Mathematica
Progress Together

Justice Issue Brief

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Assessing Trends in Violence and Violence Prevention in Oakland, California: 2016–2019

Violent crime rates have fallen substantially in Oakland, California over the past 15 years, but violence prevention remains a top priority for the city. Oakland Unite, a network of community-based organizations focused on violence prevention, has been one of the city's key efforts to tackle this issue. Oakland Unite administers grants and provides coordination through a set of complementary interventions designed to improve outcomes for participants and ultimately reduce citywide violent crime. In this brief, we examine the services provided by Oakland Unite from 2016 to 2019 in the context of violent crime and other conditions across Oakland's neighborhoods, and summarize our past findings from this four-year evaluation period.

Oakland Unite dates back to the Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004, also known as Measure Y, which raised funds for violence prevention programs and policing and fire safety personnel through a parcel tax on Oakland property and a parking tax assessment. In 2014, Oakland residents voted to extend these levies for 10 years through Measure Z, which now raises about $27 million annually. Roughly 40 percent of Measure Z's funds are directed to Oakland Unite. During fiscal year 2019–2020, Oakland Unite administered $9,495,850 across 30 grants.

In July 2020, Oakland Unite officially became the Department of Violence Prevention. This newly created department is developing a comprehensive strategy to citywide violence prevention that is grounded in a public health approach. This includes prioritizing services for individuals residing in geographic areas of Oakland that are most impacted by multiple forms of violence and other challenging conditions. We begin this brief by examining crime trends in Oakland between 2016 and 2019, and then incorporate Oakland Unite participant information over the same period.

A network of violence prevention

Oakland Unite supports various interventions aimed at assisting individuals who have the highest risk of perpetrating or becoming victims of violence. Interventions implemented between 2016 and 2019 can be summarized as follows:

- **Life coaching** works closely with high-risk youth and young adults to offer mentoring and support, set and achieve goals, and deter involvement in violence and the justice system.

- **Employment and education support services** aim to improve the career prospects of hard-to-employ young adults through skill building and transitional employment. Services offered to at-risk youth aim to increase career readiness through academic support and employment experience.

- **Gender-based violence response** supports victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and family violence. Agencies reach out to exploited youth, get them into safe environments, and provide wraparound supports to end their exploitation. Victims of family violence receive legal and socioemotional services as well as crisis response support, including emergency housing.

- **Shooting and homicide response** offers support to shooting and stabbing victims, relocation services for individuals at immediate risk of harm, and support for victims' families and others affected by homicide.

Violent crime in Oakland

Violent crime in Oakland has dropped substantially since its recent peak in 2012, when an average of nearly 1 in every 50 residents were victims of violence. Over the past decade, Oakland has had a higher rate of violent crime than its Bay Area neighbors (including San Francisco and Richmond) but only recently fell below the rate in Stockton, California, a high-crime city in the Central Valley. All of these cities experience more violent crime on a per capita basis than California and the United States (Figure 1). Oakland's violent crime rate in 2019 was nearly three times higher than the California statewide rate, and 3.4 times the U.S. average. However, over the 2016–2019 evaluation period, Oakland's violent crime rate dropped by 9 percent. In contrast, other nearby cities have experienced only slight or no change in violent crime rates over the same period.

The types of violent crimes committed in Oakland were largely stable over the 2016–2019 period, with non-firearm assaults making up about two-thirds of the total each year. Non-firearm robberies were the next most common type of violent crime, averaging 11 percent of all violent incidents reported to police (Figure 2, on the next page). Violent crime involving a firearm (including robbery and assault) made up 10 to 15 percent of reported incidents each year. Rape, prostitution and sex offenses, and family and child offenses each accounted for roughly 2 to 4 percent of violent crime. Homicides made up fewer than 1 percent of violent crime incidents in Oakland and fell slightly during this period, from a high of 80 in 2016 to a low of 70 in 2019. Like overall violent crime, homicides during this period were down markedly from earlier in the decade, when there were 126 homicide incidents in 2012.
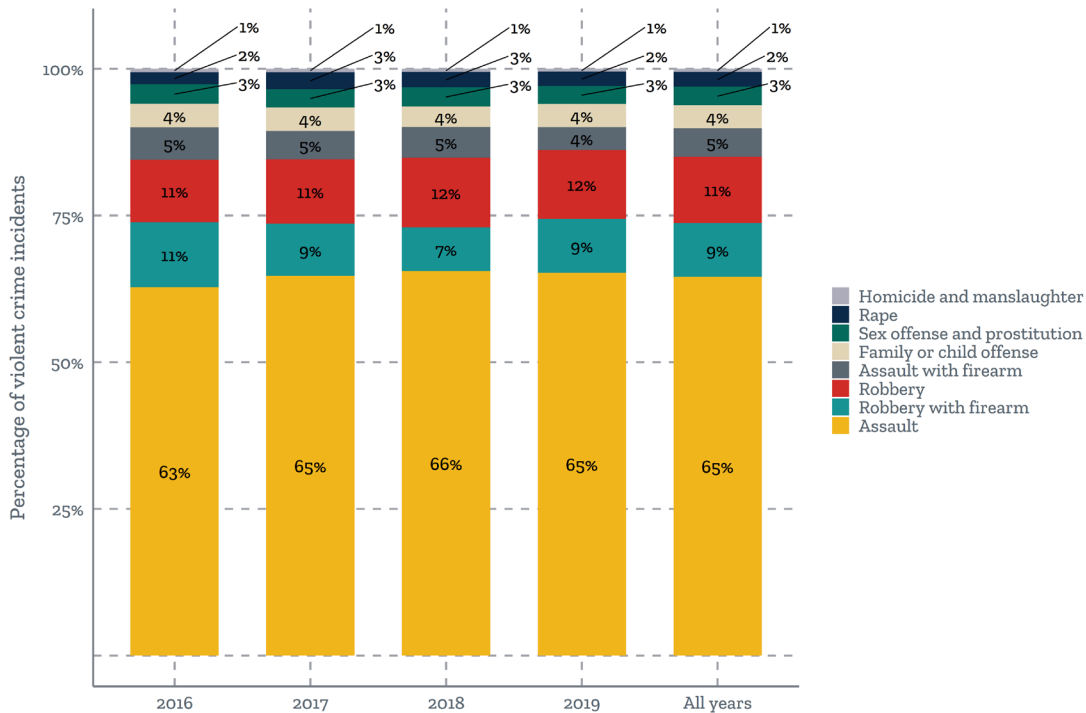
Figure 1. Violent crime over time for Oakland and comparison areas, 2010–2019
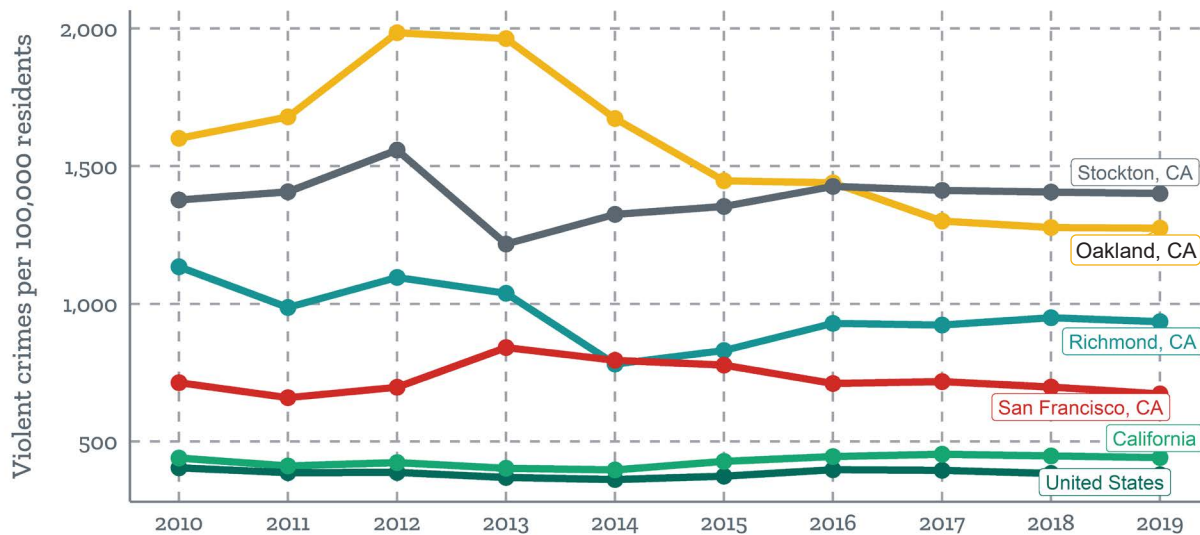
Source: Mathematica calculations using Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting and annual population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Note: Violent crime totals include murder and non-negligent homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, arson, prostitution, sex offenses, and offenses against family and children.

Figure 2. Violent crime in Oakland by incident type, 2016–2019

Source: Mathematica calculations using Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting classifications and Oakland Police Department data from 2016–2019.

Note: Violent crime totals include murder and non-negligent homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, arson, prostitution, sex offenses, and offenses against family and children.

Violent crime was not uniformly distributed throughout the city; a disproportionate number of violent incidents occurred in select neighborhoods, many of them in East Oakland. Although there were hot spots of violent crime in both West and Central Oakland, crime rates were higher overall in East Oakland and 10 of the 15 most violent census tracts were in Deep East Oakland (see box at right). The neighborhoods of Seminary, Lockwood Gardens (also known as 65th Village), and Havenscourt were among the hot spot areas within East Oakland, while Jingletown in Central Oakland, and Uptown in West Oakland were other areas where violent crime was concentrated. However, much of the violent crime in Uptown involved simple assaults, which are the least severe and are often charged as misdemeanors.

North Oakland, the Oakland Hills, and the census tracts east and north of Lake Merritt accounted for a relatively small share of violent crime and thus are predominantly shaded light gray in Figure 3 (on the next page).

What is a census tract?

A census tract is a small geographic region within a county defined for the purpose of collecting data for the U.S. census at the neighborhood-level. Census tracts generally average 4,000 inhabitants and are delineated with the goal of generating a homogeneous unit with respect to economic circumstances and population composition. There are 113 tracts either inside or overlapping Oakland's city boundaries.

Figure 3. Distribution of violent crime incidents in Oakland by census tract, 2016–2019
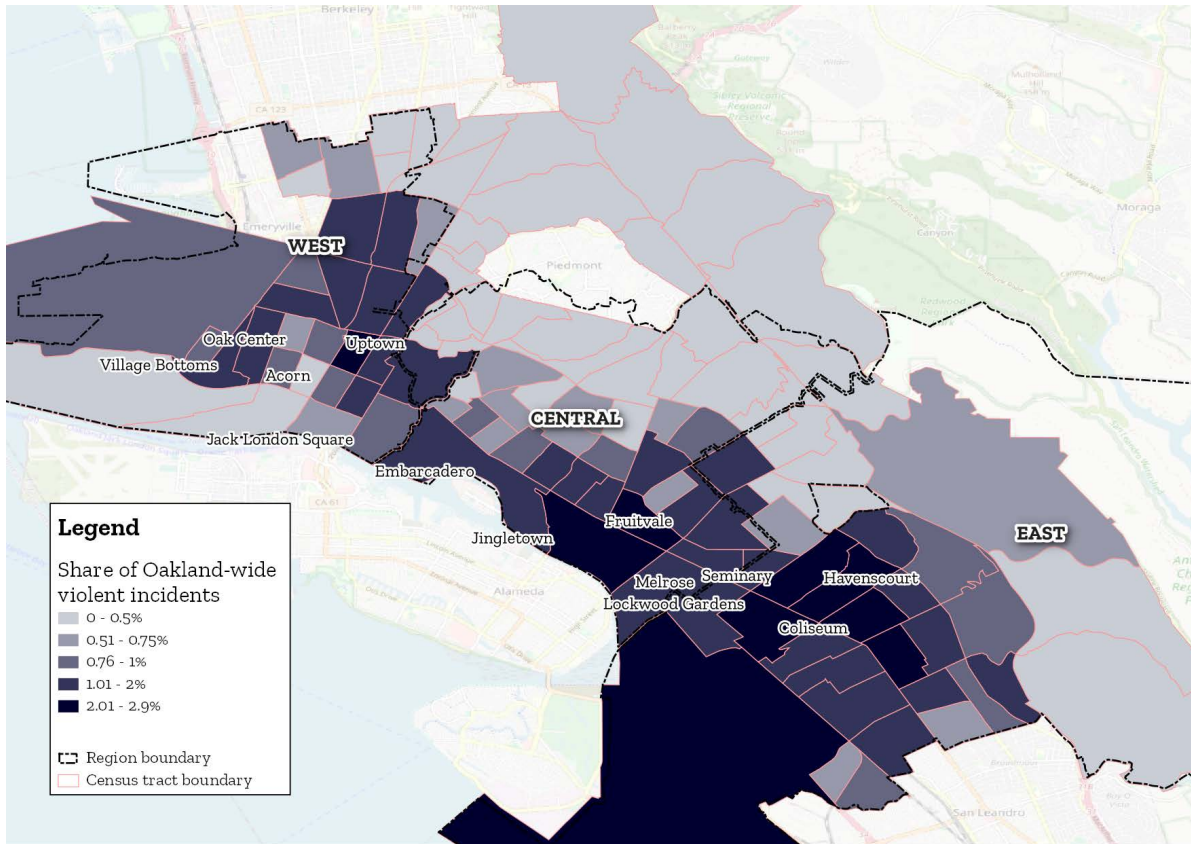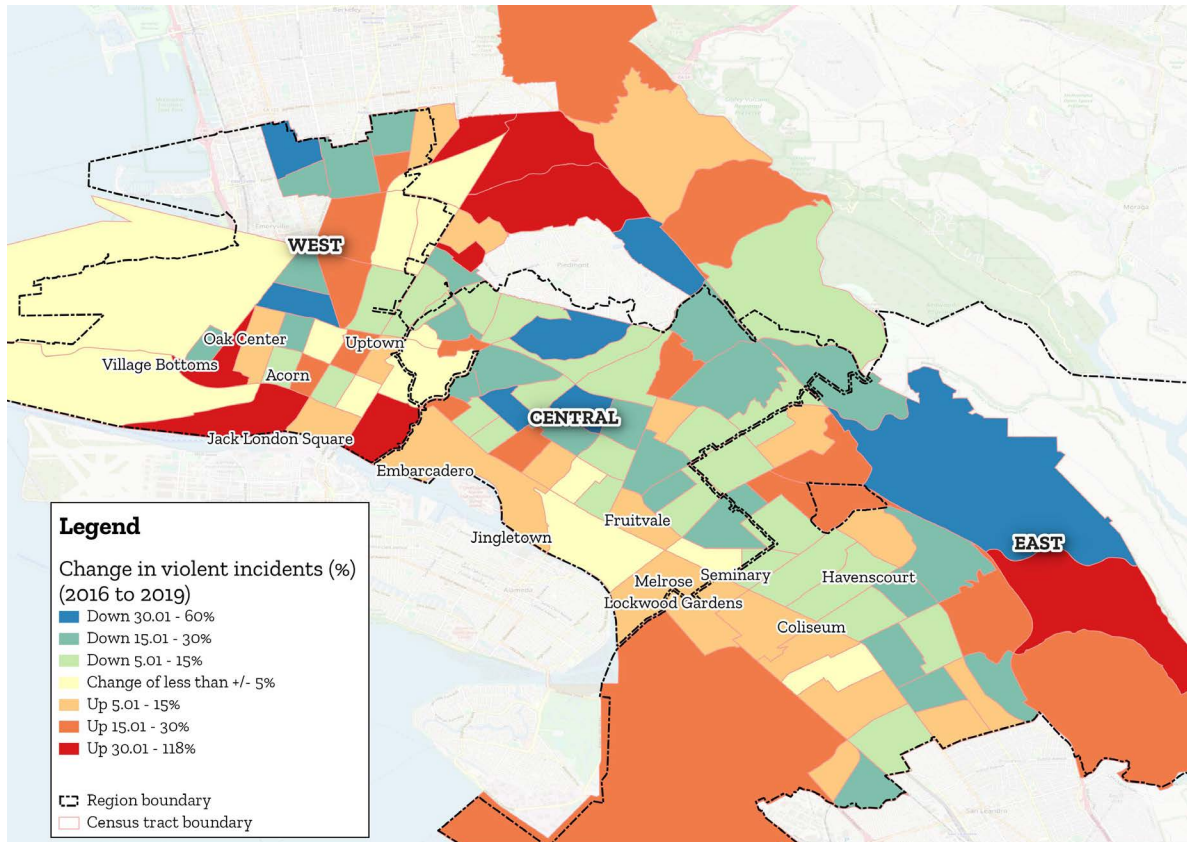

Source: Mathematica calculations using Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting classifications and Oakland Police Department data from 2016–2019.

Note: Violent crime totals include murder and non-negligent homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, arson, prostitution, sex offenses, and offenses against family and children.

The areas of Oakland experiencing the most violent crime largely remained the same as violent crime fell overall between 2016 and 2019. Of the 15 census tracts with the most violent crime in 2016, 13 remained ranked among the 15 most violent in 2019. In the few cases where the rankings of the most violent tracts did change noticeably, violent incidents appear to have shifted to a bordering tract. For example, the census tract in the top 15 most violent that dropped the furthest in ranking (from 13th most violent to 33rd) borders the tract in the top 15 that increased the most in ranking (from 15th most violent to 10th). This suggests that there may not have been a clear shift in violent crime in the broader area.

Over half of the census tracts in Oakland experienced a decline in violent crime between 2016 and 2019. As Figure 4 (on the next page) illustrates, numerous census tracts in Deep East Oakland, including those covering Seminary and Havenscourt, saw a decrease in violent incidents of more than 5 percent between 2016 and 2019. Although the figure indicates that areas in North Oakland experienced increases in violent crime of more than 15 percent, these areas had relatively low levels of violent crime to begin with. Thus, even a small increase in the number of violent incidents would result in a large percentage increase, especially relative to other, more violent tracts. Overall, the decrease in violent crime was not concentrated in any one region of the city.

Figure 4. Change in number of violent crime incidents in Oakland by census tract, 2016–2019
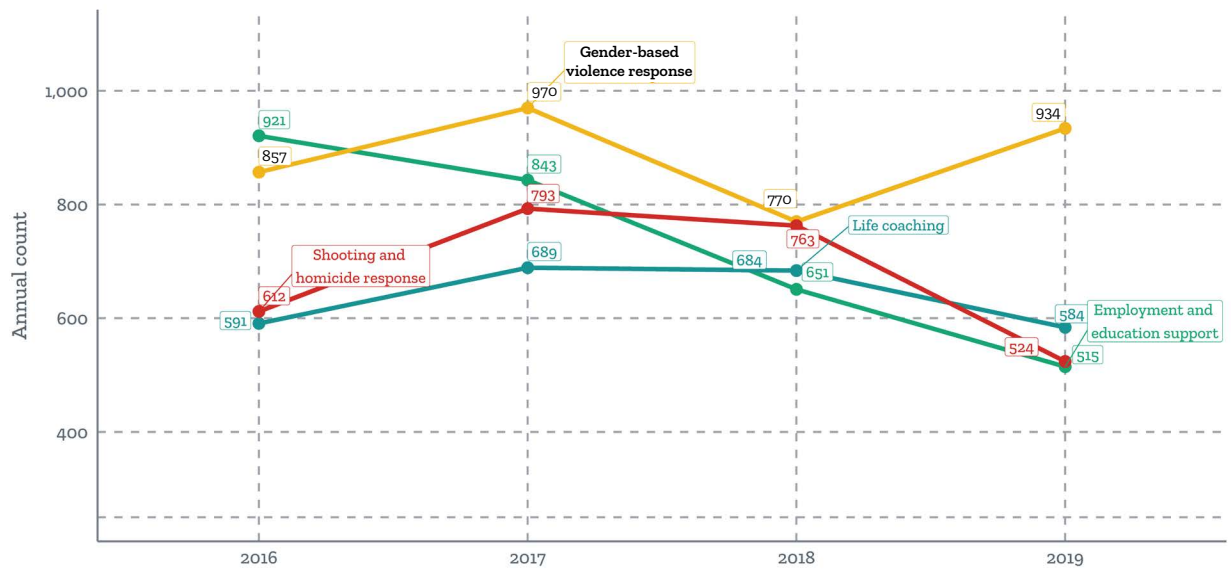

Source: Mathematica calculation using Oakland Police Department data from 2016 and 2019 for 113 census tracts.

Note: Percentages are calculated using the total number of violent incidents with a valid Oakland or Oakland-adjacent address on record that could be geocoded and assigned to a census tract.

Oakland Unite participants

Oakland Unite grantees served more than 8,500 individuals between 2016 and 2019, with each intervention providing services to more than 500 people a year. The gender-based violence programs served the most participants (Figure 5, on the next page), driven largely by the family violence intervention, which provided immediate crisis response services to victims and included a 24-hour hotline. Most interventions served a relatively stable number of participants each year, except for employment and education services, whose number of participants declined from 921 in 2016 to 515 in 2019, reflecting a relative decrease in the grant funds allocated to these services over this period.

Oakland Unite services targeted individuals at the highest risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence, many of whom had prior contact with the justice system. More than half (53 percent) of all Oakland Unite participants were arrested before receiving Oakland Unite services, and 34 percent were a victim of a reported violent crime.[1] However, specific risk factors vary from intervention to intervention based on the intervention's goals. For example, as an intervention aiming to divert youth and young adults from further involvement with the justice system, 79 percent of life coaching participants had been arrested before receiving services from Oakland Unite.

Figure 5. Number of annual Oakland Unite participants by intervention type, 2016–2019
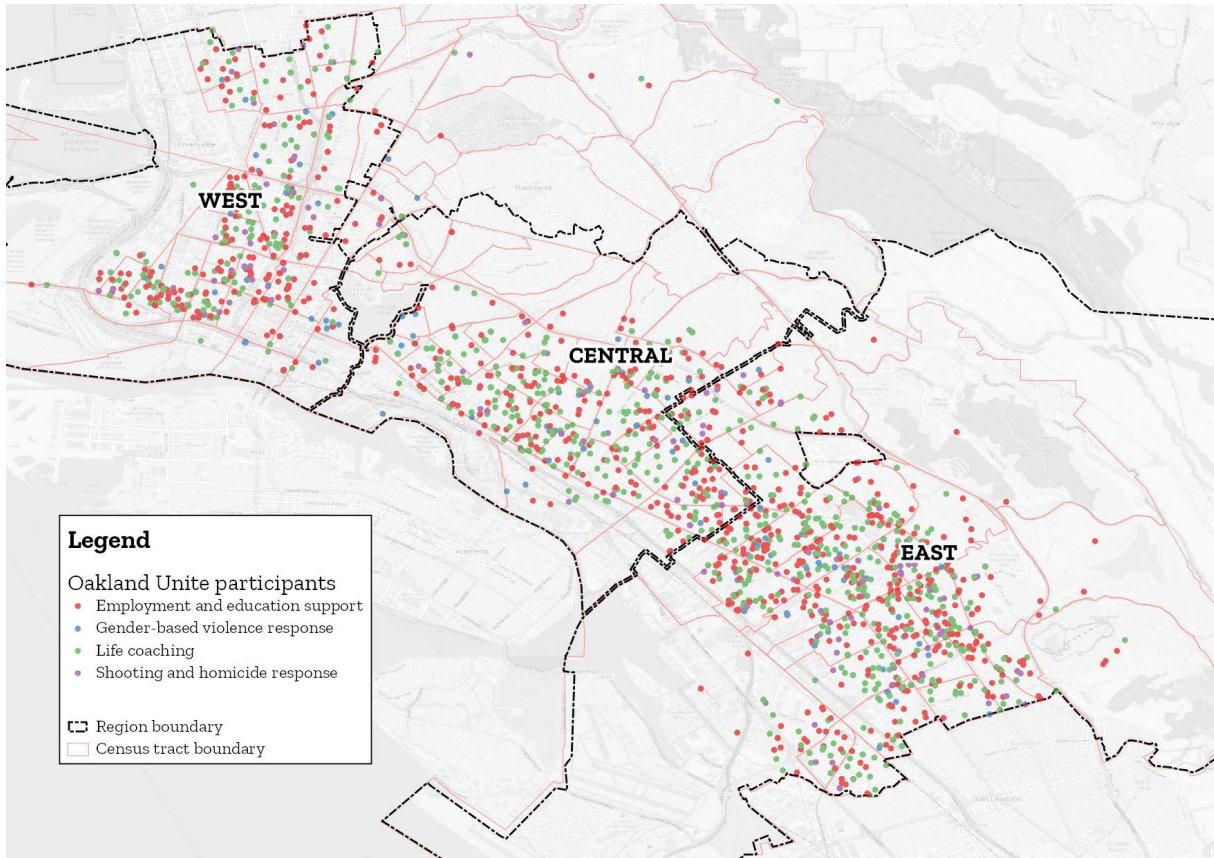

Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan data from 2016–2019.

Note: This figure includes participants who logged a positive number of service hours and is limited to participants in the youth and adult EESS, youth and adult life coaching, shooting response, homicide support, CSE youth intervention, and family violence intervention. Participants are counted for each year in which they received service.

With the exception of the gender-based violence intervention, Oakland Unite programs primarily supported Black or Latino males. Over half (64 percent) of Oakland Unite participants were Black, and 18 percent were Latino. Looking across all interventions, 52 percent of participants were male. The gender-based violence intervention accounted for around half (51 percent) of female participants; across all other interventions, 69 percent of participants were male.

Oakland Unite served individuals from throughout Oakland, but the largest group were East Oakland residents. Thirty-four percent of participants resided in East Oakland, 24 percent in West Oakland, and 21 percent in Central Oakland. The remaining 21 percent were either residents of another region or did not provide address information. This pattern is broadly consistent for participants across the different types of interventions offered by Oakland Unite, as illustrated in subsequent maps.[2]

Figure 6. Residence of Oakland Unite participants by intervention type, 2016–2019

Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan data from 2016–2019.

Note: The sample comprises the 2,142 individuals (22% of all participants) who consented to share identifying information and had a valid Oakland or Oakland-adjacent address on record that could be geocoded and assigned to a census tract. Individuals receiving multiple intervention types are counted for each.

