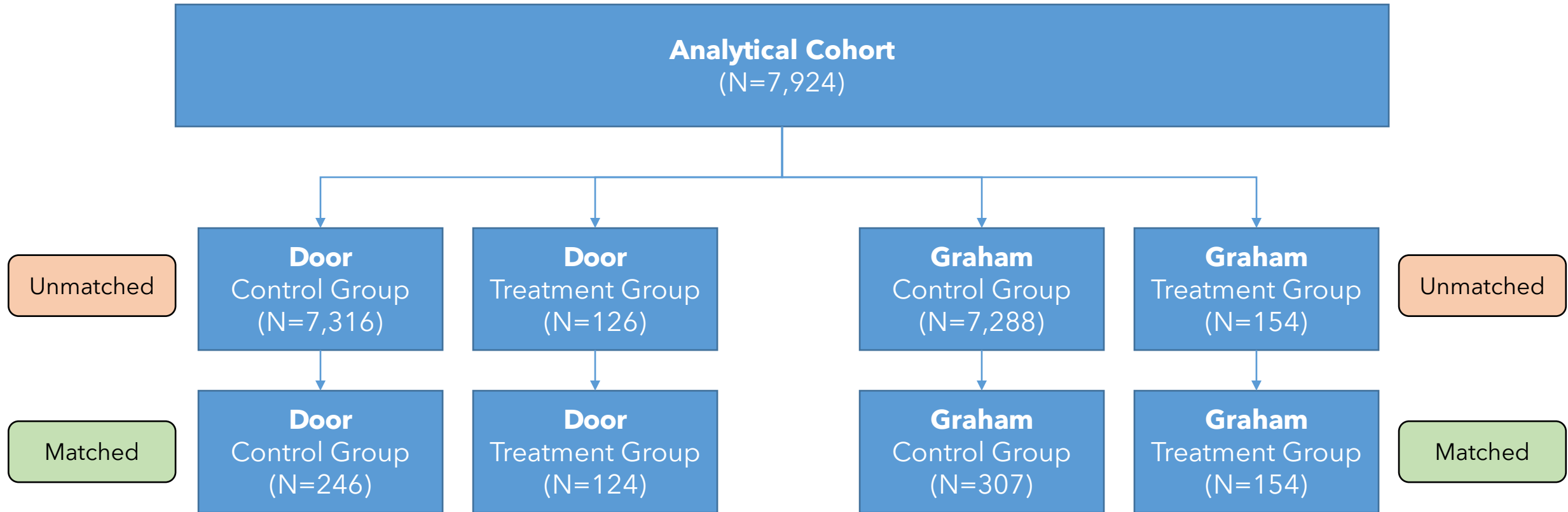
FYTA Matching Criteria

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Demographic Characteristics | Black/not Black | Recorded Sex | Age at program enrollment | Length of time enrolled in program | |
| Foster Care Experiences | Substantiated allegations (#) | Spells in care | Years in foster care | Highest ACS level of difficulty | |
| Pre-program Enrollment Experiences | Detention spells | Cash assistance | Jail spells | Wages | Shelter spells |

The list of criteria was used to estimate the propensity of a youth entering either The Door or Graham programming and aimed to create comparability between the two groups of youth analyzed.



Treatment and Control Groups



Smaller treatment groups than expected

- The Door treatment group included 124 youth, Graham 154 youth
- CIDI matched over 90 percent of youth in Graham SLAM with ACS data
- CIDI matched only two-thirds of youth who received services from The Door
- Number of youth aging out of New York City care declined by almost half from 2018 to 2022 (739 to 500)
- Availability of follow up data: youth who enrolled in either program in the last year not eligible for the study because of time to follow up

PSM produced very similar groups

Figure 1: Kernel density plot of logit of propensity score for treatment and control cases before and after matching for **The Door** program group