Geographic relationship of violent crime and Oakland Unite participants

Oakland Unite participants tended to reside in the most violent areas of the city. Violent crime directly and indirectly affects the lives of those surrounded by it. Many of the high-risk individuals Oakland Unite serves are affected by violent crime in the areas immediately near where they live. As Figure 7 (on the next page) illustrates, the greater the incidence of violent crime in a census tract, the greater the number of Oakland Unite participants who resided there. The cluster of dots found in the top-right corner of the plot indicates the census tracts where Oakland Unite services were concentrated—

namely East Oakland neighborhoods including Coliseum, Havenscourt, and Seminary (see Figure 3), which were among the most violent areas.

Although there is general alignment between neighborhood risk and Oakland Unite participation, there were several high-violence census tracts with disproportionately few Oakland Unite participants. East Peralta, Fruitvale, and Saint Elizabeth were several tracts that ranked among the most violent by number of violent crimes (indicated by their location on the horizontal axis of Figure 7), but did not rank in the top quarter of areas where participants resided (indicated by their location on the vertical axis). These areas may present further opportunities to align service delivery with communities' needs.

Figure 7. Comparison of tract-level violent crime and number of Oakland Unite participants, 2016–2019
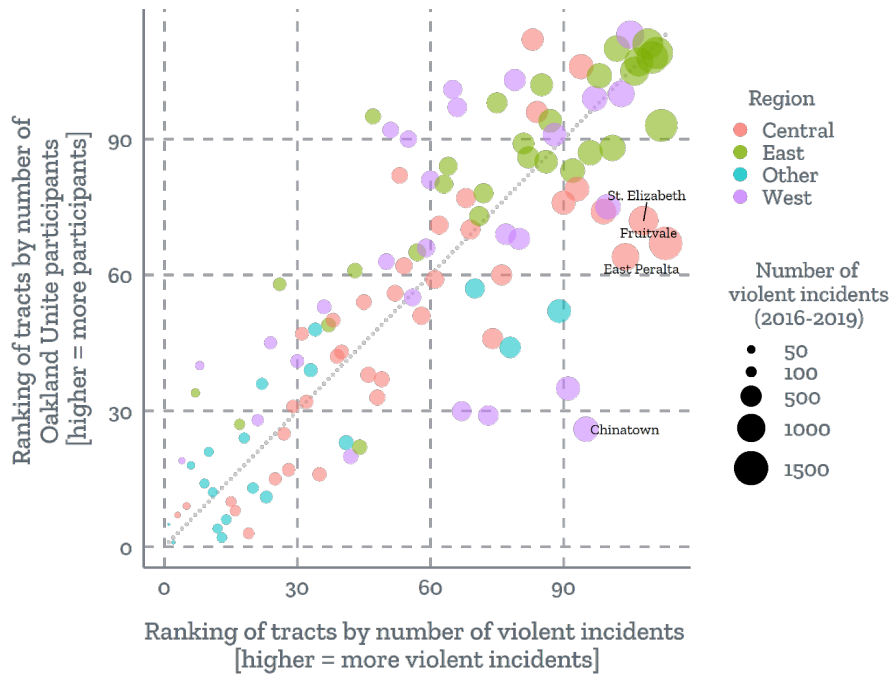
Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan and Oakland Police Department data from 2016–2019 for 113 census tracts.

Note: Region designations are drawn using ZIP5/ZCTA5 boundaries and are displayed in Figure 5. The "Other" region encompasses all Oakland-based ZIP codes not captured in the other regions. Both victim and Cityspan participant counts are totals of participants and violent incidents that had a valid Oakland or Oakland-adjacent address on record that could be geocoded and assigned to a census tract. Participants receiving more than one type of intervention are counted multiple times.

In some cases, however, there may be reasons why Oakland Unite served fewer participants in tracts with relatively high concentrations of violent crime. For example, though Chinatown had relatively higher levels of violent crime compared to Oakland Unite participation, robberies, which are considered a less interpersonal type of violence, accounted for 35 percent of all violent incidents in the neighborhood. In contrast, in Lockwood Gardens (also known as 65th Village), where many Oakland Unite participants live, robberies accounted for 18 percent of violent incidents.

Given the reality of finite resources, Oakland Unite may have prioritized individuals from areas where interpersonal violence is most prevalent.

As noted above, the specific target population can vary by intervention. In the next section, we delve into different neighborhood risk factors to examine the relationship between risk and Oakland Unite participation for the employment and education support services, life coaching, commercial and sexually exploited youth, and shooting and homicide response intervention types.

Employment and education support services (EESS)

EESS aim to support youth and young adults at risk of becoming involved in the justice system to improve their access to better economic opportunities. In the map below (Figure 8) we present census tract-level unemployment rates across Oakland to discern which neighborhoods have had the greatest need for economic support and how that compares to the location of EESS participants.

Youth and adult EESS participants were largely concentrated where the unemployment rate exceeded the Oakland average of 6.6 percent (Figure 8). However, there were some unemployment hot spots where few EESS participants resided, such as Village Bottoms (also known as the Lower Bottoms) in West Oakland and Melrose in East Oakland. Areas such as the Embarcadero, where many people reside but are also commercial or industrial hubs, tend to have higher unemployment rates.

Over 150 EESS participants had a supportive residence listed as their address (supportive residences are marked with green diamonds in Figure 8).

These residences included a shelter, a rehab facility, and a halfway home, indicating that EESS served individuals at high-risk junctions in their lives when they may have been facing housing instability and other challenges.

Past evaluation findings

In previous evaluations of adult and youth EESS outcomes, we found that relative to a comparison group of similar high-risk individuals:

- Adult EESS participants were 6 percentage points less likely to be arrested in the short term for both violent and nonviolent offenses (Gonzalez et al. 2017). EESS participants were on average at a low-er risk of being victimized or exposed to/involved in violence relative to participants in Oakland Unite's life coaching program."

- Youth EESS participants were 13 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in school, but there was limited effect on 12-month arrest rates (Gonzalez et al. 2019a).

Figure 8. Distribution of employment and education support services participants and unemployment rates by census tract, 2016–2019
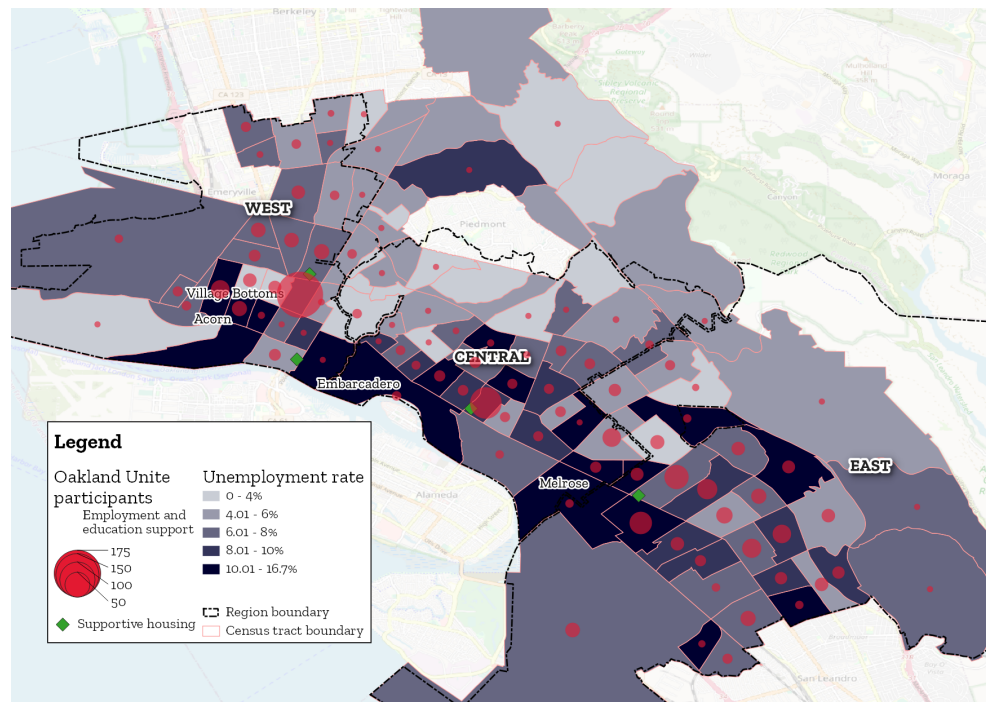
Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan data from 2016–2019 and 2018 5-year American Community Survey estimates from the U.S. Census for 2018 for 113 census tracts.

Notes: Total counts of EESS participants are tabulated from the 1,221 individuals (62 percent of all EESS participants) who consented to share identifying information and had a valid Oakland or Oakland-adjacent address on record that could be geocoded and assigned to a census tract.
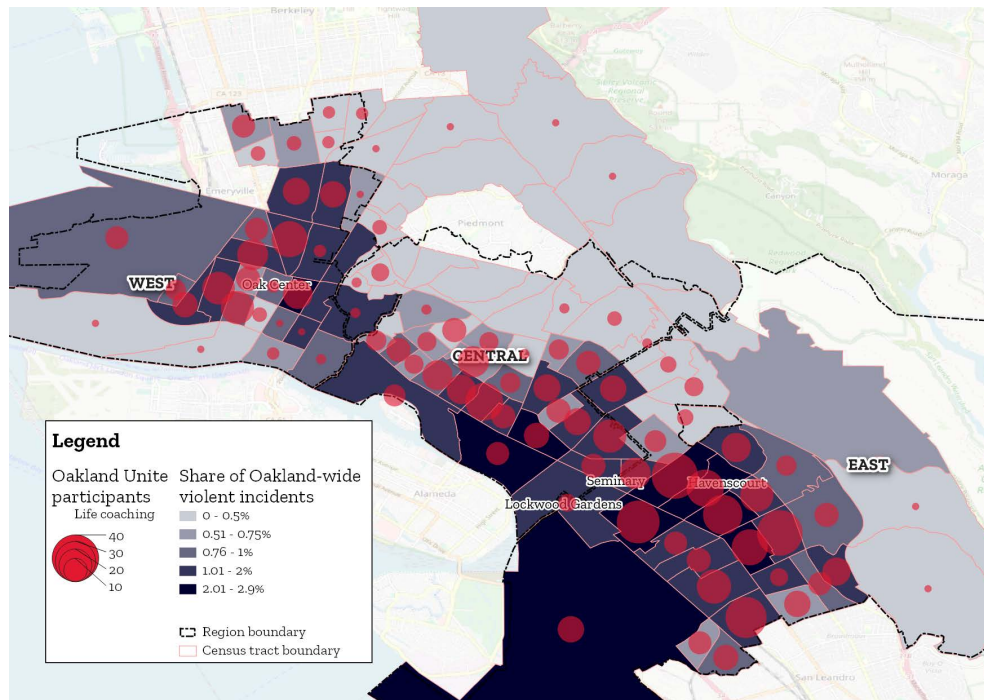
Life coaching

The life coaching intervention provides long-term case management support to justice-involved youth and young adults to reduce recidivism and prevent involvement with violence. Life coaching participants were concentrated in the highest-risk areas as measured by the prevalence of violent incidents. Lockwood Gardens (also known as 65th Village), Havenscourt, and Seminary in East Oakland were some of the areas with the highest number of both participants and violent crime. A small number of West Oakland neighborhoods such as Oak Center, containing Lowell Park, experienced high levels of violent crime but were home to relatively few life coaching participants.

Past evaluation findings

In previous evaluations of adult and youth life coaching outcomes, we found that relative to a comparison group of similar high-risk individuals:

- Adult life coaching participants were 1 percentage point less likely to be arrested for a violent offense in the short term, but there was limited impact on arrests for any offense (Gonzalez et al. 2017).
- Youth life coaching participants were 3 percentage points less likely to be arrested for a violent offense in the short term, but there was limited effect on 12-month arrest rates (Gonzalez et al. 2019a).

Figure 9. Distribution of life coaching participants and violent crime by census tract, 2016–2019

Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan and Oakland Police Department data from 2016–2019 for 113 census tracts.

Notes: Tract-level counts of life coaching participants are tabulated from the 992 individuals (64 percent of all life coaching participants) who consented to share identifying information and had a valid Oakland or Oakland-adjacent address on record that could be geocoded and assigned to a census tract.

Commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) youth intervention

The CSE youth intervention provides crisis response and intermediate-term services to youth and transitional age youth (ages 18 to 25) impacted by sexual exploitation. In contrast to other intervention types, there is little relationship between hot spots of commercial sexual exploitation and where intervention participants lived. This pattern is expected, as incidents of commercial sexual exploitation are largely concentrated along a strip of International Boulevard in the Fruitvale neighborhood that is well known as the city's hot spot for prostitution.

Many CSE youth participants reported East Oakland addresses, although 18 participants listed either MISSSEY or Covenant House, two of the three CSE youth intervention agencies, as their address.

Housing insecurity is one of the most prevalent risk factors for CSE youth, and many participants may reside in Covenant House's DreamCatcher shelter or may have listed an agency's address as their own because they do not have a stable residence.[3]

Past evaluation findings

In a previous evaluation of the implementation of the CSE youth intervention, we found that:

- Agencies serve the intended population of girls and young women of color with a history of victimization, contact with law enforcement, and school disengagement (Gonzalez et al. 2019b).

- Multiple agencies and branches of government are tackling the issue of CSE in Alameda County, but a cohesive strategy is lacking (Gonzalez et al. 2019b).

Figure 10. Distribution of commercially sexually exploited children participants and commercial sexual exploitation-related violent crime by census tract, 2016–2019
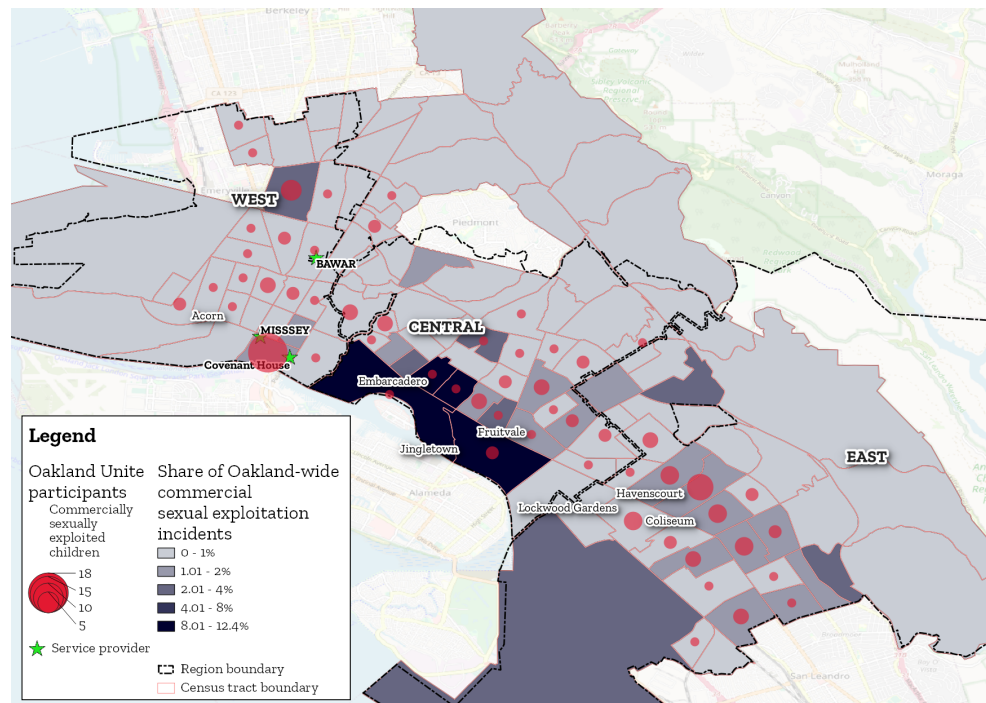
Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan data from 2016–2019 and Oakland Police Department data from 2017–2019 for 113 census tracts.

Note: Tract-level counts of CSE youth intervention participants are tabulated from the 125 (16 percent of all CSE participants) individuals who consented to share identifying information and had a valid Oakland or Oakland-adjacent address on record that could be geocoded and assigned to a census tract. CSE-related violent crimes include UCR code 37 and statute code PC236.1 (C). CSE incidents are not limited to a specific age range and include 2017–2019 to account for State Bill 1322, before which incidents may not appear in victim records.
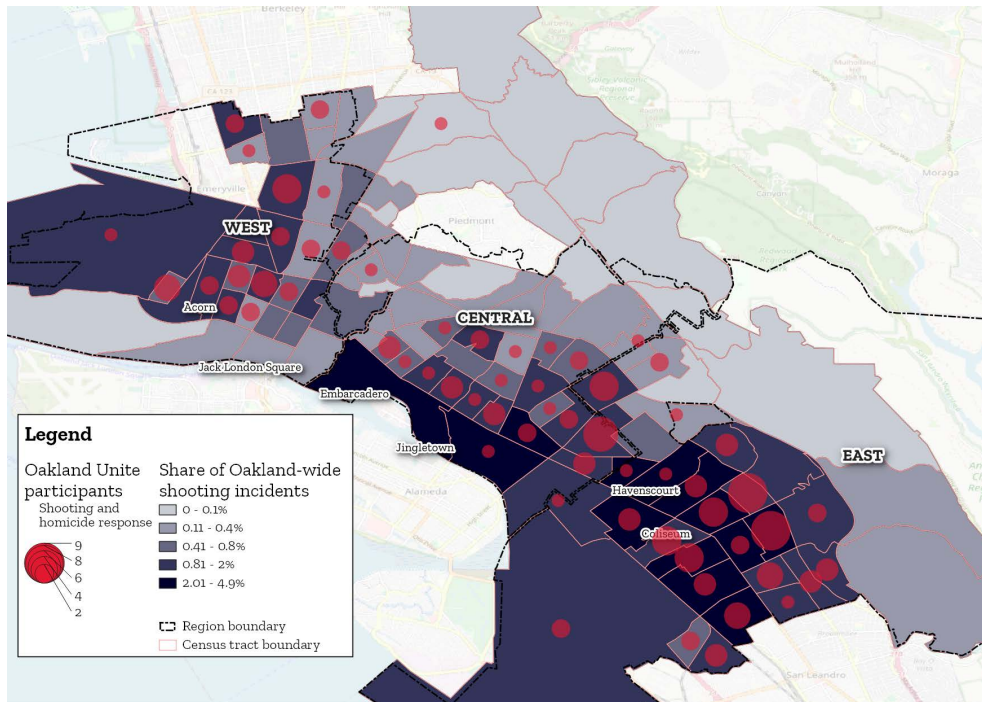
Shooting and homicide response

The shooting and homicide response intervention provides crisis response supports to shooting victims and families of homicide victims to prevent retaliation and further victimization and help victims and their families work through trauma. Overall, there is a strong correlation between where participants lived and where shootings occurred, which were both concentrated in Deep East Oakland. Several census tracts were the site of many firearm-related violent incidents but served comparatively few participants. These areas include Seminary and Havenscourt in East Oakland and Jingletown and Embarcadero in Central Oakland.

Past evaluation findings

In a previous evaluation of the implementation of the shooting and homicide response intervention, we found that:

- Participants largely avoided reinjury and retaliation after receiving services (D'Agostino et al. 2020).
- Participants' needs were addressed through both immediate and long-term services that were individualized to their needs (D'Agostino et al. 2020).

Figure 11. Distribution of shooting and homicide response participants by census tract, 2016–2019

Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan and Oakland Police Department data from 2016–2019 for 113 census tracts.

Note: Total counts of shooting and homicide response sub-strategy participants are tabulated from the 162 individuals (8 percent of all shooting and homicide response participants) who consented to share identifying information and had a valid Oakland or Oakland-adjacent address on record that could be geocoded and assigned to a census tract.

Looking ahead

Between 2016 and 2019, Oakland Unite provided services to thousands of individuals throughout the city in an effort to reduce violence. During this same period, violent crime fell nearly 10 percent citywide. Past evaluation findings suggest that Oakland Unite provided needed supports to individuals at the center of violence and potentially improved outcomes for participants. As the repercussions of violence are extremely costly to society—over $1 million in direct costs for a single shooting injury and potentially higher when all costs from medical bills, lost income, and quality of life are considered—investments in violence reduction are likely to be cost-effective and pay dividends over the long run through avoided social and financial costs.[4,5] Oakland Unite services can continue to aid in the decline in violent crime seen between 2016 and 2019 by supporting the individuals at the highest risk of involvement in and exposure to violence.

Although the relationship between residence and incidence of violent crime is not always straightforward, Oakland Unite provided services to participants who live in the highest-risk areas of Oakland and are thus most likely to be affected by violence. However, there are certain tracts throughout the city that have a disproportionate share of violent crime compared to their share of service participants. As Oakland Unite, now known as the Department of Violence Prevention, transitions to a public health strategy that aims to hone in on and allocate resources to neighborhoods and people with the highest need, this brief offers opportunities to look closely at specific census tracts that may benefit from more focused service provision.

Endnotes

[1] Individuals who received multiple intervention types are counted for each, based on their baseline characteristics at the start date of each intervention.

[2] Although Figure 6 is limited to participants who provided a valid Oakland address, the region-level breakdowns are largely consistent with the full sample of participants based on ZIP code information which is available for all Oakland Unite participants.

[3] Participants may also have listed an agency address because of confidentiality and/or safety concerns. Cityspan data does not provide additional details about participants' housing status and permanence of a participants' reported address.

[4] Fransdottir, Edda and Jeffrey A. Butts. "Who Pays for Gun Violence? You Do." New York, NY: Research and Evaluation Center, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. 2020.

[5] Muhammad, David. "Oakland's Successful Gun Violence Reduction Strategy." Oakland, CA: National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, January 2018.

Oakland Unite 2016–2020 Comprehensive Evaluation

Implementation and Impacts of Youth and Adult Life Coaching

January 19, 2021

Naihobe Gonzalez, Natalie Larkin, Alicia Demers, and Anthony Louis D'Agostino

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Executive summary

Oakland Unite aims to interrupt and prevent violence by administering grants through a diverse set of strategies, which include life coaching for youth and adults at risk for involvement with violence. The life coaching model centers on transformative relationships between participants and trained professionals with similar life experiences. This comprehensive evaluation report provides an in-depth analysis of the implementation and impacts of youth and adult life coaching programs over the 2016–2019 period.

These four years marked a period of transition for life coaching and Oakland Unite more broadly. As the strategy evolved from intensive case management to life coaching, the City of Oakland founded a Department of Violence Prevention, which officially became home to Oakland Unite in 2020. These transitions occurred in the context of broader policy changes, such as new state legislation affecting juvenile offenders and a reduction in the number of youth held in juvenile detention facilities.

This report's findings should be viewed within this changing context. In addition, the impact findings are based on individuals who received services from January 2016 through June 2017 so that their outcomes could be examined over a 30-month period. To the extent that services have changed since then (for example, as more providers completed life coaching certification training), the results may be less applicable today. Below, we present key findings and considerations for the future.

Youth life coaching key findings

Youth life coaching led to large increases in high school retention and graduation but had mixed impacts on other outcomes. Over a 30-month follow-up period, youth life coaching participants were 13 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in school and 11 percentage points more likely to graduate from high school compared to similar comparison youth. However, youth in life coaching were 13 percentage points more likely to be a victim of a violent incident reported to police than the comparison group. Despite a short-term decrease in the likelihood of being arrested for a violent offense, over a longer 30-month window we found no reductions in multiple measures of contact with law enforcement.

Figure ES.1. Impact of youth life coaching 30 months after enrollment
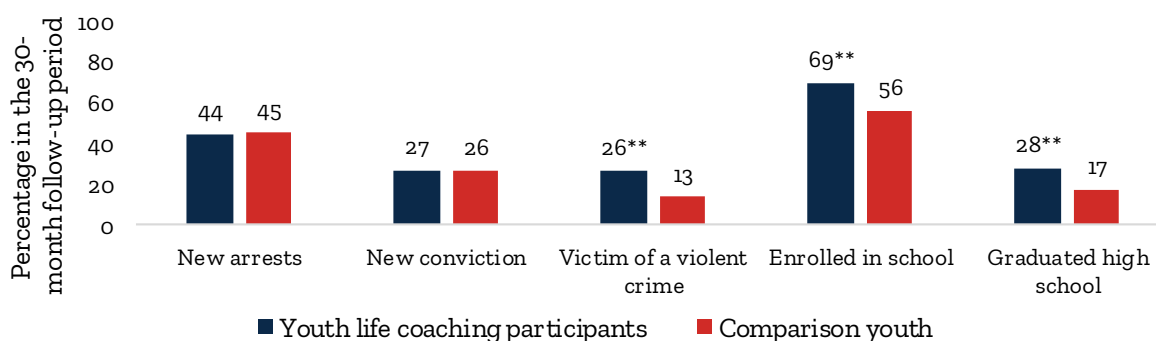
Source: Oakland Unite, Oakland Police Department, and Alameda County Probation Department administrative data.

Note: The sample is 3,001, including 192 participants matched to similar youth. To be included in the analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between the two groups.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

The number of youth beginning life coaching services declined by almost 30 percent between 2016 and 2019. In 2016, 163 participants began services, compared to 134 in 2018 and 117 in 2019. Declining enrollment in youth life coaching could reflect the decrease in the number of youth held in juvenile detention seen both in Oakland and statewide. Starting July 2019, Oakland Unite also reduced the number of youth life coaching agencies funded, from six to three.

Most youth life coaching participants (70 percent) had contact with the justice system in the year leading up to services, although this rate declined over time. Of participants who began services in 2016, 74 percent had been arrested in the year before services, compared to 59 percent of participants beginning life coaching in 2019. This is likely a reflection of the expanded eligibility criteria implemented in response to a decrease in the number of youth detained by law enforcement.

Only a small share of youth completed services as recommended by the Oakland Unite life coaching model. A quarter of youth completed the first of four phases of services as recommended. An additional 50 percent engaged with services through the first phase (four months) but did not receive the recommended intensity (two to three contacts per week). Both retention and service intensity declined over time, leading to a reduction in the amount of services received from a median of 60 hours in 2016 to 25 hours in 2018. According to life coaches and family members interviewed, some youth are not ready for change and either drop out early during the process or take some time before fully engaging in services.

Participants and their families appreciated the high level of personal involvement from life coaches and felt this had led to positive changes in their lives. Youth who were interviewed described how life coaches helped them set and follow through on goals, advocated for them in court, checked on them at school, and connected them to jobs, training, and other supports. They also spoke about being able to get off probation and "stay out of trouble" as a result of the support they received. These positive experiences were mirrored in a survey of 63 youth participants, in which 87 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their situation was better because of Oakland Unite.