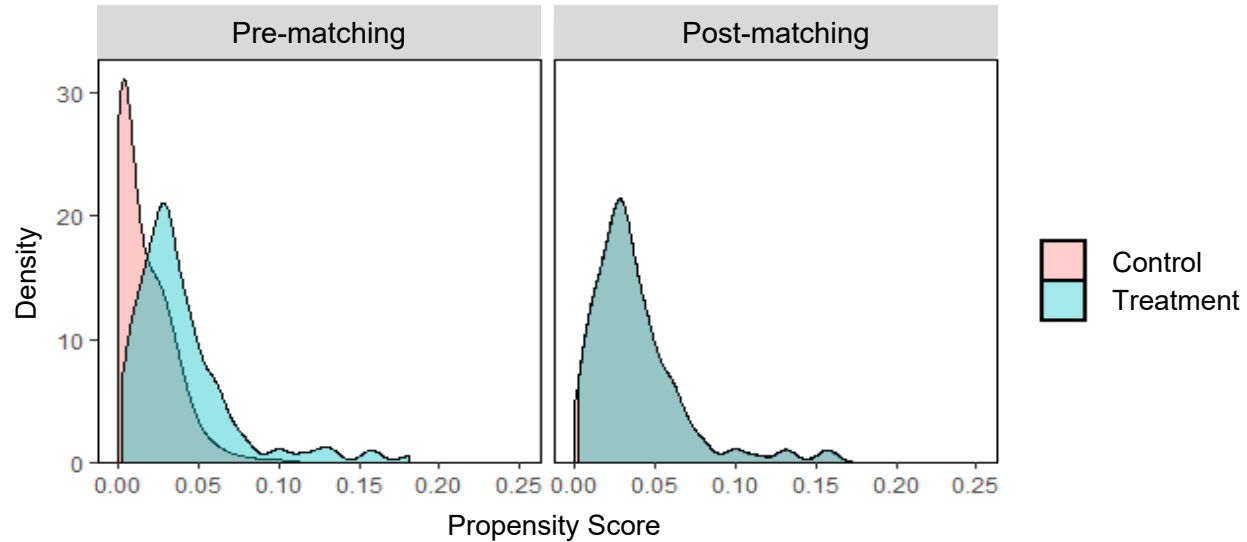
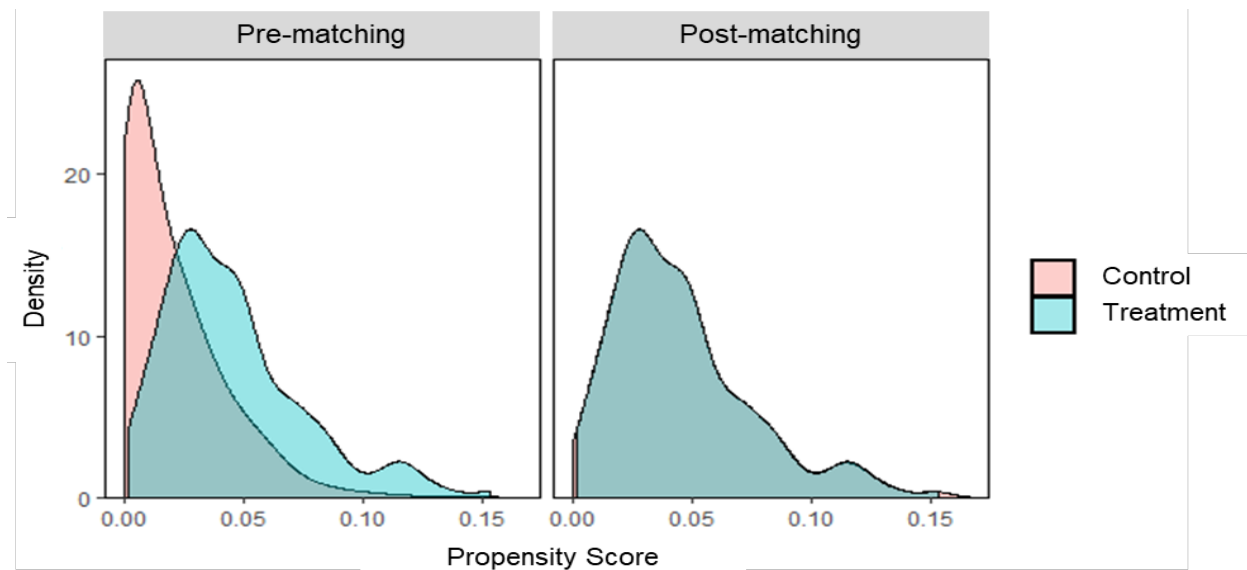


Figure 2: Kernel density plot of logit of propensity score for treatment and control cases before and after matching **Graham** program group



- Prior to matching, the pool for the control group had a much lower propensity to enter the program than the treatment group
- After matching, the propensity score distribution of the two groups is roughly the same
- Prior to matching, for example, The Door treatment youth had double the rate of shelter spells compared to all youth eligible for The Door's services. After matching, the groups had similar rates

No significant differences found between groups

The Door Experimental Outcomes
Source: Action Research analysis of NYC administrative data

| 12-months post enrollment outcomes | Control mean | Treatment mean | Statistically significant? |
|------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Cash assistance (y/n) | .29 | .24 | No |
| Shelter entry (y/n) | .07 | .08 | No |
| Juvenile detention (y/n) | .02 | .02 | No |
| Jail entry (y/n) | .01 | .02 | No |
| Unemployed (y/n) | .10 | .11 | No |
| Wages earned (y/n) | .24 | .27 | No |

- There were no statistically significant differences between the treatment and comparison groups at The Door or Graham
- Effect sizes were below the standard for a small effect (Cohen's $D > .2$)
- Table for Graham SLAM outcomes is similar to the table for The Door's outcomes presented here

Why?

Possible the programs did not impact the trajectory that youth would have otherwise had, but a closer look suggests other explanations are more compelling:

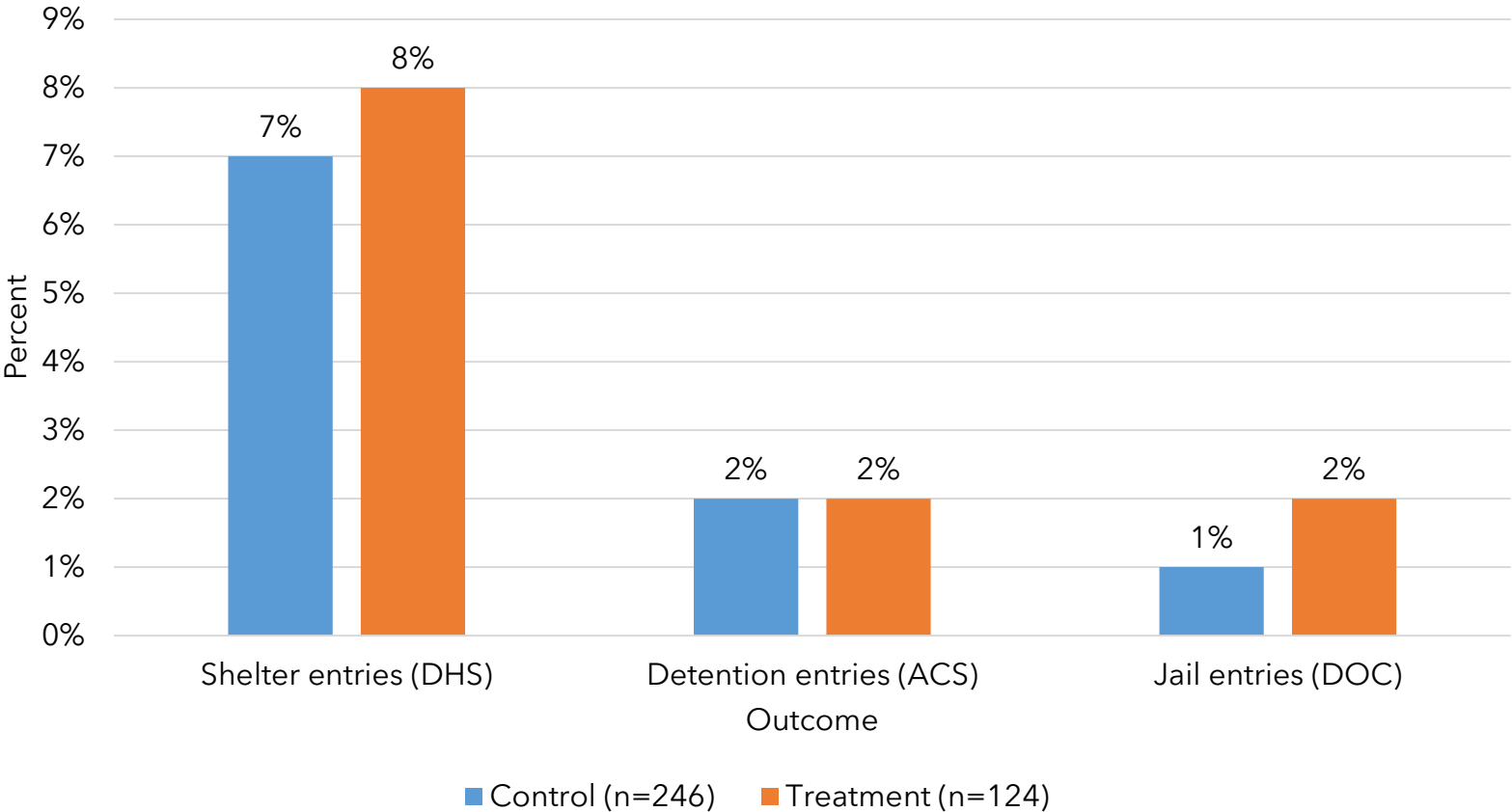
- Distribution of some outcomes made differences between treatment and control groups unlikely.
- Pandemic caused unexpected changes in outcomes
- Services accessible by the control group increased markedly during the study period—making the “test” between the treatment and control groups more challenging