Adult life coaching key findings

Adult life coaching reduced the likelihood of arrest for a violent offense after 12 months by 3 percentage points, but over time had limited impacts except for participants referred by Ceasefire. The Ceasefire program aims to identify individuals at highest immediate risk of gun violence for support and is one of the main referral partners for the adult life coaching program. Participants linked to Ceasefire were 21 percentage points less likely to be convicted after 30 months than other similar adults who were also in Ceasefire but did not participate in life coaching. Statistically significant reductions were also observed for rates of gun offenses and probation sentences for the Ceasefire subgroup. Several factors could explain the greater efficacy of life coaching for this subgroup. Participants linked to Ceasefire were at higher risk at the start of services and were also more likely to complete the life coaching model as intended. In addition, they were primarily served by two of five agencies. It is also important to note that the Ceasefire subgroup is small (N = 31). Thus, it is difficult to determine what explains the greater efficacy of life coaching among this subgroup of individuals.

Figure ES.2. Impact of adult life coaching 30 months after enrollment
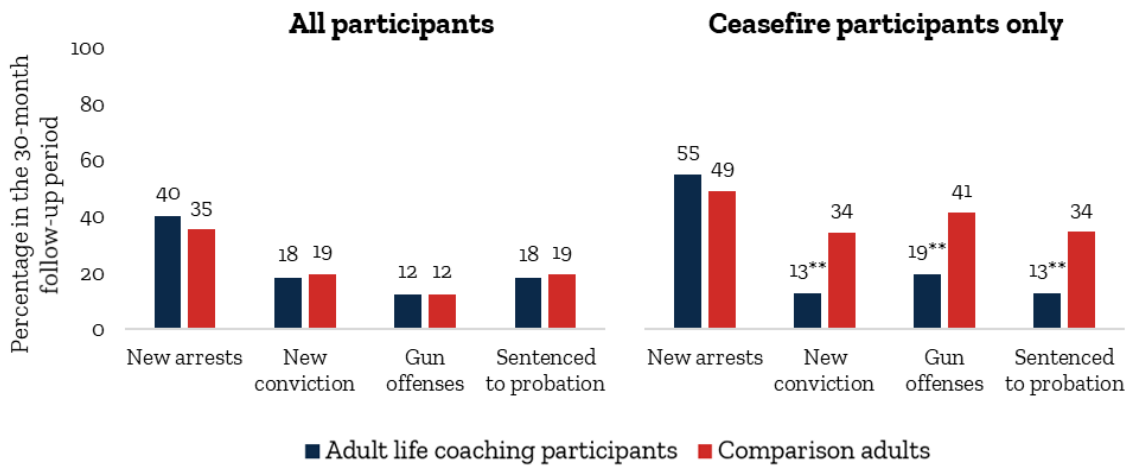
Source: Oakland Unite, Oakland Police Department, and Alameda County Probation Department administrative data.

Note: The left panel sample size is 6,436, including 257 adult life coaching participants matched to similar adults. The right panel sample size is 321, including 31 adult life coaching participants in Ceasefire matched to other similar adults also in Ceasefire. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017 and have consented to share their data for evaluation. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between the two groups.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Most adult life coaching participants (75 percent) had been arrested before beginning services, although less than half (43 percent) had been arrested in the two years before beginning services. Participants also in Ceasefire exhibited greater risk levels, with 96 percent arrested before starting services compared to 72 percent for adults not in Ceasefire. Rates of contact with law enforcement decreased over time. For example, 81 percent of participants in 2016 had been previously arrested, compared to 65 percent in 2019. This pattern could be explained in part by a decline in Ceasefire referrals over this period.

Only a small percentage of adults completed services as recommended by the Oakland Unite life coaching model. Less than 40 percent of adult participants completed phase 1 of services as intended. Participants were somewhat more likely to fail to complete phase 1 because they did not receive the recommended service intensity than because they stopped services altogether, although both were important factors. Adult life coaching participants linked to Ceasefire were more likely to complete the model's phases compared to participants overall, with almost half (49 percent) completing phase 1. Participant retention declined over time, leading the median number of service hours received to decrease from a median of 33 in 2016 to 25 in 2018. As with youth, adult life coaches and participants interviewed noted that readiness for change is an important determinant of program engagement.

Participants held positive outlooks for the future and credited life coaching with promoting personal growth and maturity. Life coaches tailored services to participants' individual goals and took an active role in helping them meet those goals. Participants and their families credited life coaching with promoting personal growth and maturity, describing better outlooks toward the future, improved relationships, and behavioral and attitudinal changes toward violence. Among the 66 adult participants surveyed for the evaluation, 87 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their situation was better because of the services they received.

Considerations for the life coaching strategy going forward

Across both the youth and adult programs, key informants identified three key strengths of life coaching: (1) shared backgrounds and experiences between coaches and participants, (2) trusting mentoring relationships, and (3) hands-on support. At the same time, they also noted the challenges of engaging individuals who do not exhibit willingness or readiness for change. These factors likely affect the quality of the life coaching relationship and thus the effectiveness of the program. Despite having limited effects, on average, on contact with law enforcement over a 30-month period, the positive perspectives shared by participants who were interviewed or surveyed highlight the potential of life coaching. The findings from this four-year evaluation period thus point to life coaching as a promising intervention for violence prevention that is still being refined. Key considerations going forward include the following:

Target population. This evaluation's findings suggest that the program may be more effective in engaging and improving outcomes for individuals who have a recent history of contact with law enforcement. Oakland Unite may consider working with law enforcement partners and grantees to define referral pathways that appropriately identify the target population. At the same time, readiness for change emerged as an important factor in participant success. Thus, systematically assessing risk and readiness may be important for identifying the target population and tailoring services to individuals' needs.

Data quality and use. Over the evaluation period, the quality of data entered into the Oakland Unite database has varied, limiting its use. Oakland Unite, grantees, the evaluator, and the database developer should work together to identify key fields, improve the quality of the data, and use it to monitor progress and inform practice. A dashboard or other interface that reports key indicators by grantee agency and life coach could support this goal. Grantees may be more incentivized to enter data accurately and on time if the data are visible and useful to them and their program managers.

Future research. This evaluation identified several areas for future research. In the next evaluation period, we recommend studying the characteristics of life coaches and participants that make for a successful relationship; measuring additional participant outcomes such as employment and earnings; taking a fuller accounting of program costs and benefits; and using rigorous methods, such as random assignment, to identify the most effective sequence, duration, and intensity of services based on individuals' needs. Oakland Unite may consider seeking outside funding to support additional research.◢

Acronyms

ACOE	Alameda County Office of Education
ACPD	Alameda County Probation Department
the City	the City of Oakland
CSEC	commercially sexually exploited children
CYO	Community & Youth Outreach
DVP	Department of Violence Prevention
EBAC	East Bay Agency for Children
EBAYC	East Bay Asian Youth Center
EESS	employment and education support services
HSD	Human Services Department
JJC	Juvenile Justice Center
MISSSEY	Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting & Serving Sexually Exploited Youth
OPD	Oakland Police Department
OUSD	Oakland Unified School District

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I. Introduction

A. Background

Violence prevention is a top priority for the city of Oakland, California, where violent crime rates have fallen substantially over the past 15 years. However, Oakland still ranks among the 30 most violent American cities, with an average of 75 homicides per year over 2016–2019 (McLively and Nieto 2019). Oakland Unite, a network of community-based organizations focused on violence prevention, has been one of the city's key efforts to tackle this issue. Oakland Unite administers grants and provides coordination to community-based organizations through a set of complementary interventions designed to improve outcomes for participants and ultimately reduce violent crime across the city (Figure I.1).

Figure I.1. Conceptual model of Oakland Unite
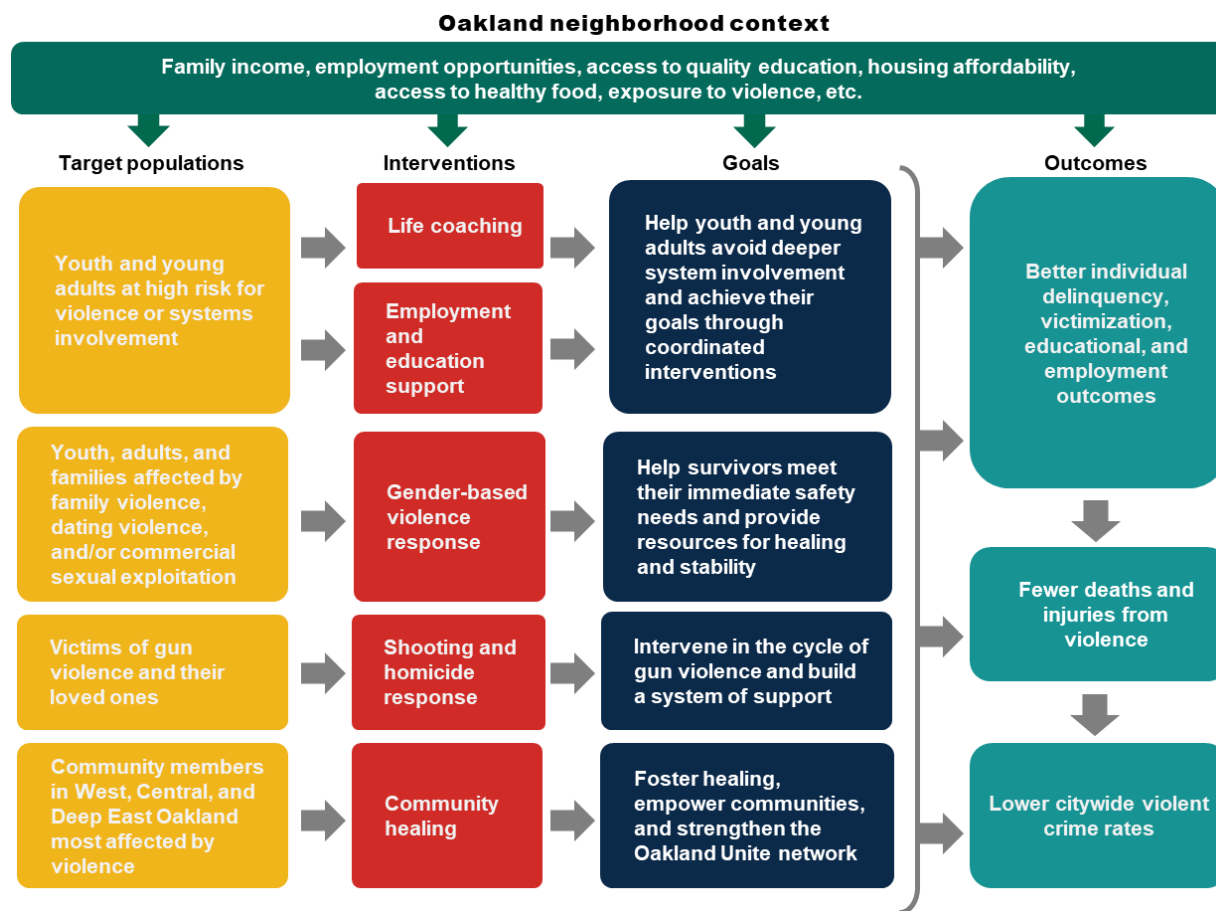
Oakland Unite dates back to the Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004, also known as Measure Y, which raised funds for violence prevention programs and policing and fire safety personnel through a parcel tax on Oakland property and a parking tax assessment. In 2014, Oakland residents voted to extend these levies for 10 years through Measure Z, which now raises about $27 million annually. Roughly 40 percent of Measure Z's funds are directed to Oakland Unite. In July 2020, Oakland Unite

officially joined the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP), a newly created department tasked with developing and overseeing a comprehensive approach to citywide violence prevention.

Every two to three years, Oakland Unite prepares a new spending plan based on community input and evaluation findings.[1] During fiscal year 2019–2020, Oakland Unite administered $9,495,850 across 30 grants. Although the spending plan and grants have been updated over the years, the interventions implemented between 2016 and 2020 can be summarized as follows:

- **Life coaching** works closely with high-risk youth and young adults to offer mentoring and support, set and achieve goals, and deter involvement in violence and the justice system.

- **Employment and education support** services aim to improve the career prospects of hard-to-employ young adults through skill building and transitional employment. Services offered to at-risk youth aim to increase career readiness through academic support and employment experience.

- **Gender-based violence response** supports victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and family violence. Agencies reach out to exploited youth, get them into safe environments, and provide wraparound supports to end their exploitation. Victims of family violence receive legal and socioemotional services as well as crisis response support, including emergency housing.

- **Shooting and homicide response** offers support to shooting and stabbing victims, relocation services for individuals at immediate risk of harm, and support for victims' families and others affected by homicide.

- **Community healing** seeks to alter norms about violence in communities by offering healing-centered activities and supports, as well as by developing the leadership skills of community leaders to direct change in their own neighborhoods and facilitate a grassroots mini-grants program.

Neighborhood context—including exposure to violence and access to quality education, affordable housing, and employment opportunities—affects the population served by Oakland Unite. The strategies thus focus on improving outcomes for populations that are disproportionately affected by these stressors, including youth and adults at the center of violence or at high risk for system involvement. Other parts of Measure Z, such as Ceasefire, Oakland Police Department (OPD) crime reduction teams, community resource officers, and emergency response through the Oakland Fire Department, are outside of the purview of Oakland Unite but also play important roles in the city's efforts to reduce violence.

Under Measure Z, the city also funds an independent evaluation of Oakland Unite. This includes annual evaluations as well as a comprehensive evaluation assessing the implementation and effectiveness of a selection of Oakland Unite programs over a four-year period. In this 2016–2020 comprehensive evaluation report, we present our findings on the life coaching intervention, which is comprised of two programs: one for youth and one for adults. We discuss implementation of each program over time, drawing on program data as well as interviews, site visits, focus groups, and surveys conducted over this four-year period. We also provide evidence about the impacts of participating in life coaching on individual delinquency, victimization, and education outcomes over a 30-month period.

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[1] Detailed information about the structure of Oakland Unite strategies, sub-strategies, and grantees is available in the 2016–2019 agency report (Eslami et al. 2020).

B. Overview of the report

The remainder of the report is organized as follows. In Chapter II, we present an overview of Oakland Unite's life coaching model. We summarize our evaluation strategy in Chapter III. In Chapters IV and V, we discuss our findings on the implementation and impacts of the youth and adult life coaching programs, respectively. We close in Chapter VI with an overarching discussion of our findings and final recommendations. Appendix A includes additional information about data collection and processing and Appendix B describes the methodologies and results.

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II. Life coaching model

A. Oakland Unite's model

Oakland Unite has developed a life coaching model that centers on transformative relationships between participants and trained professionals with similar life experiences. The model encourages frequent contact between coaches and participants, dialogue focused on self-reflection and behavior change, and coordinated support guided by case planning. The priority population for life coaching is youth and young adults who have been directly exposed to, involved in, or victimized by gun violence in Oakland. The program aims to help participants avoid incarceration and violence and empower them to achieve healthy participation in their families and communities.

Before implementing the life coaching model, Oakland Unite funded an intensive case management strategy. Intensive case management similarly focused on connecting participants to employment, education, and other critical support services, providing court advocacy and system navigation, and engaging families, but was not as intentionally designed around developing a transformative relationship with a trusted mentor. In 2016, Oakland Unite began offering a nationally recognized certificate program as a means of providing in-depth training on how to be a life coach. Life coaches extolled the value of the certification process for job performance, saying it enhanced their ability to help participants and achieve maximum effectiveness. This includes learning new communication and interviewing skills that allow coaches to listen to clients' stories and meet them where they are. Life coaches said the certification gave them "freedom" from the mindset of case management, in which the case manager feels responsible for helping clients fix their problems. Instead, certified life coaches approach their role as helping participants identify a plan for themselves and enabling them to develop their own problem-solving skills.

Life coaches apply for the certification fellowship and must be selected through a competitive process to take part. Although not every life coach has completed the certification program, all are expected to work towards forming transformative relationships with their clients following the model. According to Oakland Unite's past requests for proposals, key elements of its life coaching model include the following:

- **Shared experience:** Life coaches share similar life experiences or are otherwise intimately connected to participants' communities.

- **Intensive dosage**: Coaches have low caseloads (15:1), longer service periods (12 to 18 months), and meaningful, frequent contact with participants (including daily touches when needed).

- **Assessment, planning, and follow-up:** Life coaches assess participant risk and needs, develop service plans (known as Life Maps), and track follow-up. Life Maps are frequently revisited with participants and guide service delivery.

- **Focus on safety:** Services prioritize and respond to immediate safety concerns. Life coaches are comfortable discussing risk of violence and harm reduction strategies with participants and connect participants to conflict mediation and relocation when needed.

- **Coaching:** Programs incorporate coaching strategies that help participants identify and move towards positive goals, increase internal motivation, and address limiting beliefs. Programs may include peer support groups or other interventions that increase socio-emotional skills.

- **Family involvement:** Life coaches get to know the families and loved ones of participants and involve them in planning and service provision. Coaches work with participants to identify supportive people in their lives to help sustain positive change.

- **Linkage and advocacy:** Participants and family members are referred to services to address identified needs, such as education, employment, mental health, substance abuse, legal aid, housing, and transportation. Coaches advocate with service providers and system partners, including law enforcement, to ensure participants receive equitable and appropriate services.

- **Incentivized change:** Programs offer structured stipends used to provide a financial incentive to participants for meeting milestones. Grantees must budget at least $1,500 to $2,000 per participant annually from grant funds.

- **Coordination and training:** Grantees participate in regular case conferencing and training opportunities. They work effectively with partners such as community employment programs, law enforcement, and others, while maintaining participants' trust and confidentiality.

- **Data-driven risk factors:** Grantees use data-driven risk factors to identify eligible participants, such as prior violent injury, prior arrest, group/gang involvement, and proximity to high-retaliation violence.

- **Focus on school reentry and probation completion:** For youth, life coaches are expected to facilitate their successful re-engagement in school and completion of probation requirements. Whenever possible, life coaches should engage youth while they are still in detention to help them transition back to home and school.

Oakland Unite's life coaching model is designed to unfold in phases, starting with an initial phase of greatest service intensity that is focused on trust and relationship building during the first four months. During this phase, life coaches maintain daily contact by phone or text message and meet in person two to three times per week. They also initiate contact with the participant's family and probation officer or parole agent (if applicable) and begin to work with the participant to develop and implement a Life Map that establishes goals and milestones that are tied to financial incentives. During this phase, the coach and participant focus on safety and other immediate needs. Each subsequent phase increasingly focuses on goals related to self-sufficiency, while maintaining emphasis on safety and overall mental, physical, and emotional health. As the phases progress, the intensity of contacts decreases. By the fourth and final phase, which takes place in months 13–18, the life coach begins planning with the client a transition out of intensive case management services. Each phase is summarized in Table II.1.

The development of these program phases was informed by the Proschaska and DiClemente (1983) Stages of Change Model, which hypothesizes that behavior change is a "process involving progress through a series of stages." These stages begin with precontemplation, in which individuals are not yet ready to make a change, and progress through contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination, at which point individuals feel confident that they will not return to old habits. Throughout these stages, individuals may relapse into old patterns of behavior, but each time they go through the cycle they have the opportunity to learn from each relapse and grow from it. Oakland Unite coaches receive training on this model, which guides their approach to working with participants.

Table II.1. Four phases of life coaching service engagement

Phase	Goals	Duration (months)	In-person contacts	Family contact
1	• Support trust and relationship building • Develop and implement Life Map, focusing on addressing safety and other immediate needs • Begin lining up possible resources and establish support network	1–4	2–3 per week	To be initiated
2	• Refine and implement Life Map, setting goals related to self-sufficiency and achievement • Incentivize achievements from the Life Map	5–8	1–2 per week	Monthly
3	• Refine and implement Life Map, continuing to focus on self-sufficiency and achievement	9–12	1 per week	Monthly
4	• Refine and implement Life Map, continuing to focus on self-sufficiency and achievement • Begin planning with client warm hand-offs to other partner agencies/support relationships/trusted mentors	13–18	1 every 2–3 weeks	Bi-monthly

Source: Oakland Unite (2020).

Figure II.1 presents a logic model for the life coaching program. The inputs of life coaching should lead to a series of intermediate outcomes for participants, in which they set goals, achieve short-term milestones, meet their immediate safety and other needs, and develop life skills. Life coaches provide direct support through the trusting relationships they build with participants, as well as through direct advocacy and family engagement. At the same time, Oakland Unite staff also play a key role in service provision, facilitating case conferencing between grantees, coordinating across multiple partners, providing training and certification opportunities, and offering support and oversight. As participants achieve intermediate outcomes and develop improved socio-emotional skills, they are ultimately able to achieve self-sufficiency, avoid violence and system involvement, and improve their well-being and safety. Because they are identified as those at highest risk of involvement in violence, their improved outcomes are expected to ultimately lead to reduced rates of violence in Oakland.

The period of 2016–2019 was a time of transition for the life coaching strategy and Oakland Unite more broadly. The strategy evolved from intensive case management to a life coaching model that emphasized transformative relationships. As described in later chapters, the programs expanded their eligibility criteria for participation, accepting more individuals who met certain risk factors but were not directly referred by law enforcement. In 2017, the City of Oakland founded the new DVP, which was led by the manager of Oakland Unite on an interim basis until a new chief of DVP was hired in 2019. Oakland Unite also saw staffing changes during this time. In 2020, Oakland Unite formally became a part of the DVP. These transitions occurred in the context of broader policy changes, including new state legislation affecting CSEC and juvenile offenders, a shift to intelligence-led policing by OPD,[2] frequent turnover in the leadership at OPD, and an increased focus on diversion among local law enforcement partners.

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[2] Intelligence-led policing is a collaborative policing model grounded in the assessment and management of risk. It is based on improving intelligence operations and community-oriented policing and problem solving. Police are expected to target efforts on specific individuals thought be most directly involved in violent crime (LeCates 2018).

Figure II.1. Life coaching logic model

Oakland neighborhood context

Inputs

- **Credible messengers with shared experience**
- **Intensive dosage**
- **Transformative coaching**
- **Financial incentives**

Trusting relationship

Advocacy and connection to services, supports, and opportunities

Family engagement

Intermediate outcomes

- **Goals set (Life Map)**
- **Milestones achieved and incentivized**
- **Immediate needs met**
- **Life skills developed**

Improved decision-making and conflict resolution skills

Forward-looking attitudes

Greater self-advocacy

Outcomes

- **Self-sufficiency (education and employment)**
- **Decreased risk of violence and system involvement**
- **Improved well-being and safety**

Reduced rates of violence in Oakland

Case conferencing between grantees facilitated by Oakland Unite

Coordination between grantees and other partners led by Oakland Unite

Training and certification opportunities provided by Oakland Unite

Support and oversight from Oakland Unite program officers and planners

B. Past research

Although many different types of programs focus on serving youth and young adults who have been involved in the justice system, these programs tend to have minimal impact on recidivism. In a meta-analysis of 22 studies of reentry and aftercare programs for juvenile and young adult offenders, James et al. (2013) examined experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of therapeutically oriented programs that included skills training, counseling, and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Overall, these programs achieved small reductions in recidivism (as measured by rearrests or reconvictions), although impacts varied across programs. More effective programs were implemented at an individual rather than a group level, were more intensive in terms of number of contacts per month although not necessarily longer in duration and were targeted toward older youth and those at the highest risk of recidivism.[3]

Mentoring is another common type of program for high-risk youth and young adults, although evidence about its effectiveness is mixed. One meta-analysis of 46 experimental or quasi-experimental studies of youth mentoring programs found that, overall, these programs reduced delinquency, aggression, and drug use and improved academic performance (Tolan et al. 2014). However, impacts varied across programs and were greater when mentors actively advocated for their mentee through the multiple systems and situations they needed to navigate, and paired this advocacy with emotional support and trust building. Other research has yielded less definitive results. An evaluation of six mentoring programs in Ohio that served juvenile offenders either on parole or probation found no significant differences in recidivism rates

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[3] The authors of the meta-analysis categorized the risk levels of the study samples using the available sample characteristics, including age of first arrest, number of prior offenses, proportion ethnic minority, gang involvement, and drug abuse.

for participants (Duriez et al. 2017). Another meta-analysis found that there was not sufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of mentoring on delinquency-related outcomes (Eddy and Schumer 2016).

There are a number of community-based programs that resemble Oakland Unite's life coaching program that show promising results. An example is Roca, a Massachusetts-based program that works with high-risk young men ages 17 to 24. Roca staff provide intensive case management, a CBT-based curriculum, and education and employment support through stage-based programming over a four-year period (Baldwin et al. 2018). In the first six months, staff focus on building meaningful, trusting relationships with participants. In the subsequent 18 months, staff increase the dosage of programming and focus on building the skills and competencies participants need to meet their goals. In the final two years, staff follow up with participants and offer support in critical moments. Relative to a comparison group of system-involved young men, Roca participants demonstrated a 65 percent reduction in recidivism (Schiraldi et al. 2015). Other promising community-based programs include the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI), which operates in 11 cities in Massachusetts, and the Becoming a Man curriculum in Chicago (see Petrosino et al. 2014 and Heller, Pollack et al. 2017). Oakland Unite's life coaching model draws on evidence-based practices from these and other studies. (For a fuller review of the relevant research literature, see Gonzalez et al. 2019).

During the current Oakland Unite evaluation period, the study team conducted annual evaluations of life coaching that focused on short-term implementation and participant outcomes. In 2017, we evaluated the impacts of life coaching on adults over a 6-month period and in 2019 we examined the impacts of life coaching on youth over a 12-month period. Key findings from each evaluation report are summarized in Table II.2. In both programs, we found that grantees served high-risk participants with histories of justice system contact and experience with violence. However, a limited share of participants received the full dosage recommended by the model, primarily due to attrition in the early months of services. We found small reductions in the likelihood of being arrested for a violent offense in the short term for both groups, and for youth, a sizeable decrease in the likelihood of dropping out of school. However, impacts on overall arrest rates and other justice-related outcomes were limited. These findings revealed the need to assess participant outcomes over a longer time period and to explore how program impacts may vary for different types of participants, including the subset who actively engage in life coaching.