Few members of the comparison or The Door treatment groups entered shelter, went to detention, or to jail

Prevalence of Shelter and Justice Involvement for The Door

Source: Action Research analysis of New York City administrative data

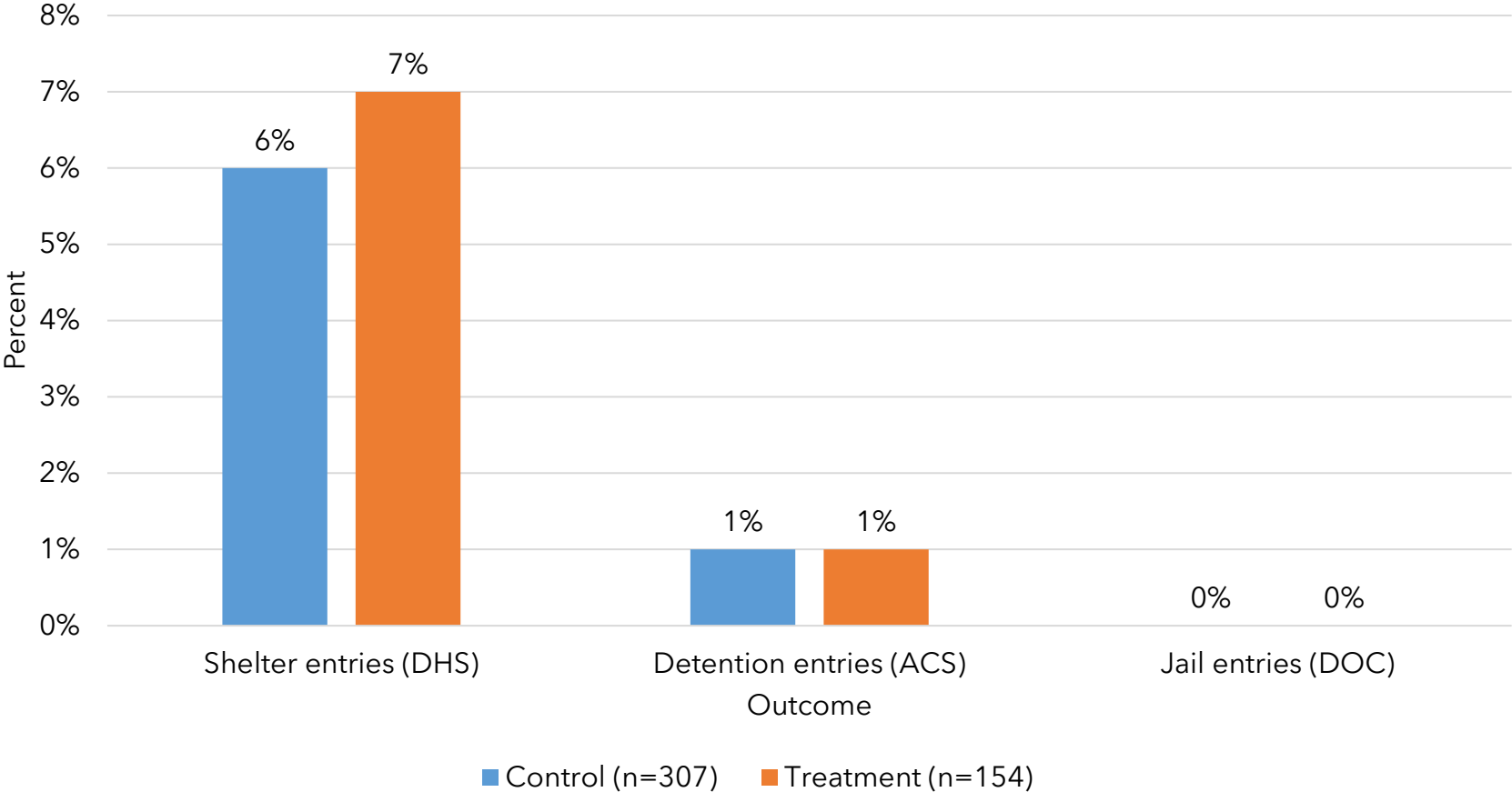


- Only seven percent of the control group entered a DHS shelter