Table II.2. Summary of previous life coaching evaluations

Evaluation year	Focus	Key findings
2016–2017	Adult life coaching (Gonzalez et al. 2017)	• Adult life coaching reduces short-term arrests for violent offenses in the 6 months following services but has limited impact on arrests for any offense • Most participants have histories of justice system contact and experiences with violence • Coaches provide frequent interactions and identify actionable goals and meaningful incentive structures • Agencies often must overcome initial distrust among clients referred from law enforcement (such as Ceasefire) • Agencies reported longer service periods of 18 months to 2 years as ideal, though the average participant receives services for 7 months • Finding life coaches with both the requisite personal experience and professional training can be difficult for agencies
2017–2018	Youth life coaching (Gonzalez et al. 2019)	• Youth life coaching reduces school dropout and short-term violent offense arrests but has limited effect on 12-month arrest rates • Most participants have histories of justice system contact and experiences with violence • Participation drops significantly after the first month of life coaching services • There is room for improved collaboration between life coaching agencies and the Alameda County Probation Department (ACPD) • There is a need for a more unified approach to address substance use and mental health across agencies and strategies • High cost of living and job-related stress are challenges for agency staff

III. Evaluation approach

The comprehensive evaluation aims to assess the implementation of youth and adult life coaching and their impacts on relevant participant outcomes, including involvement with the juvenile justice system and victimization, over the four-year period of 2016 to 2019. Below we describe the data sources and analysis methods we used in the report, as well as potential limitations to our analyses.

A. Data sources

To learn about how the youth and adult life coaching programs were implemented and assess their impacts on participant outcomes, we collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative information about agencies and participants. Qualitative data collection included site visits at each agency, semi structured interviews with staff and participants, focus groups, and a review of documents and materials provided by Oakland Unite and agency staff. In addition, we conducted a survey to gather information about Oakland Unite directly from a subset of participants. These various qualitative data collection efforts (Table III.1), spanned from summer 2017 through winter 2019. Finally, we collected multiple years of administrative data from various sources, including Cityspan (the database used by Oakland Unite grantees to record participant and service information), law enforcement, and education agencies. Appendix A contains additional details about each data source.

Table III.1. Data sources

Data source	Description
Agency visits and semi structured interviews	During visits to each agency, the evaluation team conducted semi structured interviews with agency staff members, including managers and line staff. Visits took place in July and August 2017. Follow-up telephone interviews with youth life coaching agencies were conducted in August and September 2018. We conducted a total of 12 site visits and 50 interviews.
Focus groups	The evaluation team led nine focus groups and seven interviews with life coaching participants (adults and youth), life coaches (certified and non-certified), key informants (working in law enforcement, public health, behavioral health, employment support, school districts, policy and advocacy), and participants' family members. We conducted the focus groups and interviews between July and November 2019. Focus groups ranged in size but typically included five to seven people.
Review of documents and materials	The evaluation team reviewed materials provided by Oakland Unite staff as well as materials collected directly from agencies during the site visits, such as scopes of work, agency budgets, and intake forms.
Participant survey	General topics of the participant survey included satisfaction with services, thoughts about the future, and experiences with violence. The surveys were fielded at each agency during September and October 2018. Across all agencies, 63 youth life coaching participants and 66 adult life coaching participants took the survey.
Administrative data	The evaluation team collected information on arrests, convictions, and dispositions from the ACPD; arrest and victimization incidents from the Oakland Police Department; school enrollment, attendance, behavior, and academic data from the Oakland Unified School District and Alameda County Office of Education; and service and participant information from Oakland Unite's Cityspan database. Data spanned through December 31, 2019.

To link individuals across the multiple sources of administrative data, we used identifying information, including first and last name, date of birth, gender, and address. Oakland Unite participants had to provide consent before their identifying information could be shared with evaluators. For youth life coaching

participants, the consent rate was 87 percent. For adult life coaching, the consent rate was 85 percent. Individuals who did not consent to share their personal information are included in descriptive statistics about services received but excluded from any analyses of outcomes, which require linking participants to other administrative data.

B. Analysis methods

We used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the implementation of each program and its effect on participant outcomes in the 30-month period after beginning services, which expands on previous evaluations of life coaching that examined only 6-month or 12-month outcomes. For the implementation analysis, we reviewed materials provided by Oakland Unite, analyzed interview responses within and across agencies in the same program to highlight key themes, and summarized participant survey and administrative data about services and participants.

For the impact analysis of each program (youth and adult life coaching), we identified a comparison group of individuals who were similar to participants in that program but did not receive any Oakland Unite services. These individuals were drawn from data from the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE), ACPD, OPD, and the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). To identify a similar comparison group, we used an approach known as propensity-score matching, which took into account individuals' demographics and prior juvenile justice, victimization, and educational histories based on the available administrative data. Propensity-score matching is a well-established approach for analyzing program impacts and has been found to approximate the results of experimental methods (Fortson et al. 2015; Gill et al. 2015).

To be included in the impact analyses, participants had to (1) consent to share their personal information for evaluation, (2) receive services between January 2016 and June 2017 (so we could observe their outcomes over 30 months in the available data), (3) meet a minimum service threshold of 10 hours for life coaching, and (4) have recorded demographic data. The 10-hour minimum service threshold was determined in conjunction with Oakland Unite, as one of the evaluation's goals is to assess outcomes for all participants, including those who do not receive the full recommended dosage over the four phases described in Chapter II.

After these four restrictions were applied, there were 302 participants in youth life coaching and 264 participants in adult life coaching eligible for matching. Of these, 192 youth life coaching participants were matched to an average of 15 comparison individuals each, and 257 adult life coaching participants were matched to an average of 24 comparison individuals each).[4] A small number of participants did not receive matches because no comparison group members resembled them sufficiently.

After matching, participants and comparison individuals had similar demographic characteristics and juvenile justice, victimization, and educational histories. Figures III.1 and III.2 compare selected baseline characteristics of the life coaching and comparison groups in the analysis sample after matching. In the regression analysis used to compare the two groups' outcomes, we also controlled for small remaining differences in individuals' characteristics and histories, taking into account the timing, frequency, and severity of their juvenile justice, victimization, and education experiences. Appendix B describes

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[4] When examining chronic absence from school and school discipline after beginning Oakland Unite services, we restricted the matched sample to youth life coaching participants who were enrolled in school in the outcome period and only their matched comparison youth who also were enrolled in school in the outcome period. See Appendix B for additional details

additional details about (1) the sample and the matching and regression methodology and (2) data on the baseline characteristics of Oakland Unite participants and the comparison group.

Figure III.1. Youth life coaching participants and comparison group after matching
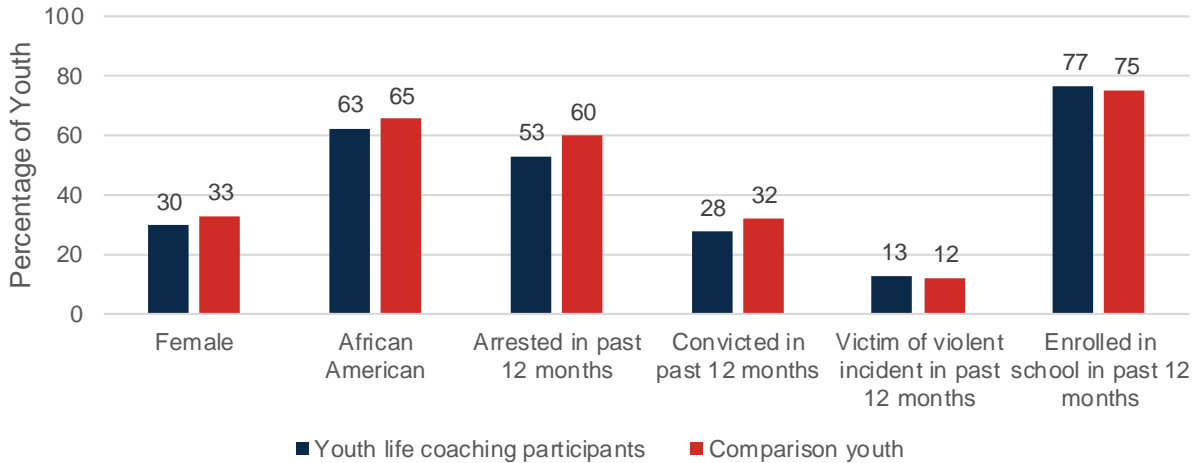
Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 3,001, including 192 youth life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. The school enrollment rate is based on youth under 18 years of age when they began services. None of the differences in the figure are statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

Figure III.2. Adult life coaching participants and comparison group after matching
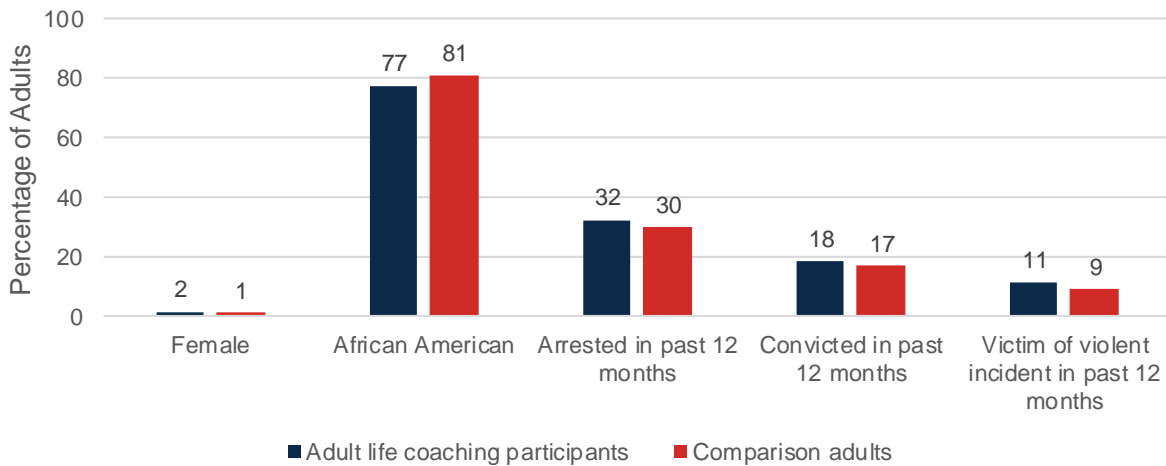
Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 6,436, including 257 adult life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services or 40 work hours between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. None of the differences in the figure are statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

After conducting the match, we analyzed outcomes in the 30-month period after participants began life coaching services. Table III.2 lists the confirmatory and exploratory outcomes of the impact analyses that were determined before beginning the analyses.[5] Participants began receiving services between January 2016 and June 2017 and therefore had different follow-up periods, ranging from February 2016–July 2018 to July 2017–December 2019.[6] The follow-up period for the comparison individuals corresponded to the same follow-up period for the Oakland Unite participant they were matched to. We used regression analyses to measure the impact of participating in Oakland Unite on these outcomes.

In addition to assessing these outcomes for the overall analysis sample described above, we conducted two subgroup analyses. First, we examined outcomes for participants who received at least 40 hours of services, the minimum amount grantees are asked to provide, in an exploratory analysis. For adult life coaching participants, we also examined outcomes for the subset of participants linked with the Ceasefire program, a violence reduction strategy that involves law enforcement, service providers, and community and faith leaders and aims to identify individuals at highest immediate risk of gun violence for support. Ceasefire is one of the major referral partners for the adult life coaching program.

Table III.2. Outcomes examined in the 30 months after starting life coaching services

Domain	Confirmatory outcomes	Exploratory outcomes
Arrests	• Had an arrest for any offense in Alameda County	• Had an arrest for an offense involving a gun in Alameda County • Had an arrest for a violent offense in Alameda County
Recidivism	• Had any delinquent finding or conviction in Alameda County	• Was sentenced to formal probation supervision in Alameda County • Violated probation in Alameda County
Victimization	• Was a victim of any violent crime reported to OPD	
School enrollment (youth only)	• Enrolled in an OUSD or ACOE school	
High school graduation (youth only)	• Graduated from an OUSD or ACOE school	
School attendance (youth only)		• If enrolled in school, was chronically absent (missed 10 percent or more of school days)
School discipline (youth only)		• If enrolled in school, had a recorded violent incident in school

OPD = Oakland Police Department; OUSD = Oakland United School District; ACOE = Alameda County Office of Education.

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[5] As an additional exploratory analysis, we examined short-term and long-term arrest, victimization, and recidivism outcomes 12 and 36 months after the start of services. The results of all exploratory analyses are reported in Appendix B.

[6] Some people who received services in the early months of 2016 had begun participating in Oakland Unite in the previous year. However, we did not have information about services received before January 1, 2016 (the start of the Measure Z funding period) for this report.

C. Limitations

Although the data sources and methods used for this evaluation provided rich information about the life coaching programs, they have some limitations:

The impact results may reflect differences between participants and comparison individuals that were not captured in the available data, particularly for the youth life coaching strategy. We matched Oakland Unite participants to similar comparison individuals using a large number of characteristics, but in any non-experimental analysis, it is possible that some differences could remain. In particular, youth life coaching programs are designed to serve youth just as they are being released from detention. In general, youth had similar rates of contact with law enforcement in the period immediately preceding the start of services as well as in the 12 months before starting services. Youth life coaching participants in our sample, however, were more likely than comparison youth to be charged with a violent offense shortly before starting services and be sentenced to probation in the 12 months before starting services (see Table B.3 in Appendix B). As a result, the analysis might underestimate the impact of services on their outcomes. Adult life coaching participants tended to have slightly higher rates of contact with law enforcement before starting services compared to comparison adults, but none of the differences among key variables were statistically significant.

The report could exclude criminal justice, victimization, and educational outcomes not reported in the available sources. Crime and violence are frequently underreported in administrative data; thus, relying on these data sources provides only a partial picture of participants' experiences. The report used criminal justice data reported by ACPD or OPD, which could exclude incidents that were not reported to police or occurred outside of these jurisdictions (for example, arrests and court processing in neighboring cities). Similarly, victimization data reflected only incidents that were reported to OPD, and frequently had incomplete personally identifiable information needed to link to other records. The available education data included only public, non-charter schools in OUSD and ACOE. Youth enrolled in other types of schools in Alameda County or beyond would be missing from these sources.

The impact analyses were limited to participants who consented to have their information matched to other data sources and participated between January 2016 and June 2017. About 15 percent of participants in the youth and adult life coaching programs did not consent to share their identifiable information with evaluators. People who do not consent to participate in the evaluation may differ from those who do. For example, Oakland Unite data show that life coaching participants who did not consent received fewer service hours, on average, than those who consented.

The participant and staff perspectives collected may not reflect the perspectives of all participants and staff. During interviews and focus groups, participants and staff could have provided responses that they felt would reflect favorably upon themselves or their agencies. Although we informed interview and focus group participants that their answers would be kept confidential, we cannot rule out this possibility. The surveys were conducted with a small sample of participants who happened to be present or were selected by the agency, and therefore may not reflect the views of all participants.

IV. Findings for youth life coaching

A. Overview of the youth life coaching program

The youth life coaching program aims to reengage high-risk youth in school and help them reduce or eliminate their contact with the juvenile justice system, following the model described in Chapter II. It is a partnership between Oakland Unite, ACPD, OUSD, ACOE, and Alameda County Health Care Services. The priority population is Oakland youth who are at high risk for violence or juvenile justice system involvement. Most referrals are designed to come from OUSD or ACPD, often just before youth are set to be released from the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC).

From January 2016 to July 2019, Oakland Unite funded six youth life coaching agencies, for a total grant award of $3,998,400.[7] In selecting grantees, Oakland Unite sought at least one agency with experience working with youth victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and one agency with experience working with multilingual immigrant youth. The agencies that offered youth life coaching services are described in Figure IV.1. In this chapter, we present implementation and impact findings for this program.

Figure IV.1. Youth life coaching agencies

East Bay Agency for Children (EBAC) specializes in addressing the mental health needs of youth with trauma. EBAC staffs a part-time mental health clinician to work with participants, refers them to other in-house support programs (such as its family resource centers), and partners with Bay Area Legal Aid to connect them to legal assistance.

East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC) provides life coaching services with a focus on helping youth enroll in school, complete the terms of their probation, connect to a supportive adult, and access career pathway employment programs and academic learning support. EBAYC also offers multilingual services to immigrant youth and their families.

Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting & Serving Sexually Exploited Youth (MISSSEY) aims to support sexually exploited youth. Life coaches provide trauma-informed support and mentoring and connect youth to wraparound services. Youth can also spend time in MISSSEY's drop-in center, which provides a safe space for them.

The Mentoring Center draws on its mentoring curriculum, which is designed to encourage character development, cognitive restructuring, and spiritual development, and includes life skills, employment, and anger management training. In addition, Mentoring Center staff facilitate prosocial learning groups for youth.

OUSD Alternative Education, in partnership with Community and Youth Outreach (CYO) and the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE), supports youth in their transition back to school. Youth are connected to life coaches based on their placement in an OUSD or ACOE alternative school. Life coaches are hired by CYO, which is a subgrantee.

Youth ALIVE! life coaches provide mentorship and connect youth to wraparound services. Staff also assess participants' need for substance abuse and mental health counseling and offer clinically supported, gender-specific support groups and links to ongoing mental health services both in-house and through outside referrals.

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[7] In addition to these six agencies, two partners that provided referral and placement coordination (Alameda County Juvenile Probation Department and OUSD Enrollment Coordinator) also received funding. Starting July 1, 2019, a new funding period began that provided grants to three youth life coaching agencies: EBAYC, Young Women's Freedom Center, and Youth ALIVE!. Community Works West is also part of Oakland Unite's new youth strategy, but as a diversion program.

B.   Implementation findings

1.   Participants

In a given year, approximately 260-360 youth received life coaching services. The number of youth receiving services peaked in 2017, at 356. This number has declined since then, reaching 263 in 2019 (Figure IV.2). Because life coaching services are available for up to 18 months, participants can receive services over multiple calendar years. Figure IV.2 also depicts the number of participants who began services by calendar year. The number of new participants declined steadily, from 163 in 2016 to 117 in 2019. During this period, the total grant amount awarded for youth life coaching averaged approximately $1.6 million each fiscal year ($1.7 million in 2016–2017, $1.3 million in 2017–2018, $1.7 million in 2018-2019, and $1.5 million in 2019-2020).

Figure IV.2. Annual number of youth life coaching participants and youth gun offenders in Oakland

Approximately 115 youth ages 18 and younger were arrested in Oakland each year during this period for an offense involving a gun (with the exception of 2018, when there was a significant but temporary

decrease in the number of youth arrested overall).[8] Consistent with state and national trends, however, the number of youth in Alameda County facilities and detention has decreased in recent years. In 2018, approximately 180 youth were in county facilities and detention in a given quarter. In 2019, this number was approximately 170.[9] According to ACPD data, about half of these youth were returning to or lived in Oakland.

Oakland Unite expanded eligibility criteria in 2018 to take a more preventive approach to reducing violence and include youth at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. Youth life coaching originally targeted youth who had been referred by the JJC Transition Center. However, as of July 2018, the program broadened the eligibility criteria to include youth who are at risk of engaging in or being victims of violence. For example, OUSD could now refer youth directly. Parents of some youth participants said they were referred to life coaching after asking for help at their children's school. The JJC and several life coaches stated that they broadened the eligibility criteria because the number of youth being detained decreased, yet each agency was still responsible for meeting enrollment targets. Oakland Unite staff confirmed that this change was implemented to address several factors, including a decrease in the number of eligible referrals and the number of youth that life coaching agencies encountered who demonstrated risk factors but were not justice-involved.

Along with the expanded eligibility criteria, a task force headed by the Alameda County District Attorney's office helped agencies identify CSE youth. Identifying CSE youth requires coordination across several partners, as criminal charges alone may not indicate whether youth are at risk of sexual exploitation. The SafetyNet Committee, a task force headed by the District Attorney's Office, played an important role in identifying CSE youth and referring them for life coaching and other services. In addition to traditional referrals from the JJC Transition Center, the expanded eligibility criteria allowed MISSSEY to receive referrals from other Oakland Unite agencies, such as Bay Area Women Against Rape, or from other organizations that attend the SafetyNet meetings, such as Bay Area Legal Aid.

The majority of youth life coaching participants were African American males ages 14 to 18. Sixty-eight percent of participants were African American, and 19 percent identified as Hispanic (Figure IV.3) over the four-year period. Around one in eight participants (12 percent) were neither Black nor Hispanic. Participants largely drew from the program's recommended age range, with 91 percent starting services between ages 14 and 18. A small group of participants were younger than 14 or older than 18, although some of these cases may reflect data entry errors. Between 2016 and 2019, the share of female participants ranged from 20 to 33 percent, with no clear time trend. Participants predominantly came from East Oakland, and slightly more participants came from Central Oakland than West. The regional distribution of participants was largely stable over time, barring 2019, when the share of participants from

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[8] Several factors may explain this temporary decline. According to OPD, officers stopped arresting youth for drug offenses in 2018 and moved toward more diversion. Patrol officers also made fewer stops that year. California Senate Bill 439, ending the arrest and prosecution of children under the age of 12 and modifying the ages that a person must be to fall within the jurisdiction of juvenile court, was signed in September 2018 and went into effect on January 1, 2019.

[9] In the fourth quarter of 2019, 33 percent of the 172 youth supervised by the Alameda County Juvenile Facilities Division were incarcerated in Juvenile Hall, 32 percent were under GPS monitoring, 22 percent were under home supervision, and 13 percent were in Camp Sweeny, a compulsory minimum-security residential program. For more information, see: https://probation.acgov.org/probation-assets/files/probation-data/Alameda%20County%20Probation%20Population%20Profile%20Q4.2019.pdf

West Oakland dropped by 15 percentage points from the prior year and the share from Central increased 11 percentage points.

Figure IV.3. Demographic characteristics of youth life coaching participants

Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Note: The "Other" category in the racial composition includes all other races and ethnicities aside from African American and Hispanic. The "Other" category in the region composition includes any area in Oakland not within the East, Central, or West regions, as well as locations outside of Oakland. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

The vast majority of youth life coaching participants had contact with the justice system in the year leading up to services. Eighty-three percent of participants were arrested before starting services and 39 percent were a victim of a violent crime reported to police (Figure IV.4). About half (46 percent) of participants were arrested in the three months before beginning life coaching, and most (70 percent) were arrested in the year leading up to the start services. This is consistent with the JJC Transition Center being a major referral source for youth into the program. About 4 in 10 participants were victims of violent crimes at some point in their lives before the start of life coaching (Figure IV.4, right panel). Only a small percentage of participants (4 percent), however, were victimized in the three months before services.

Participants beginning services in 2019 had notably lower arrest rates at the start of services compared to participants at the beginning of the evaluation period. With the change in referral requirements in mid-2018 that allowed agencies to engage youth beyond direct referrals from the JJC Transition Center, the prior arrest rate of participants declined over time. Eighty-eight percent of participants first observed in 2016 had ever been arrested, compared to 64 percent of participants first observed in 2019. Although

victimization rates were also slightly lower among recent cohorts of participations, the difference between years was much smaller.

Figure IV.4. Percentage of youth life coaching participants with arrest or victimization histories prior to start of services
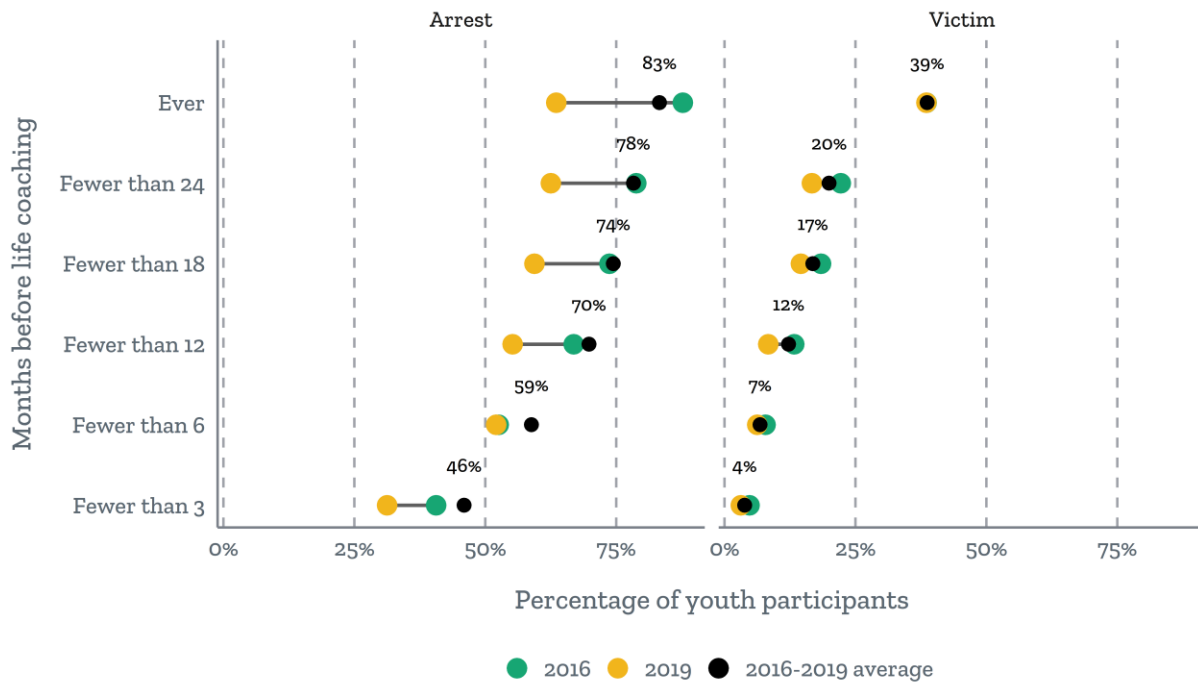
Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan and OPD data for 2016–2019.

Note: Results are based on 646 individuals (88 percent of all youth life coaching participants) who consented to share identifying information. Time periods are determined according to the month and year in which the participant first had any service contact with youth life coaching.

Almost a quarter (22 percent) of youth life coaching participants had a gun offense before starting services, and 46 percent had a violent offense; most of these arrests occurred in the two years before beginning life coaching. Eight percent of participants had been arrested for gun offenses and 17 percent had been arrested for a violent crime in the three months preceding services. The rate of prior violent offenses follows a similar trend between 2016 and 2019 as overall arrest rates, with markedly lower rates for the cohort starting life coaching in 2019. The share of participants with prior gun offenses, however, had a less clear pattern over time; rates in 2016 were not consistently higher when looking across different periods before services (for example, six months before services versus three months before services).