- Only two percent of the control group entered New York City juvenile detention
- Only one percent of the control group entered the New York City jail system
- These low rates make demonstrating a statistically significant difference unlikely

Similar results were found for Graham

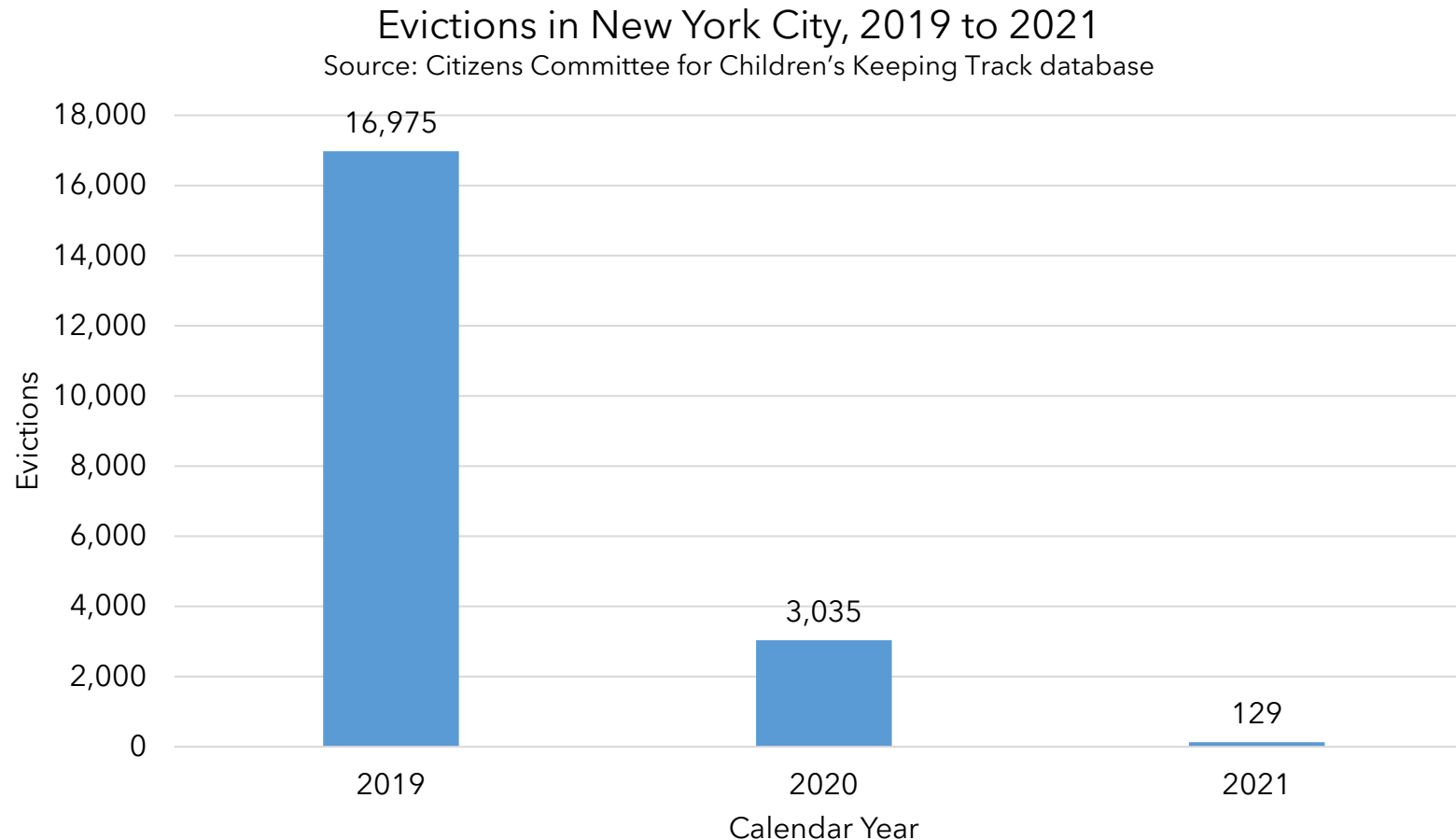
Prevalence of Shelter and Justice Involvement for Graham SLAM