Figure IV.5. Percentage of youth life coaching participants with gun or violent offense histories prior to start of services
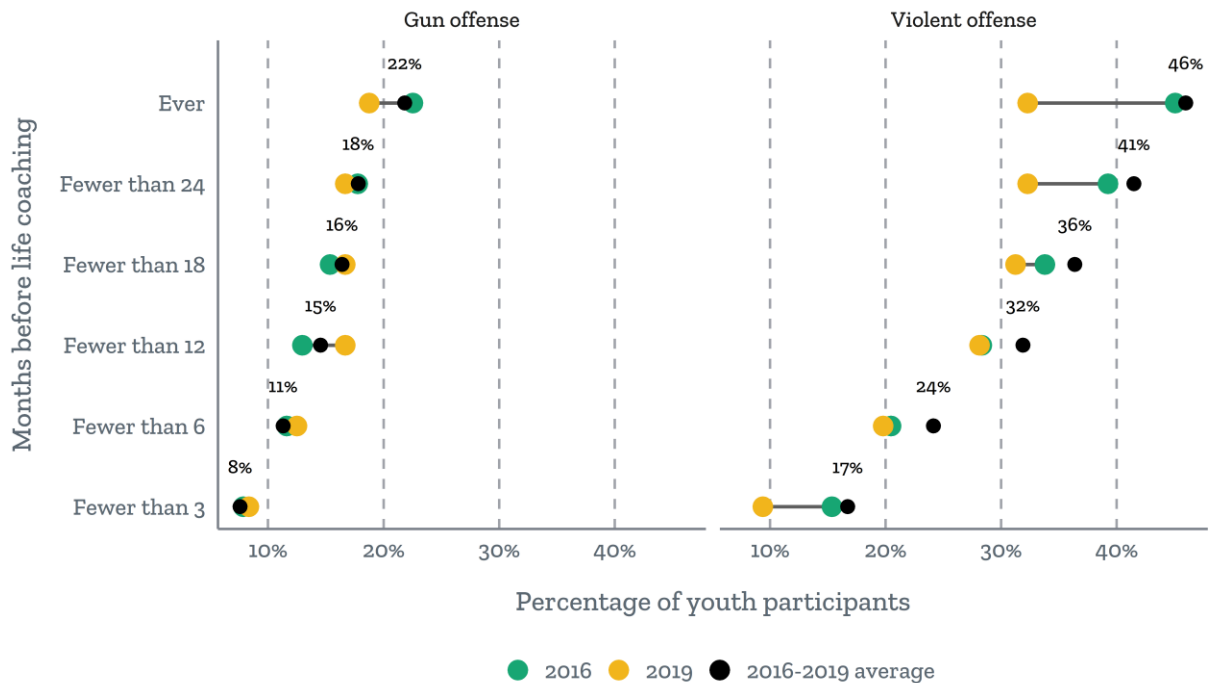
Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan and OPD data for 2016–2019.

Note: Results are based on 646 individuals (88 percent of all youth life coaching participants) who consented to share identifying information. Time periods are determined according to the month and year in which the participant had initial service contact with youth life coaching.

Youth participants previously in the JJC had substantially higher rates of arrest but similar prior victimization rates as other participants (Figure IV.6). As expected, 100 percent of the youth who were in juvenile detention before starting life coaching had been previously arrested. Among youth who had not been detained in the JJC before starting life coaching, the prior arrest rate was much lower, at 53 percent. Both groups of participants were equally likely to have been a victim of violence at any point before starting life coaching (about 4 in 10 participants).

Figure IV.6. Percentage of youth life coaching participants with arrest or victimization histories before services, by detention in JJC
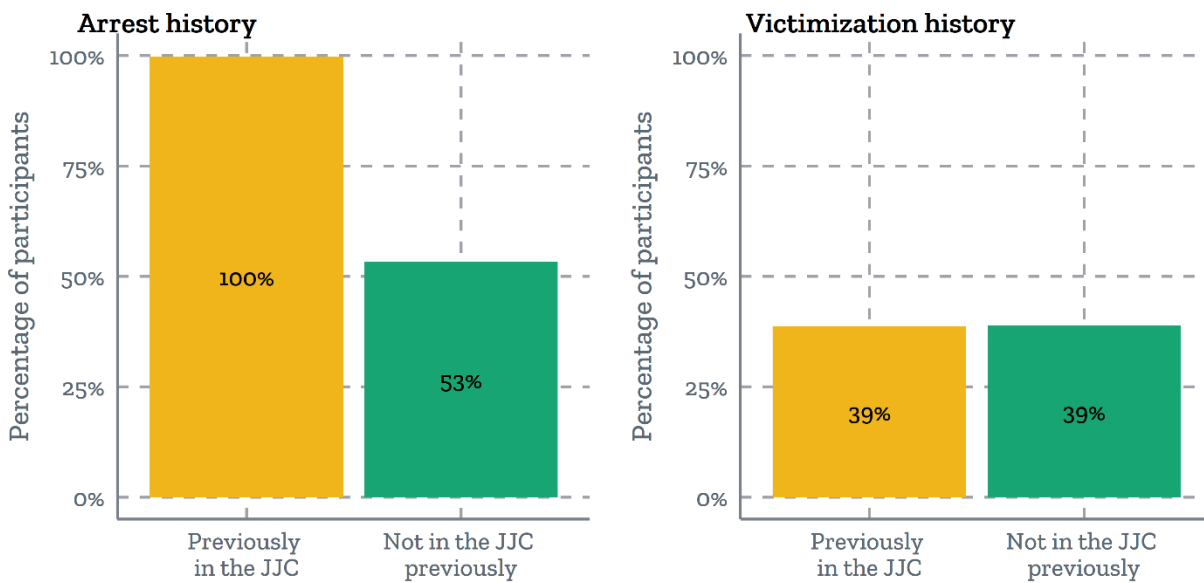
Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan and OPD data for 2016–2019.

Note: Results are based on 646 individuals (88 percent of all adult life coaching participants) who consented to share identifying information, 417 of which had previously been in the JJC. Time periods are determined according to the month and year in which participants had initial service contact with youth life coaching.

Most participants had been enrolled in school in the academic year preceding their life coaching program, but they often faced attendance and discipline issues (Figure IV.7). Between 2016 and 2019, 70 percent of youth participants were enrolled in school, either in the Oakland Unified School District or in an alternative school run by the Alameda County Office of Education. Among those participants enrolled in school, 71 percent were chronically absent, missing at least 10 percent of their enrolled days in the preceding school year. Participants also exhibited discipline issues, with 36 percent being suspended from school at some point before their involvement with Oakland Unite, and 28 percent having been involved in a violent incident at school specifically. Although chronic absenteeism rates trended upwards between 2016 and 2019, other education risk factors did not exhibit a clear shift over time.

Figure IV.7. Schooling outcomes of youth life coaching participants
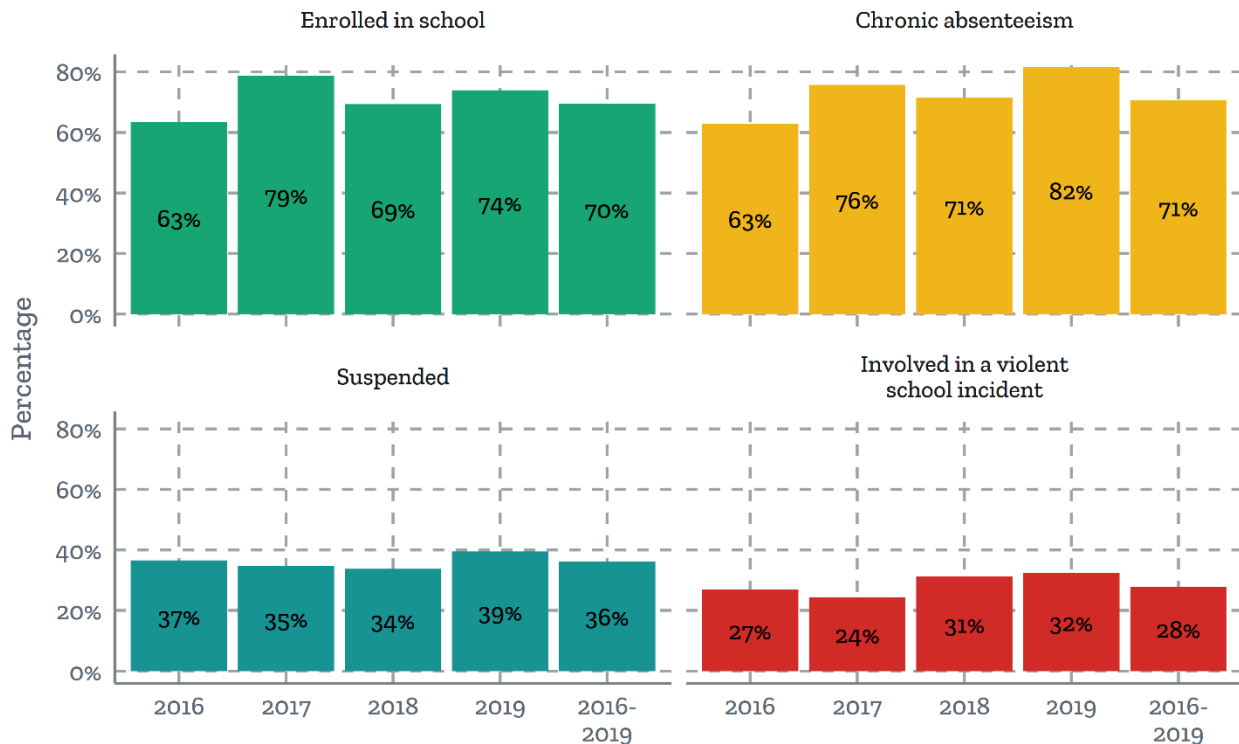
Notes: The sample is restricted to the 646 youth life coaching participants who consented to their information being shared with independent evaluators. Values reported for the outcomes of chronic absenteeism, suspension, and involvement in a violent school incident are based on the sample of participants who were enrolled in school prior to starting life coaching. Participants were counted as having chronic absenteeism if they missed at least 10 percent of the previous school year's days.

2.   Services

Only a quarter of youth completed the first phase of life coaching services as recommended by the model (Figure IV.8). Almost three quarters (73 percent) of participants were retained through the first phase of services (at least four months), but only a quarter also received two or more weekly service contacts on average, the minimum recommended in phase 1. Considering only those who fully complied with the program model in the previous phase, the share of participants complying with the model increased after phase 1. Of the 138 participants who received the full phase 1 service model, 72 percent averaged at least one weekly contact and were retained throughout the full length of phase 2. By phase 3, only 18 percent of all participants remained, but of those participants over two thirds complied with the phase 3 requirements. Overall, only 6 percent of youth completed the full life coaching model, as prescribed by both length and intensity of services across the four phases. These service engagement patterns were the same between youth previously in the JJC and those who were not previously detained (not shown).

Figure IV.8. Share of youth completing the life coaching service model
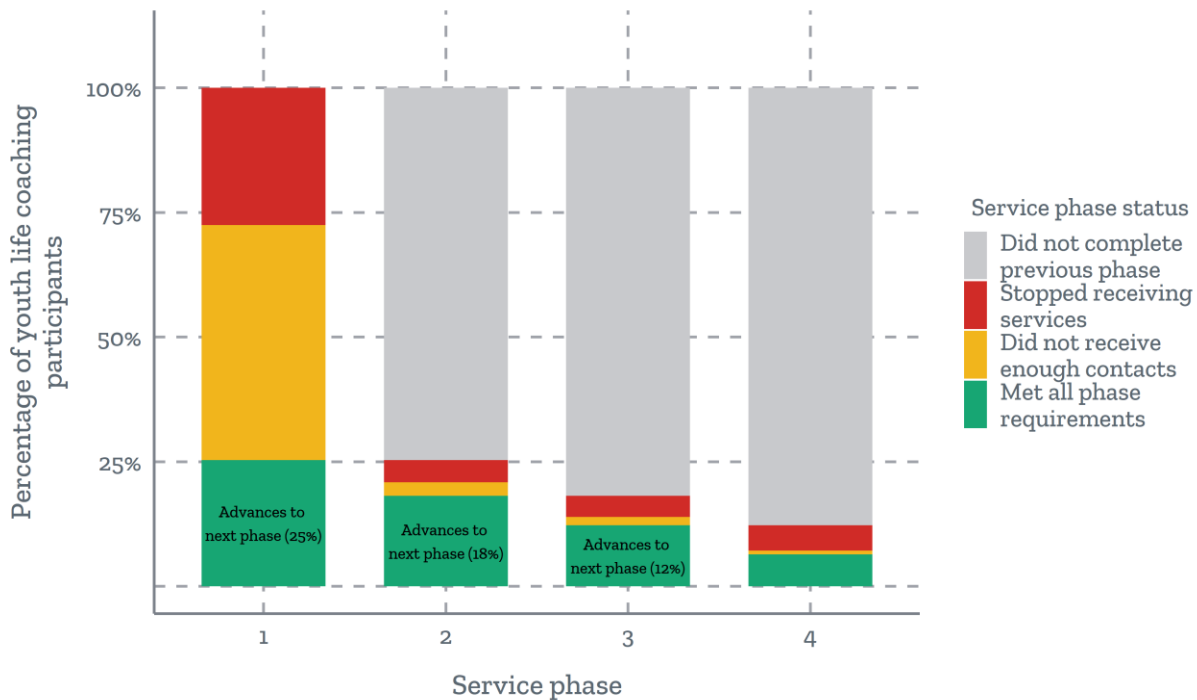
Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Notes: The sample of 545 participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe the full year-and-a-half service window.

Service duration and intensity varied significantly across participants. Figure IV.9 provides a fine-grained view of participant engagement, illustrating both the duration and intensity of services received each week for every individual served by youth life coaching. The top rows indicate participants who received the most life coaching contacts overall. These are youth who engaged for a long period of time *and* received high-intensity services throughout their engagement (as reflected by the darker shading, which indicates weeks with a greater number of service contacts). Participants at the bottom are those who received the least number of contacts overall, largely because they only participated in life coaching for a very short amount of time. This figure also shows that some participants have inactive periods before reengaging with life coaching.

Almost a quarter of participants (23 percent) stopped receiving life coaching after the third month (not shown). Although participant retention decreases with each passing week, the largest movement of participants out of the program occurs early on, within the initial three to four weeks of services. By the start of the ninth month, half of participants had stopped receiving services. Examining participants over an 18-month period following the beginning of services, we see that participation averaged just over eight months, though this could include some inactive periods during which a participant did not receive services. Exit reasons were not tracked in Cityspan, but life coaches said that youth who drop out commonly have difficulty getting out of their comfort zones, have families move away from Oakland, or are incarcerated for violating the terms of their probation.

Figure IV.9. Intensity of services received by youth life coaching participants
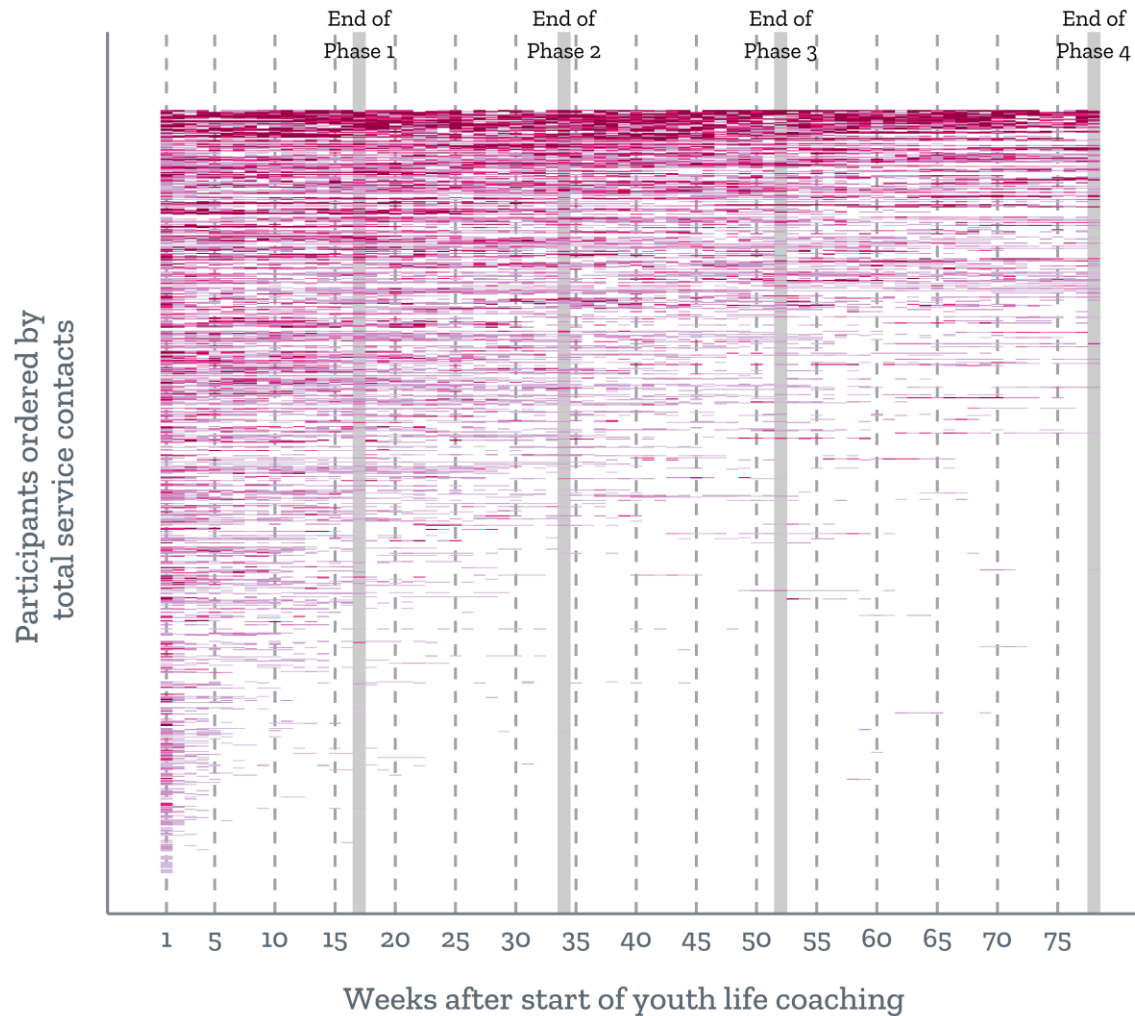
Figure IV.9: How to interpret

Each row represents the number of service contacts received by a single participant over an 18-month period. Participants are ordered according to the total number of service contacts received over the duration of their participation. Participants receiving the fewest contacts are positioned at the bottom; participants with the greatest number are positioned at the top. Darker areas reflect weeks with a greater intensity of services than lighter areas. Blank areas reflect weeks with no service contacts.

Number of service contacts

1 2 3 4 5+

Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Notes: The sample of participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began youth life coaching services no later than July 1, 2018 to ensure 18 months of service data across participants from all years.

Primarily, however, life coaches said that some youth who are referred to life coaching are not ready for services and either drop out early during the process or take some time before fully engaging in services. Participants and their families noted that a participant must be willing to change in order to fully engage in services, regardless of what the program offers. The link between readiness for change and program engagement is supported by research: A study of adolescent offenders concluded that matching interventions to individuals' stages of change may reduce treatment dropout and increase client motivation and therapeutic progress (Willoughby and Perry 2002). For example, the authors note that a youth who is in the precontemplative stage (the first step in the Stages of Change model) would likely have a negative reaction to a program that is action-oriented. The goal in the precontemplative stage should be to help youth want to change. [10]

Figure IV.10. Share of participants actively receiving youth life coaching services, by week after initial participation

Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Notes: This figure depicts participant retention rates based on the full-time span between participants' first and last recorded youth life coaching contact. The sample of participants included in the figure is restricted to the 545 participants who began youth life coaching services no later than July 1, 2018 to ensure 18 months of service data across participants from all years.

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[10] The authors recommend that people working with youth who are at this stage take the role of a "nurturing caregiver", as youth at this stage are most likely to continue with services if they feel that the person genuinely cares about them and their well-being. Although youth in this stage are least open to making a change, increasing their awareness of the problem and allowing them to release their emotions appear to be the most appropriate change processes to use with them (Prochaska et al. 1992; Prochaska and Norcross 1994).

Participant retention dropped more quickly in the later years of the evaluation period. In 2016 and 2017, participants tended to drop off from the program more slowly than in 2018, as shown in Figure IV.10. (Participants beginning services in 2019 are not included in the figure because a complete year-and-a-half service period could not be observed for them.) Among 2016 participants, it took until week 46 before only half of all participants were still active. For the 2018 cohort, participation levels dropped to 50 percent in week 25. This translated to fewer youth completing the phases of the program over time. Whereas 75 percent of youth were still active at the end of phase 1 in 2016, among 2018 participants only 62 percent were still active after phase 1.

The median participant received a total of 53 service hours, but this number declined for each new cohort of youth (Figure IV.11).[11] Participants in all years received a wide range of total service hours during their involvement, as shown in Figure IV.11. The median number of service hours peaked for the 2016 cohort, at 60 hours, and dropped to 25 for the 2018 cohort. Because the sample is restricted to participants who can be observed in the data for 18 months, the reported differences across cohorts represent a meaningful reduction in total service receipt over time.

Beyond comparing median values, the overall *distribution* of individual-level service hours also changed dramatically over time. The prominent hump in the 2016 curve (indicating the number of hours received by the greatest number of participants) is centered at approximately 90 hours. The equivalent hump for the 2017 cohort shifts leftwards, denoting a reduction in hours received across a large share of participants who began services that year. For participants starting services in 2018, a flat line replaces the defined hump, which indicates a nearly equal probability of a participant receiving six hours of service as 60 hours. Although the smaller sample size of 2018 participants is one explanation for this distributional characteristic, the key factor is the relative shortage of participants who sustained intensive participation at levels seen in earlier life coaching cohorts.

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[11] Because service hours ranged widely across participants, we report medians instead of averages. Median values are less influenced by extreme values in the data, such as the large number of participants who received fewer than one hour of service or those who received more than 150 hours.

Figure IV.11: How to interpret

The horizontal axis represents the total number of service hours received among participants who began life coaching in the designated year, and is displayed on a logarithmic scale for visual clarity. The vertical line in each row denotes the median number of participant service hours. For example, the median number of service hours for a participant who began youth life coaching in 2016 is 59.8 (meaning half of participants received more than 59.8 hours, and half of participants received fewer). Each dot represents the total number of services hours received by a single participant.

Figure IV.11. Distribution of total number of youth life coaching service hours, by initial year of service
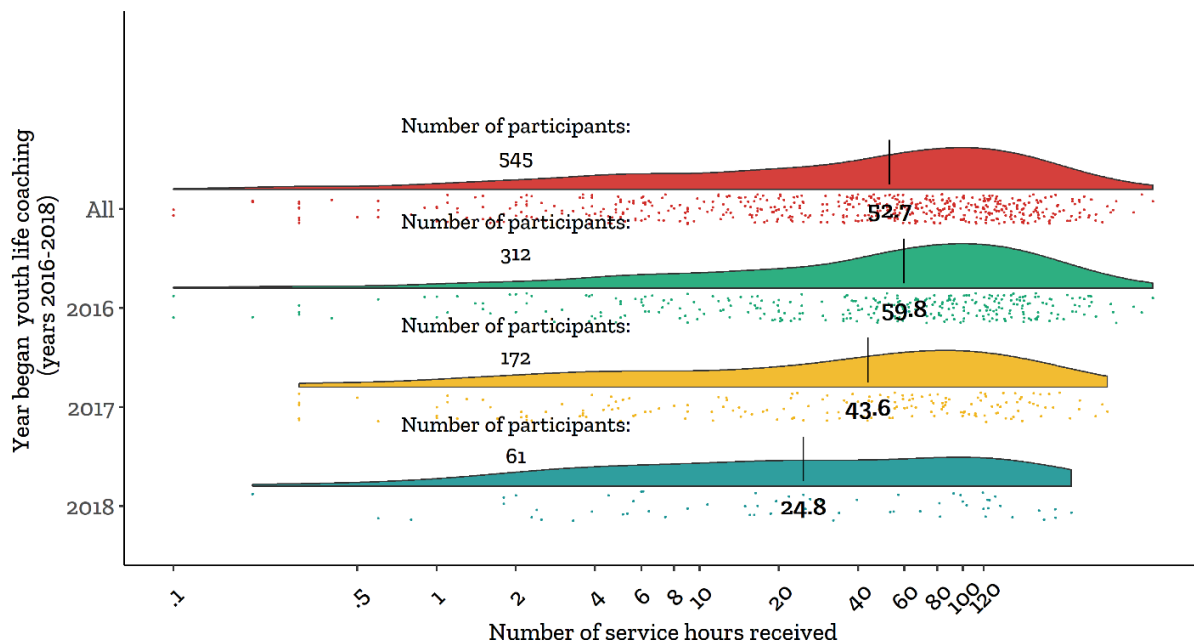
Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Notes: The sample of participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe the full year and a half long service window. Only service hours recorded in the first 18 months of a participant's involvement in life coaching are included in reported total service hours.

The average number of weekly service hours received did not significantly change over an individual's service duration, but decreased among recent cohorts (Figure IV.12). Although the Oakland Unite life coaching model suggests that service intensity should gradually decrease as participants move through the phases of the program, there was not a clear trend in average weekly service hours over the duration of participation. Although there are week-specific peaks, the weekly averages are relatively flat over an 18-month period for all cohorts. Overall, active participants in the 2016–2019 period averaged 2.9 hours of weekly contact, with little variation in averages across the phases.

However, there are differences in the overall level of service intensity across cohorts. Participants who began life coaching in 2016 averaged 3.4 hours of services over their first four months of service, compared to 2.0 hours among participants beginning services in 2018. For participants starting services in

2018, weekly service hours during phase 3 and phase 4 (roughly 2.9 hours) were higher than during phases 1 and 2. In other words, participants who stayed with the program longer also engaged with services more intensively each week. Thus, two factors drove the reduction in total service hours each cohort received between 2016 and 2018: (1) a decline in the average weekly hours active participants received and (2) increasing and more rapid participant attrition over time.

Figure IV.12. Participants' average weekly total of contact hours, by initial year of service
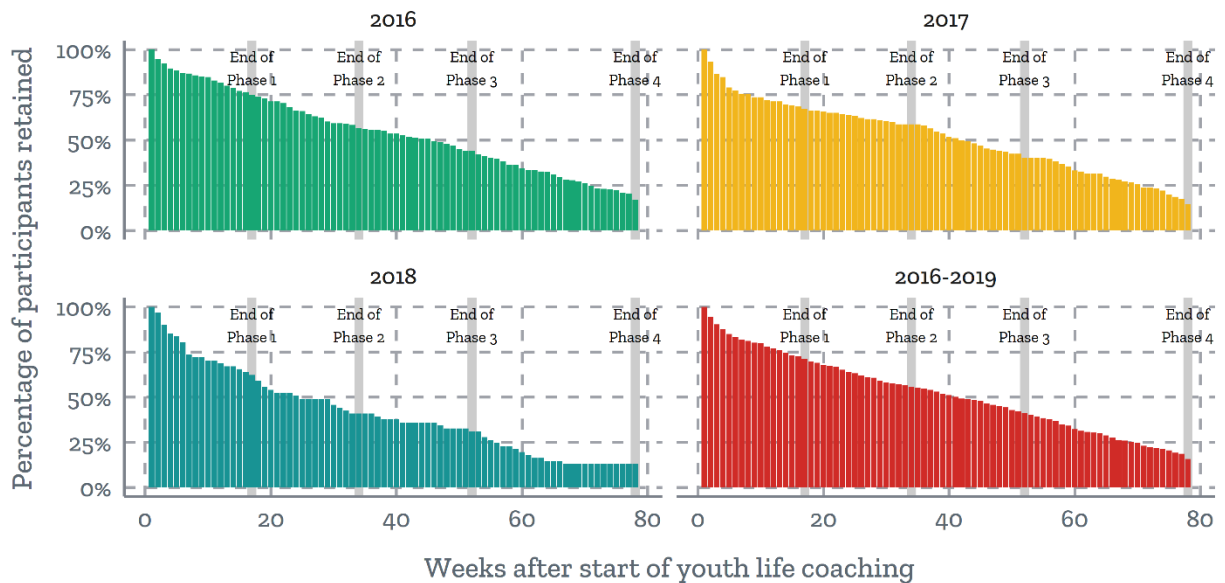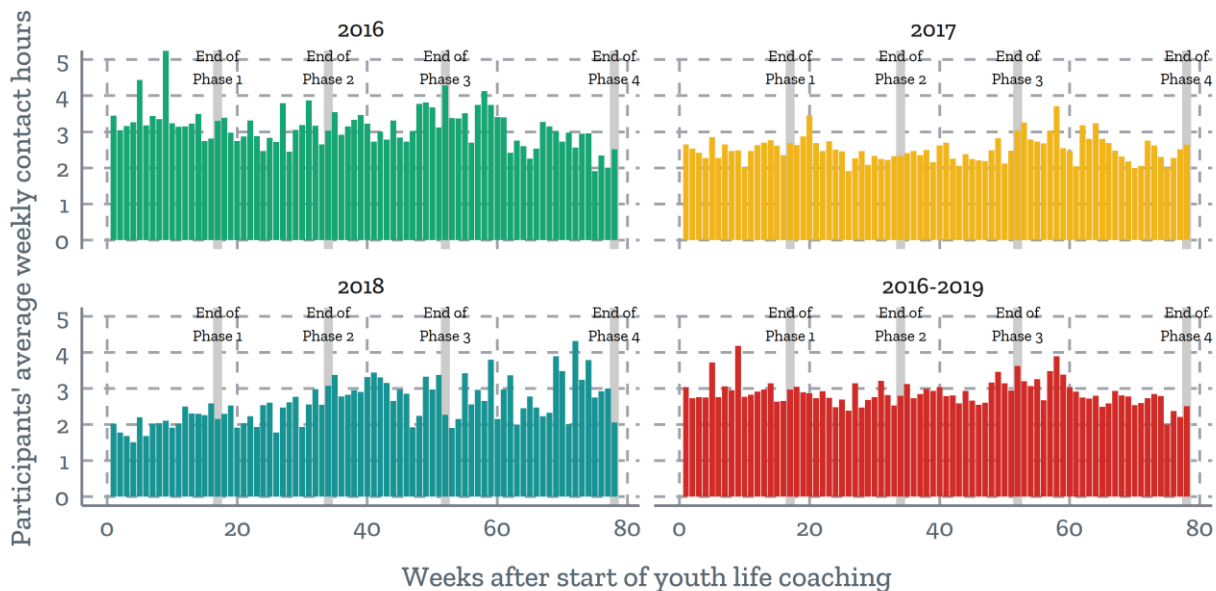

Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Note: The sample of 544 participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe participants' full 18-month service periods. Weekly average values are calculated for the group of participants receiving services in the specified week. The bottom-right panel includes individuals starting services in 2016 through 2018 whose 18-month period included participation data for 2019.

As noted earlier, several factors shifted over the course of the evaluation period, including referral sources, eligibility criteria, participant risk levels, and the number of certified life coaches. Some or all of these factors could help explain the changes in service intensity and duration observed over time. For example, as participants' risk level declined, youth may have required less intensive services. At the same time, Oakland Unite staff noted that grantees' data entry practices have improved over the years.

Arrest and victimization histories were similar between youth who engaged life coaching services extensively and those who engaged for a month or less. Participants who received services for at least 45 weeks made up the top quintile in terms of total service weeks, and represent an "extended engagement" group. Relative to participants who received four or fewer weeks of service, there were limited differences in their respective arrest and victimization rates prior to beginning life coaching. Eighty-three percent of the extended engagement participants had been arrested prior to the start of service, compared to 81 percent of participants receiving services for a month or less (Figure IV.13). This similarity is not altogether surprising, as involvement with the JJC was a prerequisite for referral to life coaching for much of the evaluation period and most youth were expected to have been arrested prior to services. The difference between the two groups was slightly larger when looking at prior victimizations:

42 percent of participants with extended engagement had been a victim of a violent incident reported to OPD, compared to 35 percent of those who only engaged for one month.

Figure IV.13. Comparison of prior histories between youth life coaching participants with limited and extended program engagement

Half of the youth life coaching participants had continuous contact with life coaching services, with no service gaps exceeding 30 days. Among the other half of participants who did sustain at least a 30-day gap in service participation before resuming contact, most (28 percent of all participants) had a single gap separating their participation into two distinct service periods (Figure IV.14). Over an 18-month window, some participants had multiple service breaks. One in 10 participants was absent from the program at least three times, with each break lasting a minimum of one month. Life coaches explained that sometimes participants engage in services for a few months, drop off, and then reengage.

Although just under half (47 percent) of participants who had multiple service periods returned after one to two months, many returned after substantially longer absences from the program. Among participants who were absent from life coaching services for at least 30 days and then returned to receive at least one service contact, the most common timeframe for returning was one to two months (Figure IV.15). However, a sizeable share of the group of returnees waited substantially longer before resuming services. More than one in five such participants had a gap of six months or longer before resuming program participation.

Figure IV.14. Share of youth participants by number of continuous life coaching service periods
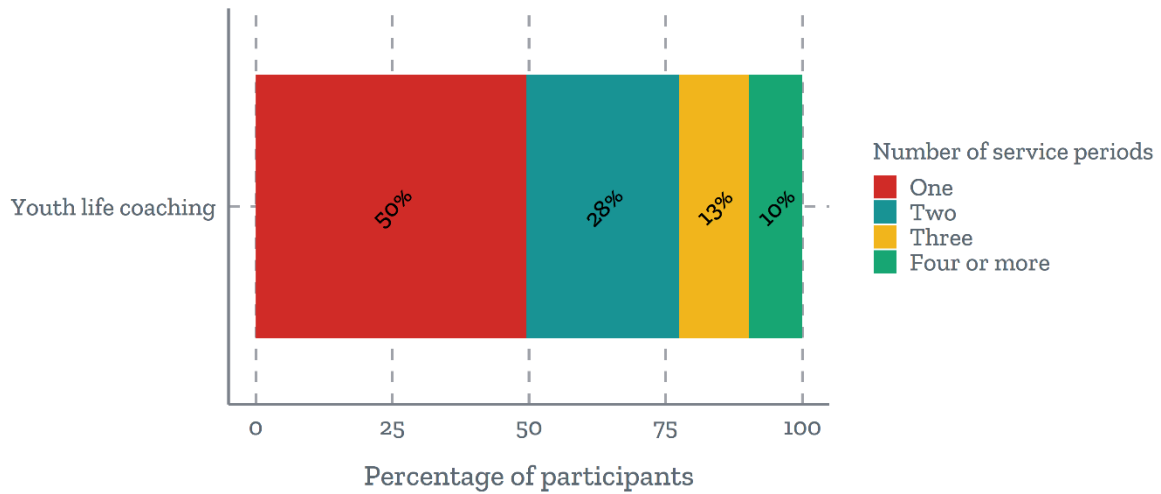
Notes: The sample of participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe the 18-month service window. We define a participant to have begun a new service period if more than 30 days had elapsed between consecutive service contacts.

Figure IV.15. Time elapsed before participants returned after break in service for participants with more than one distinct service period
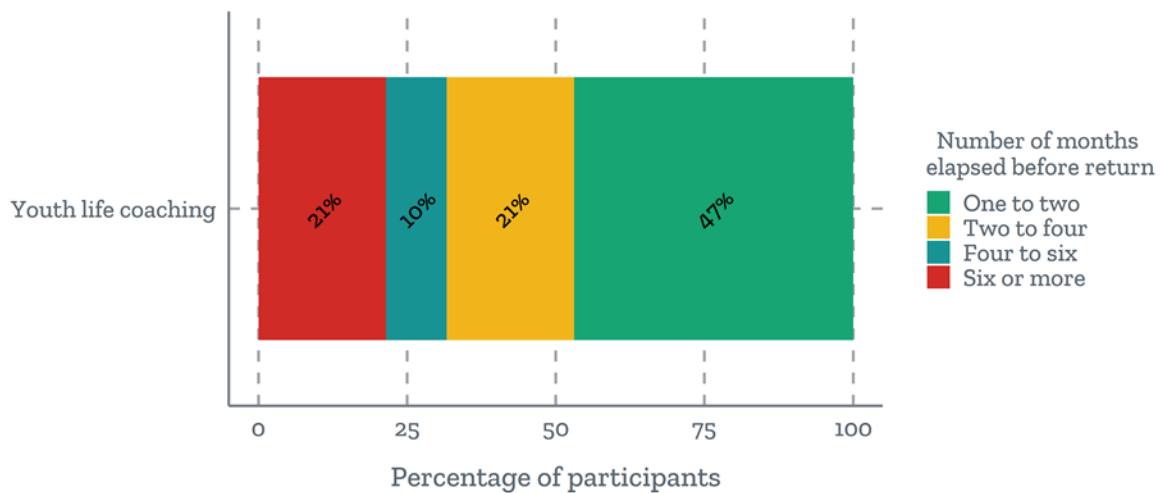
Notes: The sample of participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe the 18-month service window. We define a participant as having begun a new service period if more than 30 days had elapsed between consecutive service contacts. This figure displays the time elapsed between participants' first service period and the next service contact they have following a 30-day break, if applicable. For individuals with multiple service contact breaks, time elapsed after the second break onwards is not shown.

About one in five youth accessed other Oakland Unite services after starting life coaching. One component of the life coaching program is to foster participants' transition from intensive case management to other supports and resources. For some participants, that means accessing other Oakland Unite-supported services. Twenty-one percent of youth received services from another Oakland Unite strategy after starting life coaching. Most commonly, youth began education and economic support services (12 percent) or participated in violent incident and crisis response, which includes crisis response to victims of CSE, shootings, and stabbings (7 percent). A small share (4 percent) of participants eventually transitioned to adult life coaching.[12]

Some youth received Oakland Unite services *before* starting life coaching (12 percent) or at the same time as starting life coaching (11 percent). Among these youth, violent incident and crisis response was the most common program. For example, 16 percent of participants received violent incident and crisis response strategy services either before or concurrent with the start of life coaching, compared to 6 percent after the start of life coaching. The majority of violent incident and crisis response service recipients did not receive any other Oakland Unite-supported services beforehand, and did not engage other Oakland Unite services after starting youth life coaching. Participant flows are depicted in Figure IV.16 (percentages are not shown).[13]

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[12] Individuals who participated in both youth and adult life coaching are included in the analyses of both programs.

[13] The small number of participants shown as receiving adult life coaching before or concurrent with youth life coaching may reflect a data entry error, as one agency offered life coaching to both youth and adults.

Figure IV.16: How to interpret

This figure visualizes the flow of youth life coaching participants through other Oakland Unite services at three time periods: before starting life coaching, concurrent with life coaching (that is, starting on the same date), and after starting life coaching. The width of the gray areas illustrates the number of individuals flowing from one type of service to another. Most participants receive only life coaching, as reflected by the large gray area at the top of the figure showing the flow of participants from no prior services to life coaching to no further services.

Figure IV.16. Youth life coaching participants' engagement with other Oakland Unite programs
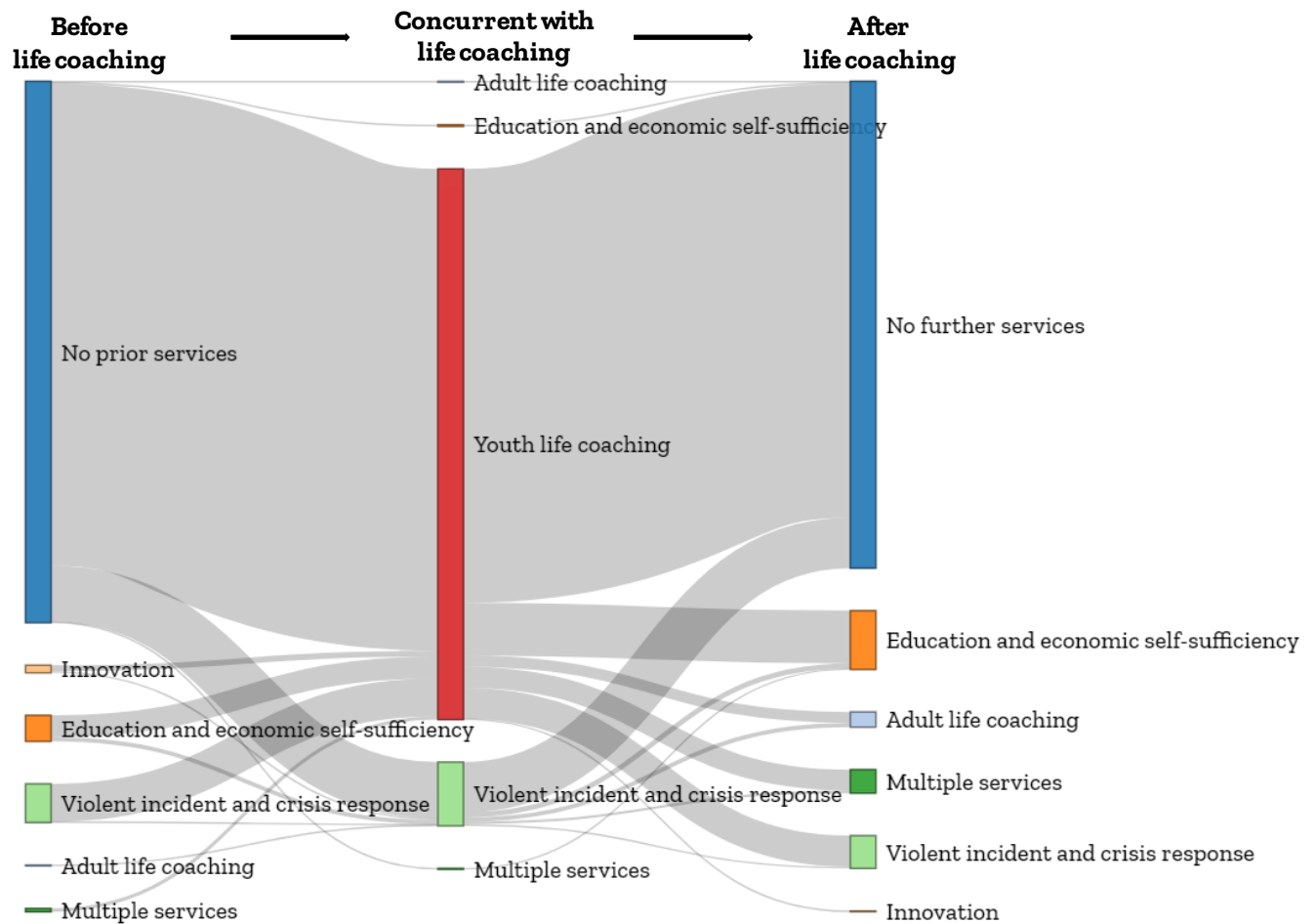
Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Note: Bar height corresponds to the number of participants. Over the 2016–2019 evaluation period, 736 individuals participated in youth life coaching and consented to their information being made available to independent evaluators.

3. Participant experiences

Participants can sometimes feel stigma and apprehension when referrals to life coaching are tied to law enforcement. Some youth said that when they were first introduced to life coaching, particularly when they were on probation, their participation did not feel voluntary because life coaches "just show up at [their] house." Even though some youth did not consider their initial contact to be a choice, they became more receptive to the program after meeting their coach. One youth said, "I also didn't have a choice … but I actually like my coach." One key informant said that when referrals are tied to law enforcement entities, both adult and youth participants may feel "stigma and apprehension."

Life coaches reported that financial incentives help motivate youth, but also that incentive amounts are too low or run out too quickly for some participants. While working on the Life Map, life coaches and participants review each step toward a goal and determine which steps to incentivize. One life coach said this process "helps kids build self-advocacy skills and talk about what they really want to have incentives for." Other life coaches shared similar thoughts on incentives, with one life coach remarking that some youth "wouldn't come if they didn't get the incentives." Key informants agreed that life coaching needs to be "strongly incentivized for youth to participate." About 13 percent of the youth life coaching budget is allocated for participant financial support and incentives. Data on the payments participants received were not consistently available.

Life coaches also identified some challenges with incentives. Some said the incentive amount is not sufficient for some youth, who tell life coaches they can earn more money on the streets than from the incentives. Other participants are motivated and work through their milestones quickly, which means they max out on their incentives early on. Life coaches noted that some participants lose motivation and leave services when the incentives are exhausted. Some agencies try to find additional funds for youth by leveraging other funding streams or incentivizing youth to obtain employment. A different challenge is that undocumented participants cannot receive incentive checks, so life coaches find other ways to support them (such as providing gift cards).

Life coaches, participants, family members, and key informants have found that youth's success is tied to life coaches' personal involvement with participants and their families. Family members said that life coaches are able to connect with their children in ways they may not be able to. For example, a mother noted that after her son lost his older brother to gun violence, the life coach became a trusted male role model. Participants appreciated their coaches' patience as well as their communication style. Youth mentioned that coaches are "motivating" and "not the type of person who would judge you right away without knowing you." Key informants agreed that life coaches who share a similar background with participants become "credible messengers," and because they are "not an authority figure," it helps foster a trusting relationship.

One life coach mentioned the need to establish a relationship built on trust to ensure that youth "[get] a sense you're genuinely interested in them, and that they are not just another number." Life coaches accomplish this by getting intensively involved in the participants' lives. Life coaches who worked with youth said they often helped the entire family access these services. In addition, key informants, families, and participants talked about how life coaches attend criminal court with participants and sometimes even advocate for a participant at court. For example, one parent said her son's life coach drives her and her son to court dates. Another family member said that her son's life coach had driven her to the hospital when he got into a car accident.

Youth shared that their life coaches helped them set and achieve goals, such as to attend and do better in school. Youth participants and their families described successes in school, such as regularly

attending classes, improving grades, and graduating high school. One youth participant said, "I had a lot to make up, and my [life coach] helped me set goals. It made me more motivated to actually attend school and get those credits that I needed." One mother said, "I wanted to make sure my daughter was motivated to continue to do her work and not get into trouble." Once goals are set, life coaches continue to encourage and motivate participants. For example, they encourage youth to stay engaged in school by "popping up to [their] school" to check in on them, talk to teachers, and even bring them food.

> *"What I like about [life coaching] is that they make you set your goals and accomplish them. They don't give up on you easily. When they see you going down, they realize it right away, and [get] you the help you need."*
>
> -Youth participant◢

Life coaches may also connect youth with employment opportunities. Three family members of youth participants mentioned that the life coach connected their son or daughter with job opportunities after school. Their child appreciated having a job for a few hours, and the parents suggested youth should get more opportunities to work. One mother said jobs are not only good for money, but also help youth "keep busy" and thus avoid getting into trouble. Both adult and youth participants also talked about being able to get off probation and "stay out of trouble" as a result of the support they received.

Substance use can be a challenge for youth and their life coaches. Life coaches reported finding it challenging to stop substance abuse and said they employed a harm reduction approach to address the problem. Life coaches explained that it is important for participants to feel safe and not perceive that they are being judged for engaging in substance use or abuse. In particular, staff acknowledged that it is unlikely that youth will stop occasional use of marijuana, and generally found the harm reduction approach to be appropriate for youth who are able to understand and mitigate the risks. However, one key informant indicated that youth who use substances are less interested in other aspects of their lives, so they are less likely to follow through on goals related to schooling and mental health treatment.

Typically, the biggest challenge with the occasional use of marijuana relates to participants' terms for probation. Although life coaches work with youth to develop a detox plan or encourage youth to at least stop using marijuana until they are off probation, some refuse or are unable to follow through with their plan. Youth who use other controlled substances such as heroin or who demonstrate an addiction to a substance are referred to additional services, including outpatient treatment centers. One informant suggested that life coaches as a whole should be more aware of substance abuse treatment resources where they can refer participants.

Participants reported high levels of satisfaction with life coaching services and held positive outlooks for the future. Ninety-four percent of surveyed participants indicated that they were satisfied with their life coaching agency, with two-thirds strongly agreeing that they were satisfied. More than three-quarters of youth life coaching survey respondents (87 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that their situation was better because of Oakland Unite services. Despite the number of challenges life coaching participants face, when asked what they thought their lives would be like one year in the future, the vast majority of respondents expressed positive outlooks. All survey respondents indicated that it was likely or very likely that they would be able to resolve conflicts without violence. At least 90 percent of respondents noted that they would likely or very likely finish their education, be more hopeful about life, be better able to deal with a crisis, avoid unhealthy drug or alcohol use, and have a steady job.

C. Impact findings

As described in Chapter III, we analyzed the effects of participating in youth life coaching on outcomes in the 30-month period after participants began Oakland Unite services. Among youth included in the impact analysis, 53 percent were arrested in the 12 months before starting services, with many of these arrests occurring in the three months just before beginning services (Figure IV.17). This pattern is consistent with the youth life coaching model, particularly in 2016 and 2017, which enrolled youth primarily through direct referrals from the juvenile justice system. In the 30 months after beginning services, 44 percent of participants were arrested. To assess whether there was an impact from participating in youth life coaching, we matched participants to other Oakland youth with similar demographics and criminal justice, education, and victimization histories and compared their outcomes in the same 30-month follow-up period.

Figure IV.17. Participant arrest rates by month, before and after starting youth life coaching services
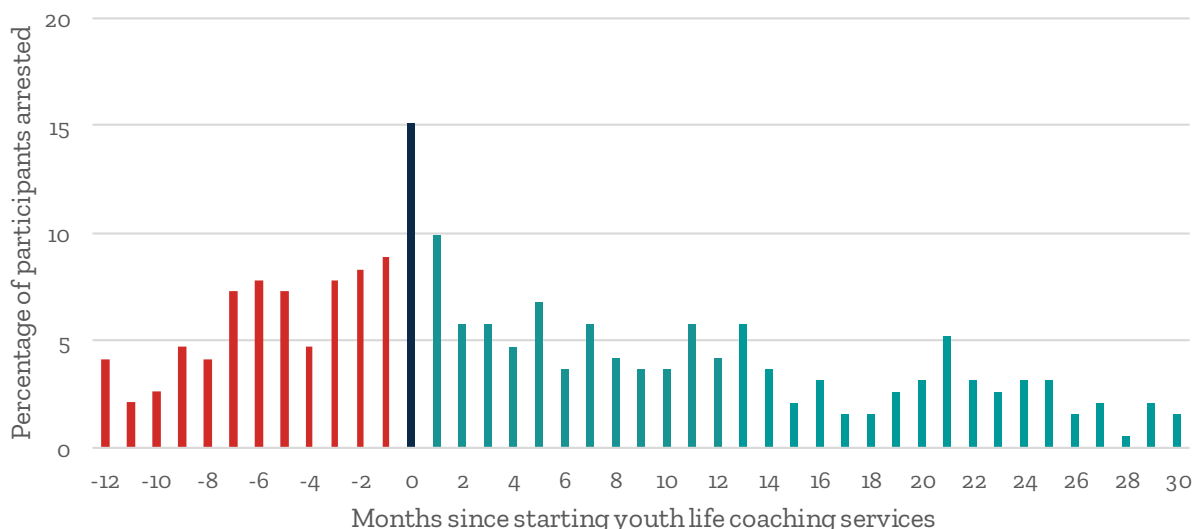
Source: Cityspan, OPD, and ACPD data.

Note: This figure is based on 192 youth life coaching participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and June 30, 2017, consented to share their information for evaluation, and were included in the impact analysis.

Youth life coaching participants had similar rates of new arrests and convictions as the comparison group in the 30 months after beginning services. During this period, 44 percent of youth life coaching participants were arrested, and 27 percent were convicted for a new offense (Figure IV.18). These rates were similar for the matched comparison group over the same follow-up period. When we examined additional exploratory measures of contact with law enforcement, including arrests involving a gun or violent offense and violations of probation,[14] these rates were also similar to those of the comparison

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[14] The six-point difference in the percentage of youth sentenced to probation is concentrated in the first month or two after services began and is not statistically significant over the 30-month window. Some youth began life coaching services before going to court and therefore were sentenced after the start of services.

group. These findings are consistent with a previous evaluation of youth life coaching (Gonzalez et al. 2019), which found limited impacts on youths' contact with law enforcement in the 12 months after starting services. Although youth were less likely to be arrested for a violent offense in the first six months after starting services, this reduction faded over a longer 12-month period.