Source: Action Research analysis of New York City administrative data



- Only six percent of the control group entered a DHS shelter
- Only one percent of the control group entered New York City juvenile detention
- No one in the control group entered the New York City jail system
- No program can show a difference when the control group has a “perfect” outcome

Why did so few youth enter shelter or become involved in the justice system?



- Eviction moratorium and housing court closure meant that evictions all but stopped during the pandemic*
- Juvenile arrests dropped by half and juvenile detention entries fell by 40 percent from 2019 to 2020*
- The point-in-time New York City jail population declined by 15 percent from January 1, 2020 to January 1, 2021**

* Source: Citizen's Committee for Children Keeping Track database available at <https://data.cccnewyork.org>

** Source: Vera Institute of Justice, <https://greaterjusticenyc.vera.org/nycjail>

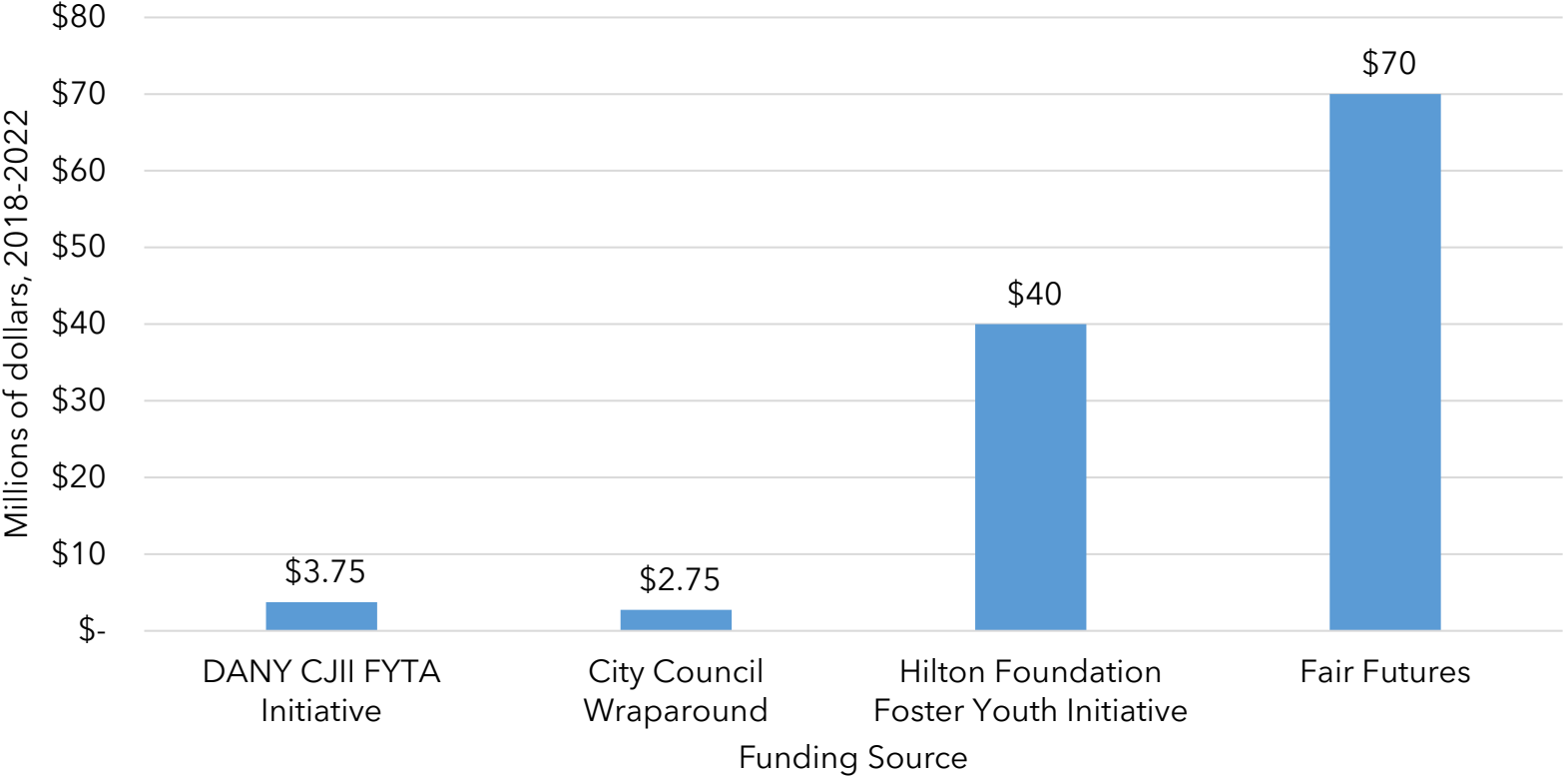
What about employment and benefit outcomes?

- In the first two months of the pandemic, 950,000 New York City jobs disappeared
- There were 300,000 fewer New Yorkers in the labor force as of January 2023 compared to early 2020
- Retail, restaurants and other service sectors where foster youth often start their careers shrank more than other sectors of the economy and the sector's recovery has lagged other sectors
- Receipt of cash assistance: hard to interpret whether receipt is a positive or negative outcome. Nature of cash assistance changed dramatically during the pandemic

Services received by the comparison group

Funding for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood (2018 to 2022)

Sources: See the Interagency Foster Care Task Force Final Report, 2020; Fairfutures.org; Hilton Foster Youth Initiative Annual Report