Figure IV.18. Impact of youth life coaching on rates of contact with law enforcement 30 months after enrollment
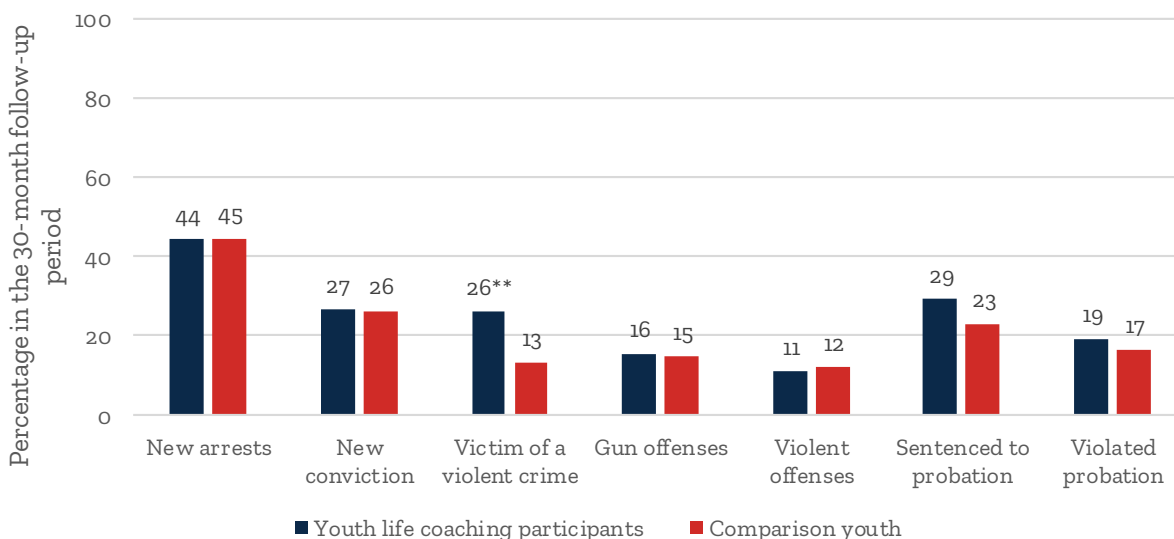
Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 3,001, including 192 youth life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between Oakland Unite participants and youth in the comparison group.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Youth life coaching participants had higher rates of victimization than the comparison group in the 30 months after beginning services. In the 30 months after beginning services, 26 percent of youth life coaching participants were victims of a violent offense reported to OPD, compared to 13 percent of similar comparison youth (Figure IV.18). This 13 percentage point difference between the two groups is statistically significant. In the 12 months prior, youth life coaching participants had similar rates of victimization compared to comparison youth (13 percent compared to 12 percent, respectively; see Figure IV.19). The difference in cumulative victimization rates between the two groups in the outcome period grows over the 30-month window, from 5 percentage points in the first 12 months to 13 percentage points after 30 months. In additional analyses (not shown), we found that the differences in victimization rates between the two groups were concentrated in simple assaults (9 percentage point difference) and aggravated assaults with a firearm (4 percentage point difference).

A number of factors may help explain this large increase in the likelihood of being a victim of violence. First, our measure of victimization is based on incidents reported to OPD. To the extent that youth who participate in life coaching (or their families) are more likely to report violence to the police, this could help explain some of the differences observed between participants and the comparison group. However,

some qualitative evidence suggests that participating in life coaching may inadvertently increase youth's risk of being victimized.

Life coaches said that participants can sometimes have "one foot in the street life and one foot out." One life coach provided an example of a participant who had enrolled in a drug rehabilitation program and found employment but was still being "hunted" in the streets. He had been shot twice before eventually relocating. Life coaches noted that youth are not always able to leave the areas where they are being exposed to violence. One life coach said that youth sometimes complain that their environment is not changing at the same pace as them: They may have the same friends and feel "like a sitting duck" because people around them know they are not carrying a weapon.[15]

Figure IV.19. Cumulative victimization rates by month, before and after starting youth life coaching services
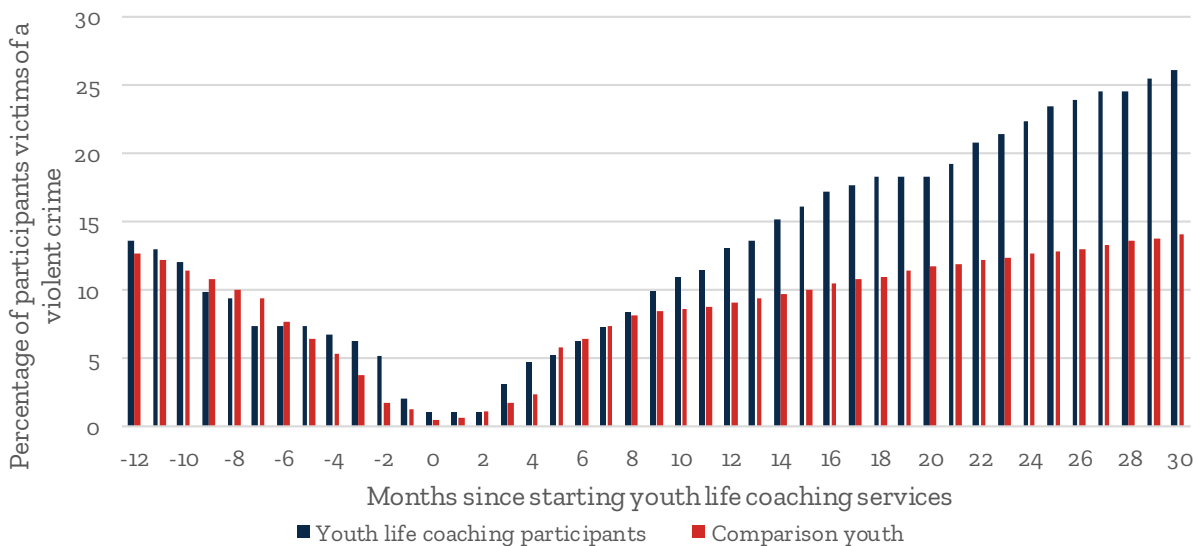
Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

Youth life coaching participants were 13 percentage points more likely to have enrolled in school and 11 percentage points more likely to have graduated high school in the 30 months after starting services compared to the comparison group. In the 30 months after beginning services, 69 percent of school-aged life coaching participants were enrolled in an OUSD or ACOE school, compared to 56 percent of similar comparison youth (Figure IV.20). This 13 percentage point difference between the two groups is statistically significant. In the 12 months before starting life coaching, 77 percent of life coaching and 75 percent of comparison youth had been enrolled in school. Thus, although some life coaching youth who were younger than 18 when they began services dropped out of school in the 12 months after starting services, participating in life coaching led to a large reduction in their likelihood of dropping out.

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[15] We also ruled out the possibility that comparison youth might be more likely to be incarcerated or under supervision or monitoring during the follow-up period, which could make them less likely to experience violence in the community. There were no statistically significant differences in disposition outcomes between the two groups (not shown).

Figure IV.20. Impact of youth life coaching on school enrollment, graduation, and engagement 30 months after enrollment
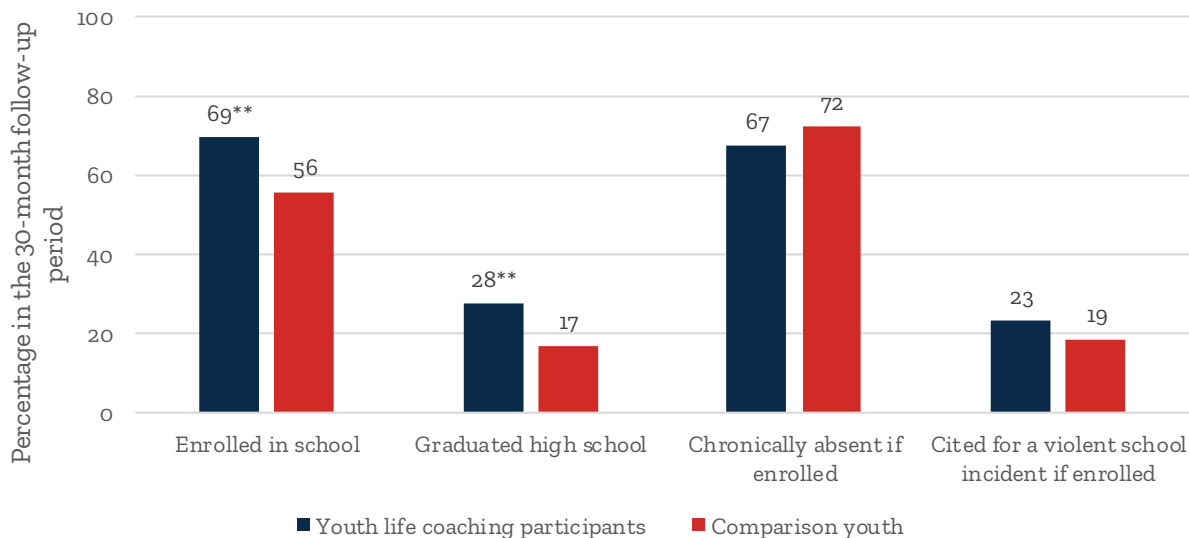
Source: Oakland Unite, OUSD, and ACOE administrative data.

Note: The total sample for the school enrollment outcome is 3,001 including 192 youth life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. The school enrollment rate is based on youth who were under 18 years of age when they began services. To examine chronic absence and violent school incidents, the sample was restricted to 1,019 youth who were enrolled in school in the outcome period, which included 116 youth life coaching participants. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between Oakland Unite participants and youth in the comparison group.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

This finding is consistent with a previous evaluation of youth life coaching (Gonzalez et al. 2019), which found a large impact on school enrollment in the first 12 months after life coaching. The fact that impacts occur early in the life coaching service window reflects a built-in component of the youth life coaching model. As youth are referred to life coaching from the JJC Transition Center, an OUSD enrollment coordinator who sits at the Transition Center (and whose position is partially funded by Oakland Unite) helps reenroll them in a school that meets their safety and academic needs. Almost a third of youth life coaching participants enrolled in an alternative school in the year after starting life coaching. As noted earlier, life coaches then help youth transition back into school, setting and incentivizing goals together with the participant.

Youth life coaching participants were 11 percentage points more likely to graduate from high school in the 30 months after starting services compared to the comparison group. Participating in life coaching also led to a large increase in the likelihood of graduating high school. In the 30 months after beginning services, 28 percent of school-aged life coaching participants had graduated from an OUSD or ACOE school, compared to 17 percent of similar comparison youth (Figure IV.20). This 11 percentage point difference between the two groups is statistically significant, as well as substantively large.

Youth enrolled in school in the 30 months after starting services had similar school attendance and discipline rates compared to the comparison group during this period. Among youth enrolled in school in the outcome period, 67 percent of life coaching participants were chronically absent, and 23 percent had a reported violent incident in school (Figure IV.20). These rates were similar for the matched comparison group over the same follow-up period. Although there were no statistically significant differences between life coaching and comparison youth, these rates are substantially higher than the average. Among all high school students in OUSD and ACOE, 25 percent were chronically absent and 5 percent had a violent school incident in the 2018–2019 school year. These findings suggest that the increase in high school graduation may be largely driven by the decrease in school dropout caused by participating in life coaching rather than by improvements in school engagement, conditional on being enrolled in school.

The findings were similar among the subset of youth life coaching participants who received 40 or more service hours. The findings presented thus far are based on youth life coaching participants who received at least 10 hours of services, which is less than the recommended dosage in just phase 1 of the life coaching model. This minimum threshold is low so as to be inclusive of participants in examining their outcomes. The participants in these analyses received a median of 91 hours of services, and 22 percent received less than 40 hours. Thus, as an exploratory analysis, we also examined outcomes for the subset of participants who received 40 or more service hours. Among this subgroup, the median number of service hours received was 124.

Like all youth life coaching participants, those who received 40 or more service hours also had higher rates of victimization than the comparison group in the 30 months after beginning services (see Table B.7 in Appendix B for full results). During this period, 28 percent of youth life coaching participants with higher service dosage were victims of a violent offense reported to OPD, compared to 15 percent of similar comparison youth. This 13 percentage point difference between the two groups is statistically significant and is similar to the impact for the overall sample. As with the overall sample, we did not find any statistically significant differences in measures of contact with law enforcement but found that youth were significantly more likely to be enrolled in school and graduate from high school in the 30 months after starting services. [16]

Although the level of service dosage does not appear to be linked to program impacts, other factors could explain why participating in life coaching may be more effective for some youth than others. For example, research on juvenile offenders suggests that youth's readiness for change is an important factor in their response to services (Willoughby and Perry 2002). The authors of this research note that violent youth who are in the precontemplative stage are likely to participate in services due to external pressure from others (such as the justice system, school, and parents) and may even demonstrate "superficial change" as long as that pressure is maintained. However, they caution that unless the program can develop a genuine desire for change in these participants, youth are likely to continue (or return to) engaging in violence.

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[16] In addition to estimating impacts among the subset of youth who received at least 40 hours of services, we conducted an additional exploratory analysis assessing whether there was a linear relationship between program impact and number of service hours received (not shown). However, we found no evidence that youth life coaching is more (or less) effective the more hours a participant receives.

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V. Findings for adult life coaching

A. Overview of the adult life coaching program

The adult life coaching program aims to help high-risk young adults reduce their likelihood of engaging in violence, avoid involvement with the criminal justice system, and achieve stability and success in their lives, following the model described in Chapter II. The priority population is young adults ages 18-35 who have been directly exposed to, involved in, or victimized by gun violence in Oakland. Individuals can be referred through multiple channels, including Ceasefire and other justice system partners, such as ACPD, the District Attorney's Office, and local correctional facilities. Other members of the Oakland Unite network (particularly the shooting and homicide response strategy) can also refer participants. From January 2016 to July 2019, Oakland Unite funded the five adult life coaching agencies (see Figure V.1), for a total grant award of $4,725,900.[17]

Figure V.1. Adult life coaching agencies

Abode assists individuals and families experiencing homelessness by advocating for them, helping them secure housing in Oakland, and providing case management services.

Community & Youth Outreach, Inc. (CYO) provides outreach, mentoring, case management, and support to high-risk youth and adults in Oakland.

Human Services Department (HSD) oversees Oakland Unite and also provides adult life coaching services to high-risk young adults in Oakland.

The Mentoring Center (TMC) offers intensive services to Oakland youth and adults through case management, life coaching, and mentoring groups.

Roots Community Health Center (Roots) supports residents of East Oakland through a suite of community services, including healthcare, mental health, rehabilitation, education, training, and employment support.

Source: Documents provided by Oakland Unite, agency websites, and interviews with agency staff.

In selecting grantees for this program, Oakland Unite sought agencies that demonstrated the ability to collaborate with the referral partners listed above and had experience working with individuals closely connected to gun violence. Oakland Unite also sought to identify one agency (ABODE) to provide

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[17] Starting July 1, 2019, a new funding period began that provided grants to these same five adult life coaching agencies.

housing-focused coaching specifically. In addition to funding four community-based organizations, Oakland Unite supported a team of life coaches employed by the city's Human Services Department (HSD) who work directly with adults at highest risk of violence.

In the rest of this chapter, we present implementation and impact findings for the adult life coaching program over the period of January 2016 to December 2019.

B. Implementation findings

1.   Participants

In a given year, approximately 300 to 350 adults received life coaching services (Figure V.2). The number of participants receiving services peaked in 2018, at 378. Though the number declined to 321 in 2019, it was still higher than in 2016. Because life coaching is available for up to 18 months, participants can receive services over multiple calendar years. Another way to measure annual participation, which ensures that each participant is counted only once, is to identify the year in which a participant began services. This number of new participants each year ranged from a low of 151 in 2017 to a high of 209 in 2018. The annual number of new participants roughly followed the same pattern as the total grant amount awarded each fiscal year ($1.7 million in 2016-2017, $1.4 million in 2017–2018, $1.6 million in 2018–2019, and $1.5 million in 2019–2020). Over this period, approximately 600 to 660 adults were arrested in Oakland each year for an offense involving a gun (including robberies and assaults with a firearm as well as illegal possession of a firearm).

Figure V.2. Annual number of adult life coaching participants and adult gun offenders in Oakland
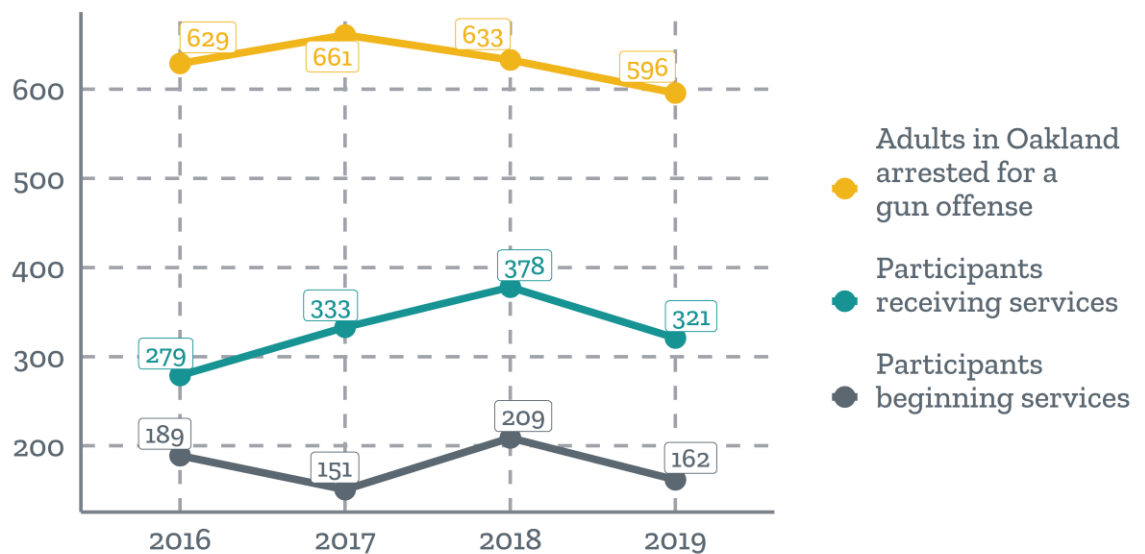
Source: Mathematica calculation using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Note: Individuals were considered life coaching participants if they had at least one service contact documented in Cityspan. Gun offenses include Uniform Crime Reporting categories 5 (robbery with firearm), 9 (assault with firearm), and all statute code descriptions that include handgun, firearm, machine gun, shotgun, or zip gun.

Participants of adult life coaching were predominantly African American males between ages 19 to 35. Over three quarters of participants were African American (77 percent) and 17 percent identified as Hispanic (Figure V.3). A relatively small share (6 percent) were neither African American nor Hispanic. Most participants (85 percent) fell in the 19-35 target age range, with more participants ages 19 to 24 than 25 to 35. While the race and age makeup of participants remained relatively stable over the four-year period, there was a steady increase in the share of female participants, from 3 percent in 2016 to 13 percent in 2019. This increase may be a result of a new grantee selection process implemented by Oakland Unite that awarded additional points to agencies with a female life coach on staff. Participants predominantly came from East Oakland, and slightly more participants came from Central Oakland than West Oakland.[18]

Figure V.3. Demographic characteristics of adult life coaching participants

Participants were referred through multiple channels, including law enforcement, other Oakland Unite agencies, and word-of-mouth. According to focus groups and interviews with agency staff and

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[18] For a more detailed analysis of the geographic location of life coaching participants and neighborhood violence in Oakland, see Larkin et al. (2020).

participants, adults were typically introduced to life coaching through law enforcement partners such as ACPD, Parole Office, Public Defender, District Attorney's Office, and Ceasefire. The share of Ceasefire-linked participants was about 17 percent based on data provided by OPD.[19] Other referral sources included other Oakland Unite agencies (primarily Youth ALIVE! and HSD), probation and parole officers, and other life coaches or peers.

Throughout the evaluation period, some life coaches expressed concerns about referrals from Ceasefire. In 2017, one staff person reflected on how the nature of the Ceasefire program affected initial trust levels between potential participants and agency staff:

> *"We haven't gotten a lot of Ceasefire call-in referrals. That hasn't really worked because [...] it's a case-by-case basis, but a person who's forced to come to a thing where the police are talking about, 'You gotta make changes, you might get killed,' then they walk out and we come in, and they make a connection that you're associated with the police. People will respond differently but that look isn't the perfect look."*

Another agency, although citing a positive relationship with Ceasefire, also raised concerns about referrals through Ceasefire. The agency's staff reported seeing fewer referrals from Ceasefire than expected, forcing them to conduct more outreach and recruiting on their own. These concerns were echoed in 2019, when some life coaches said that referrals connected to law enforcement were not the ideal means to identify potential participants. According to one life coach, law enforcement "casts too wide of a net to make numbers." When law enforcement refers individuals who have not been involved in the justice system for years, some potential participants are consequently unsure of why they're being referred.

Three-quarters of participants had a prior arrest record before starting life coaching. However, most had not been arrested within two years of their start date. Over the four-year period, three out of four adult participants had a previous arrest on file (Figure V.4, left panel). For most participants, their most recent arrest happened much earlier than the start of their life coaching participation. For example, 10 percent of participants were arrested in the preceding three months and 43 percent were arrested sometime in the two years preceding their start of life coaching. More than 4 in 10 participants were victims of violent crimes at some point in their lives prior to the start of life coaching (Figure V.4, right panel). As with arrests, for many participants their reported victimizations occurred two or more years before the start of life coaching.

Participants who began life coaching in 2019 had lower rates of arrest and victimization than participants who began in earlier years. In 2016, 81 percent of participants had been previously arrested, compared to 65 percent of participants who began life coaching in 2019. This pattern of declining arrest histories holds across each of the baseline periods shown in Figure V.4. Victimization rates were also lower among recent cohorts of participants, though the differences were not as large. Whereas 46 percent of life coaching participants in 2016 had reported being victimized, 39 percent of those starting life coaching in 2019 had a violent victimization on record.

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[19] According to referral data entered by grantee staff, participants were most commonly referred to adult life coaching by Ceasefire, at 33 percent (though this share declined over time). This rate is higher than the rate we obtained by linking participant data to Ceasefire data provided by OPD, which was approximately 19 percent.

Figure V.4. Percentage of adult life coaching participants with arrest or victimization histories prior to start of services
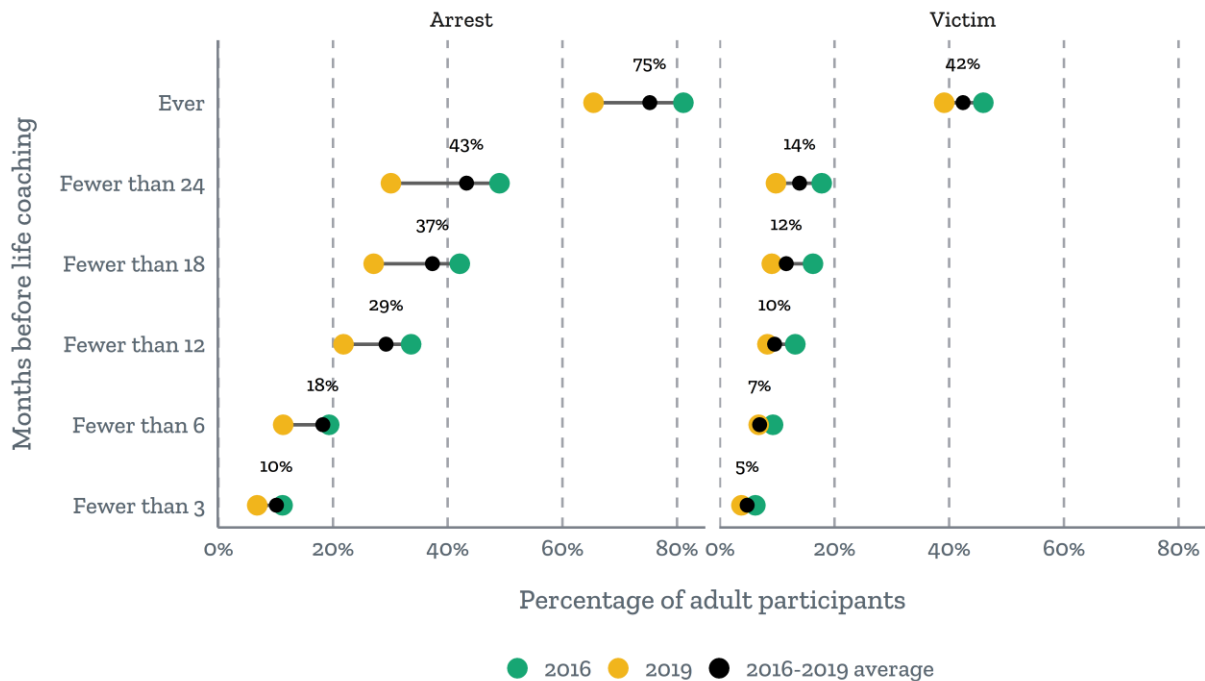
As with overall arrest rates, many participants had a history of gun or violent offenses that occurred two or more years before starting life coaching. Over a third of life coaching participants (37 percent) had a gun offense prior to services, and 38 percent had committed a violent offense. However, only 5 percent were arrested for a gun offense and only 3 percent were arrested for a violent offense in the six-month period before starting life coaching (Figure V.5). There was a decrease in the share of participants with prior arrests for a gun offense, from a high of 41 percent in 2016 to 33 percent in 2019. The share of participants previously arrested for a violent offense was the same for the 2016 and 2019 cohorts (34 percent) but peaked in 2017 at 44 percent (not shown).

Comparing participants' histories of arrest and victimization over time suggests that more recent cohorts were potentially at lower risk of engaging in violence than previous cohorts. These patterns could be consistent with a relative decrease in the share of participants referred by Ceasefire over time and a relative increase in the share of female participants served by grantees.[20]

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[20] Whereas 76 percent of male participants had been arrested before starting life coaching, 53 percent of female participants had a prior arrest. Male and female participants had similar rates of prior victimization (41 percent for female participants and 42 percent for male participants).

Adult life coaching participants linked with Ceasefire had substantially higher rates of arrest and victimization than other participants. Almost all Ceasefire-involved participants (96 percent) were arrested prior to services, compared to 72 percent of other participants (Figure V.6). A larger share was also previously victimized by violent crime (70 versus 39 percent). These differences are consistent for each cohort of participants. Ceasefire participants are identified by law enforcement as being at greatest immediate risk of committing gun violence and are therefore expected to be an especially high-risk group.