- The comparison group had access to considerably more resources than expected at the beginning of DANY funding
- Fair Futures received \$70mm from New York City government from FY2020 to FY2023
- The Hilton Foundation granted \$40mm from 2018 to 2022
- The New York City Council provided \$2.75mm for a high-fidelity wraparound model for FYTA
- At roughly \$500K per year per program, the funding provided to The Door and Graham a welcome contribution but may not have been enough to offer a distinct and superior service array for treatment youth when compared to other similar youth

Conclusions

1. The funding to The Door and Graham SLAM supported services to hundreds of young people that prior studies have shown have some of the most dismal outcomes of any vulnerable group
 - a) The Door and Graham SLAM are part of an array of service providers that rely on external funding to serve young people
2. The outcomes of the treatment and control groups for shelter use and justice system involvement did not differ and were much better than expected at the outset of the study, likely due to the pandemic
3. The outcomes of the treatment and control groups for employment and cash assistance show low income and employment, but are hard to interpret due to the pandemic
4. Interviews suggest that many youth found the programs provided social and emotional support, outcomes not measured in this analysis
5. Other research efforts, including evaluations of the New York YV Lifeset programs, YouthNPower, and the Fair Futures initiative will provide more information on how to improve the lives of young people.



Appendix 1: FYTA Cohort

All children born between 1993 and 2007 and served by ACS

November 2020

DANY Program Participants

FYTA Study Cohort