Figure V.5. Percentage of adult life coaching participants with gun or violent offense histories prior to start of services
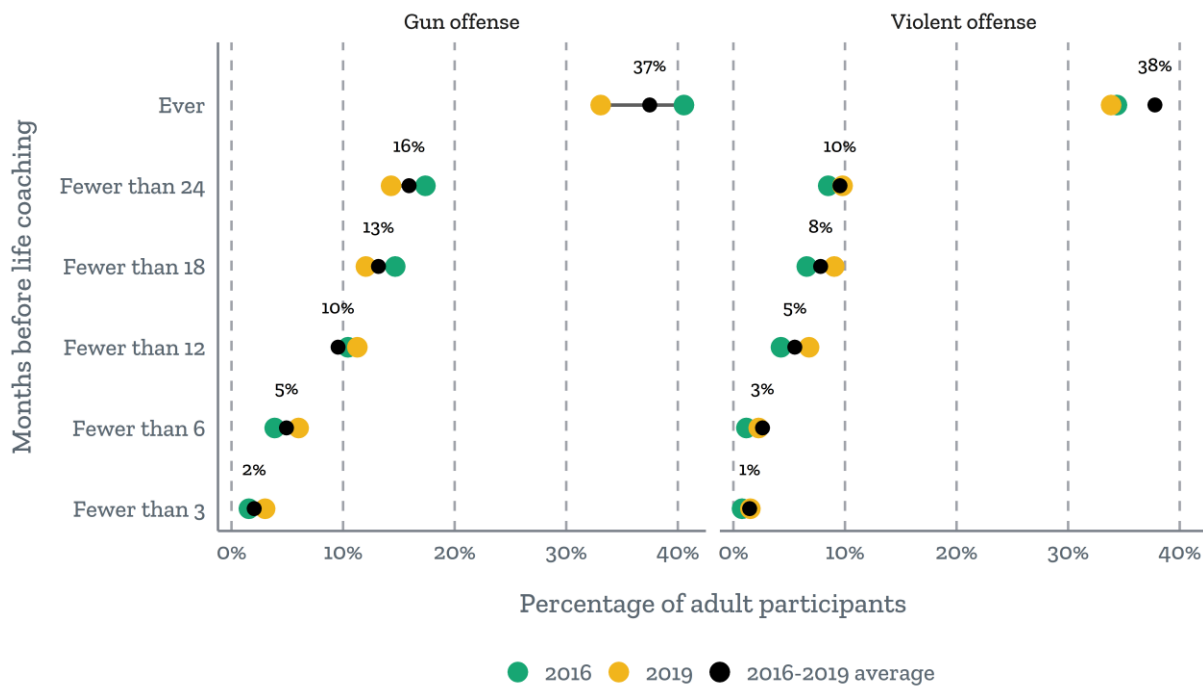
Figure V.6. Percentage of adult life coaching participants with arrest or victimization histories before services, by involvement in Ceasefire

Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan and OPD data for 2016–2019.

Note: Actual victimization rates are likely to be higher than indicated because of underreporting of victimization incidents to the police. Values represent the percentage of participants for the designated category who were arrested or were a victim of a violent crime at any time before starting life coaching services. Individuals were included in the Ceasefire group if they appeared on a list of Ceasefire call-in or custom notification participants provided by OPD. The Ceasefire sample includes 79 adult life coaching participants.

2. Services

Less than 40 percent of participants completed the first phase of life coaching services as recommended by the model (Figure V.7). Participants were somewhat more likely to fail to complete phase 1 due to not receiving the minimum recommended intensity of services (2 contacts per week) than due to stopping services altogether before the end of the phase (4 months), although both were important factors. Among the subsets of participants who moved on to phase 2 or subsequent phases, stopping services was the primary reason for failing to meet these later phases' requirements; in other words, most of those who continued to engage received the minimum required number of contacts. Overall, only 5 percent of participants completed all four phases as described in the life coaching model.

Service duration and intensity varied significantly across participants. Figure V.8 provides a fine-grained view of participant engagement, illustrating both the duration and intensity of services received each week for every individual served by adult life coaching. The top rows indicate participants who

received the most life coaching contacts overall. These are participants who engaged for a long period of time *and* received high-intensity services throughout their engagement (as reflected by the darker shading, which indicates weeks with a greater number of service contacts). Participants at the bottom are those who received the least number of contacts overall, largely because they only participated in life coaching for a very short amount of time. This figure also shows that some participants have inactive periods before reengaging with life coaching.

Figure V.7. Share of adults completing the life coaching service model
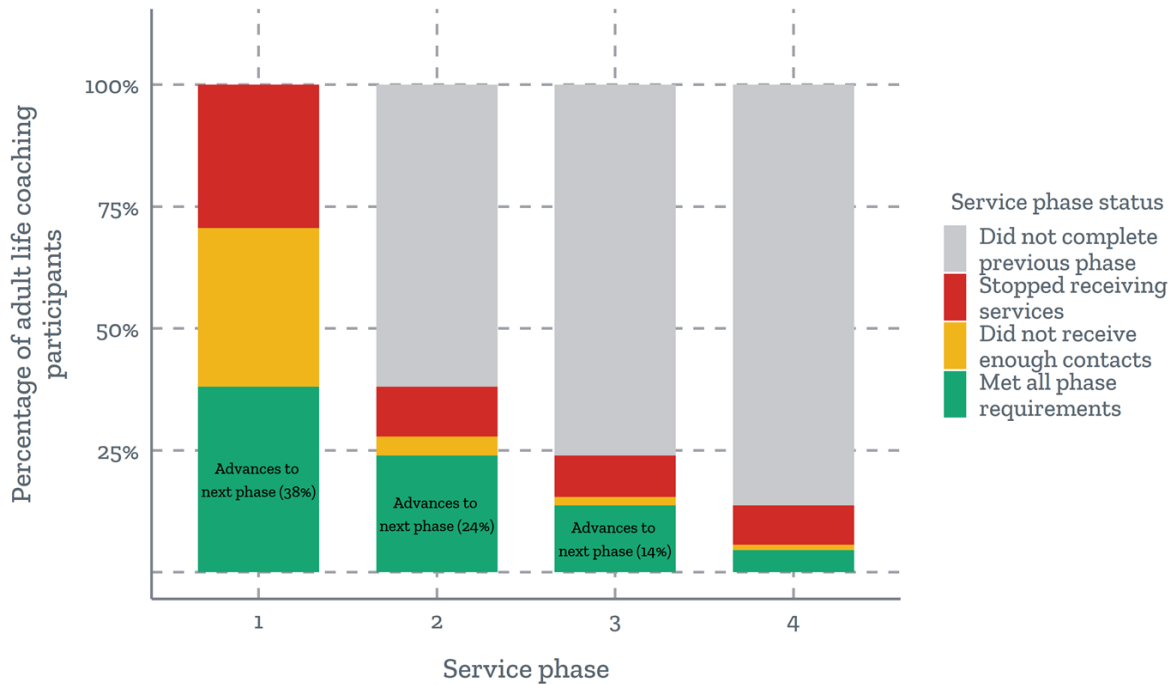
Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data from 2016–2019.

Notes: The sample of participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe the full year and a half long service window. Only service hours recorded in the first 18 months of a participant's involvement in life coaching are included in reported total service hours.

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Figure V.8. Intensity of services received by adult life coaching participants

End of Phase 1   End of Phase 2   End of Phase 3   End of Phase 4

Participants ordered by total service contacts

1   5   10   15   20   25   30   35   40   45   50   55   60   65   70   75

Weeks after start of adult life coaching
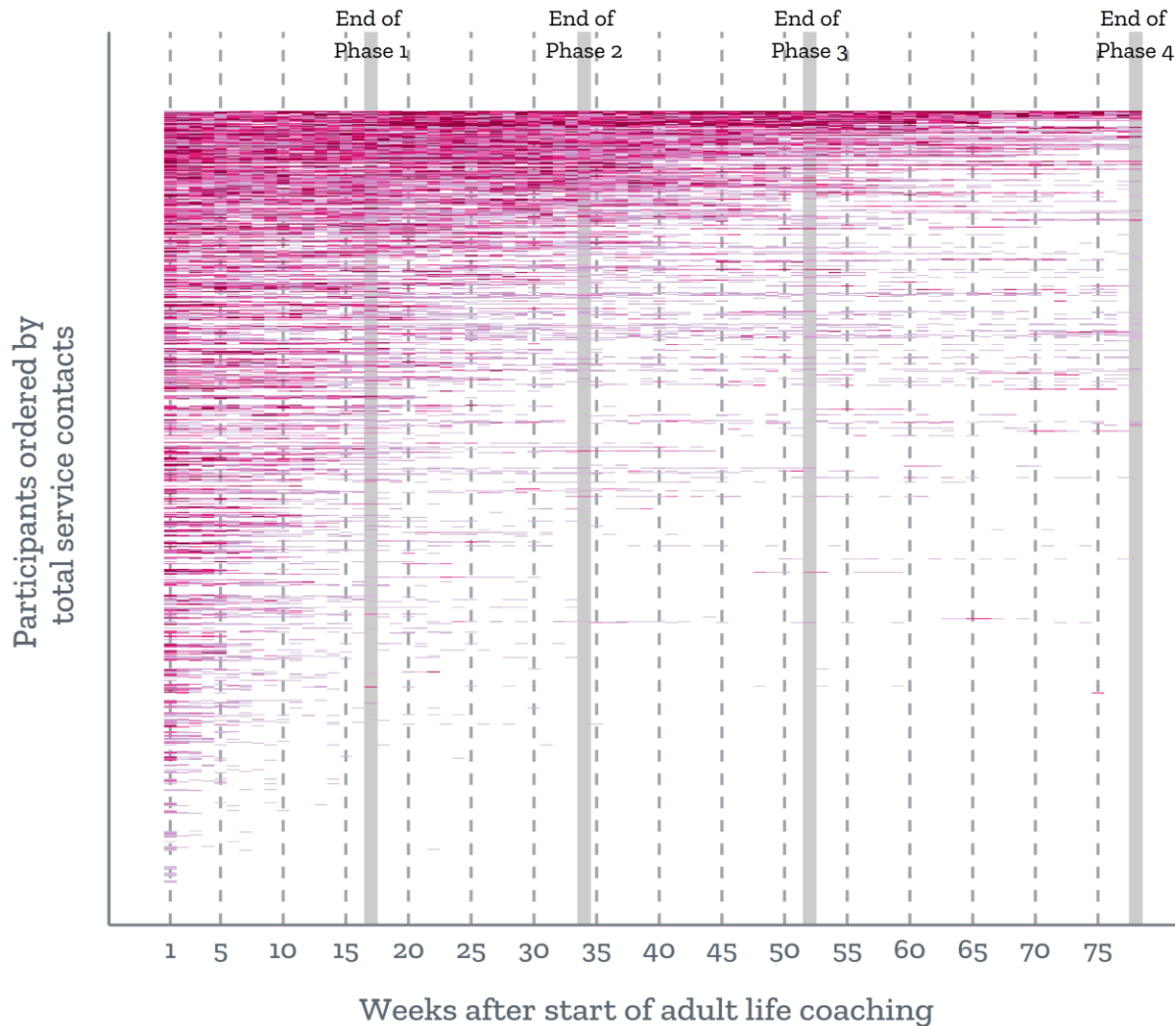
Figure V.8: How to interpret

Each row represents the number of service contacts received by a single participant over an 18-month period. Participants are ordered according to the total number of service contacts received over the duration of their participation. Participants receiving the fewest contacts are positioned at the bottom; participants with the greatest number are positioned at the top. Darker areas reflect weeks with a greater intensity of services than lighter areas. Blank areas reflect weeks with no service contacts.

Number of service contacts
1   2   3   4   5+

Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Note: The sample of 528 participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe participants' full 18-month service periods.

Adult life coaching participants linked to Ceasefire were more likely to complete the model's phases than other participants. Almost half (49 percent) of participants linked to Ceasefire completed the model's first phase (Figure V. 9), meaning they engaged for four months and received at least two contacts per week, on average. As with the overall sample of participants, both attrition and lower-than-recommended service intensity contributed to a large share of participants not advancing to the next phase. Eleven percent of Ceasefire participants completed all four phases of the life coaching model, compared to 5 percent for the overall sample.

It is worth noting that participants linked to Ceasefire were concentrated in two agencies: HSD (serving 47 percent of Ceasefire participants) and CYO (serving 36 percent). The remaining 17 percent of life coaching participants linked to Ceasefire were primarily served by TMC and Roots. Although some life coaches reported that they found it more difficult to build trust with individuals referred by Ceasefire, this does not appear to have had an adverse effect on these participants' engagement with services. On the contrary, Ceasefire participants were more likely to remain engaged and receive the recommended intensity of contacts.

Figure V.9. Share of adults completing the life coaching service model, Ceasefire participants

Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Note: The sample of 74 Ceasefire participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe participants' full 18-month service periods.

Almost a quarter of participants (22 percent) stopped receiving services by the third month. Although participant retention decreases with each passing week, the drop-off occurs most rapidly in the first six months of engagement (Figure V.10). By the eighth month, half of participants had stopped receiving services. Examining participants over an 18-month period following the beginning of services, we found participation averaged just over nine months, though this could include some inactive periods.

Although the Oakland Unite model recommends 12 to 18 months of services (and in practice many participants do not engage that long), some agency staff reported longer service periods of 18 months to two years as ideal. Staff at one agency observed, "It takes three years under the best conditions to change behavior…The last Oakland Unite cycle had 18 months, which was outstanding, but then the challenge is letting go."

Figure V.10. Share of participants actively receiving adult life coaching services, by week after initial participation

Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Notes: This figure shows participant retention rates based on the full time span between participants' first and last recorded adult life coaching contact. The sample of participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began adult life coaching services no later than July 1, 2018 to ensure 18 months of service data across participants from all years.

Participant retention dropped more quickly in the later years of the evaluation period. Half of participants beginning services in 2016 had ended their engagement with adult life coaching by the ninth month of service. For participants beginning services in 2018, half had ended engagement by six and a half months. Initial attrition in the first few weeks of services has been increasing over time. Whereas only 6 percent of those starting services in 2016 stopped participation in the first month, this share increased to 17 percent for the 2018 cohort. As a result of growing attrition, fewer participants in each cohort reached the recommended 12 to 18 months of engagement with life coaching. Thirty-nine percent of participants starting life coaching in 2016 engaged for at least 12 months, but this share decreased to 27 percent for the 2017 cohort and 19 percent for the 2018 cohort.

According to both life coaches and participants, readiness for change determines whether a participant will be successful in completing life coaching. Life coaches and participants said that whether participants are "willing or ready to change" or are "self-motivating" influences their engagement and how much they benefit from the program. These implicit characteristics are demonstrated through participants' receptiveness to service from the beginning—for example, whether they make it to appointments or communicate with their life coach if they cannot attend an appointment. Research also

suggests that individuals' readiness for change is correlated with their take-up of services, whether they are a victim or a perpetrator of violence (Johnson and Johnson 2013; Maldonado and Murphy 2018). A study of a community-based intimate partner violence intervention found that readiness for change was a stronger predictor of positive treatment response for individuals who had been referred by the court, compared to those with self-referrals (Maldonado and Murphy 2018).

Life coaches emphasized that they do not force participants to engage in services, instead allowing the participants to drive change. According to one life coach, "The change is ultimately made if the person is ready to make that change, they want to do something different, they're tired of bumping their head against the wall." One parent said that getting her adult son involved in services earlier in life "didn't go anywhere" because her son was not interested, but that "now he's a grown man, now he wants it. You can't help someone who doesn't want it." Research has found that readiness for change does not necessarily correlate with age, though this can depend on the type of risky behavior examined (for example, see Alley et al. 2013). As noted in the previous chapter, therapeutic violence prevention programs can adapt their approach to an individual's readiness for change; for clients in the precontemplative stage, the goal should be to help them want to change (Willoughby and Perry 2002).

Financial incentives were used as a tool to motivate some participants to engage in the program in the beginning. According to interviews, these incentives serve to encourage buy-in to the program; some participants mentioned being interested in the program after learning they could get paid. One life coach noted, "Incentives help us along. It's an important piece that helps with buy-in." Another life coach shared, "The incentives help people stick around long enough to see if it's going to work out for them." Participants noted that they received incentives for accomplishing specific goals such as obtaining their license or ID or attending a life skill class (on budgeting, for example).

Some life coaches see a downside to incentives because they might be the only reason for a participant's engagement. As one life coach observed, "The challenge would be persons […] who dropped in looking for $1,600 saying all the things they think you want to hear, but what they're looking for is a check. We've had one or two or three, but they don't last very long." Another life coach described challenges in learning how to set participant expectations correctly around the incentives. In general, however, life coaches, participants, and participants' families believe incentives are essential and promote "positive messaging". One life coach summarized the importance of incentives: "When they take steps toward goals that they have identified, they get incentivized…they love it, as you can imagine…[It's] our way of celebrating you doing well."

Between 2016 and 2019, adult life coaching participants received a median of 32.2 total service hours (Figure V.11). The median number of service hours was largely stable for participants beginning services in 2016 and 2017 but fell to 25.4 hours for participants beginning services in 2018. Because the sample is restricted to individuals who began life coaching before July 1, 2018 (so that each cohort could be observed for at least 18 months), the reduction in median service hours between 2016 and 2018 reflects a true reduction in the number of services recorded for each cohort. However, there is some indication that grantees' data entry practices may have improved over time (for example, in earlier years some grantees may have logged time spent attempting to contact a participant).

Figure V.11. Distribution of total number of adult life coaching service hours, by initial year of service
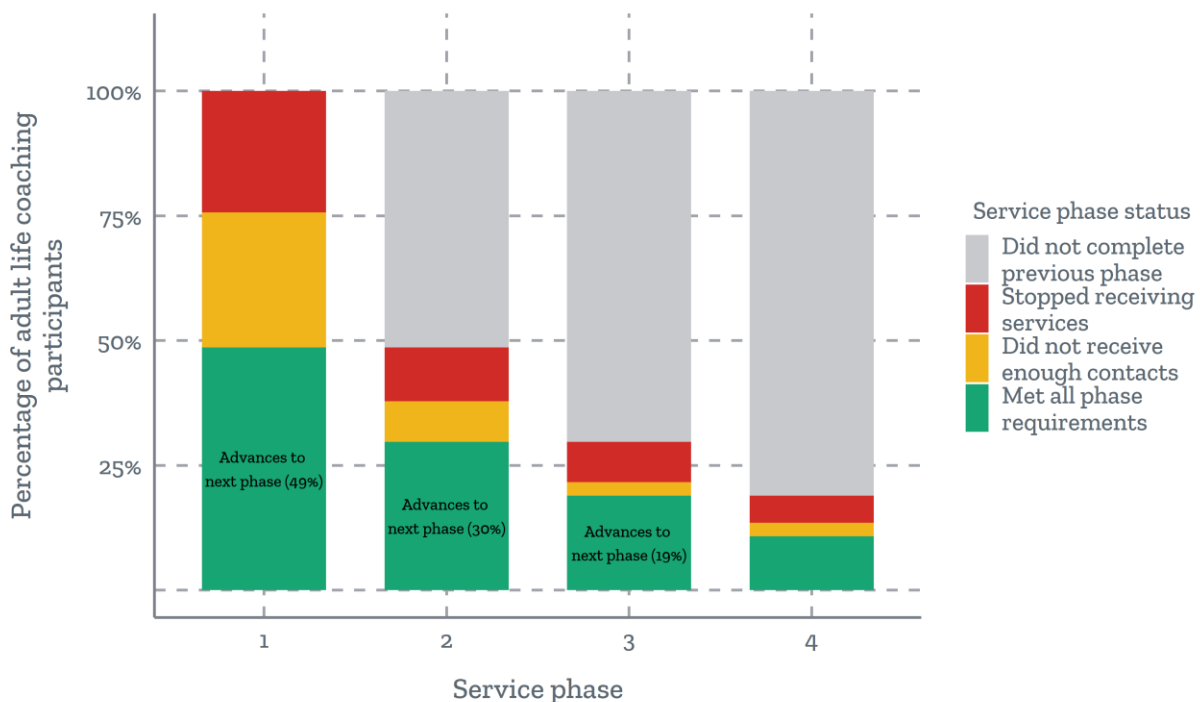

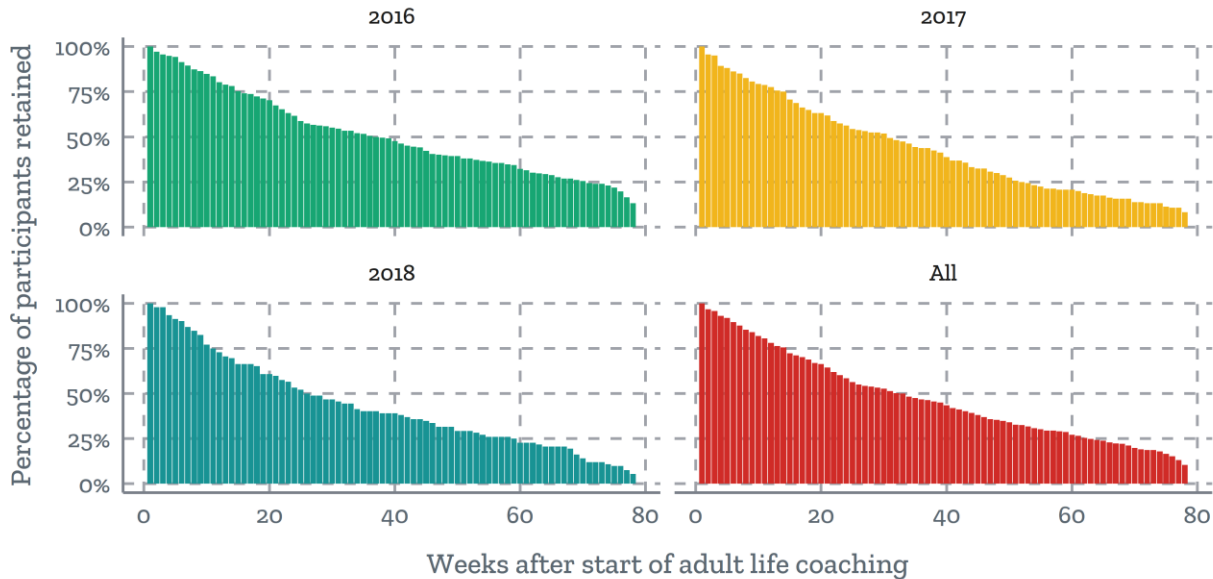Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Notes: The sample of participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe the full year-and-a-half service window. Only service hours recorded in the first 18 months of a participant's involvement in life coaching are included in reported total service hours.

The average number of weekly service hours gradually declines following the first four months of service, as recommended by the Oakland Unite model. Service intensity (just over 3 hours per week) is highest in the first week, when life coaches work to engage participants and conduct intake. In the first four months of services, average weekly hours were close to two hours a week, in keeping with phase 1 of the program model (Figure V.12). These average values include only participants who were active in a given week, and therefore do not reflect participant attrition over time. The patterns in service intensity are relatively stable for each of the participant cohorts, which suggests that the decrease in total service hours each cohort received is primarily driven by the increase in attrition shown in Figure V.10.

Life coaches noted that a participant's level of risk determined the intensity of services provided. As one life coach described, a high-risk participant, such as a victim of gun violence who is at immediate risk of retaliation, would require daily contact by phone and in-person follow-up two to three times a week. On the other end of the risk spectrum, a client who is employed and not at any immediate risk would not require daily visits but would still receive daily check-ins by phone or text messaging. Life coaches reported efforts to maintain frequent and intensive contact with clients.

Figure V.12. Participants' average weekly total of contact hours, by initial year of service
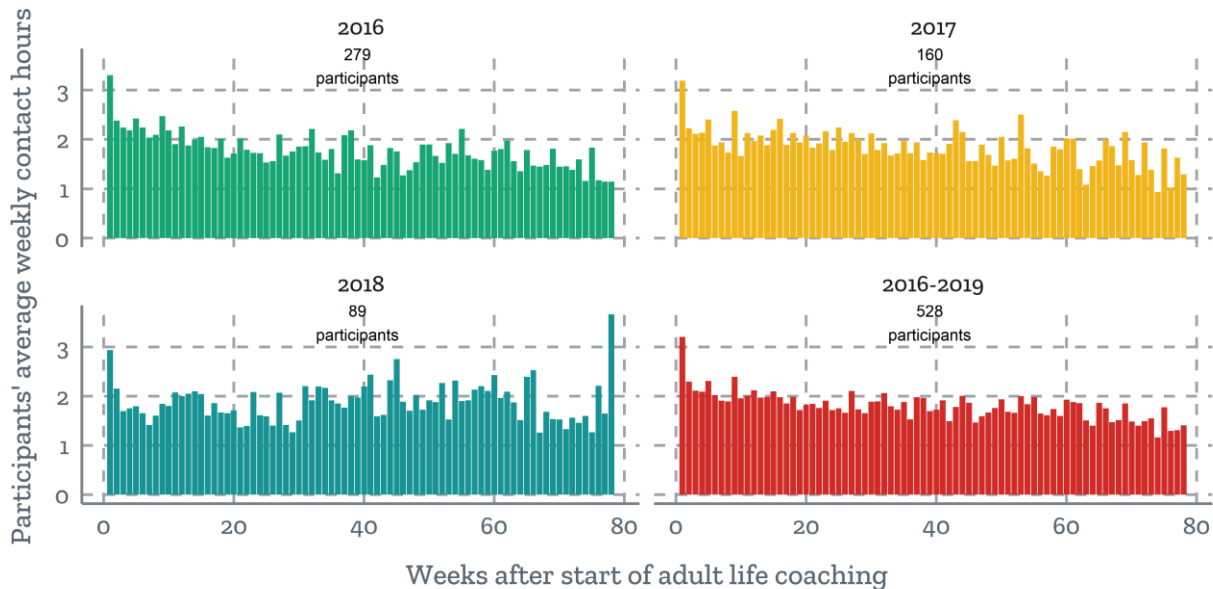
Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Note: The sample of 528 participants included in the figure is restricted to those who began receiving services on or before July 1, 2018, in order to observe participants' full 18-month service periods. Weekly average values are calculated for the group of participants receiving services in the specified week.

Participants who engaged in life coaching services more extensively were more likely to have been arrested or victimized before starting services compared to those who engaged for a month or less.
Relative to individuals who participated in life coaching for a month or less, participants with extended engagement were 13 percentage points more likely to have a prior arrest and 7 percentage points more likely to have been the victim of a violent crime before starting life coaching (Figure V.13). Extended engagement was defined as participating for 40 or more weeks, which corresponds to the top quintile of adult participants. Over three quarters of participants with extended life coaching engagement had been arrested prior to services, compared to 63 percent of those who engaged for a month or less. Forty-five percent of participants with extended engagement had been a victim of a violent incident reported to OPD, compared to 38 percent of those who engaged for only one month.

Figure V.13. Prior histories of participants with limited and extended program engagement
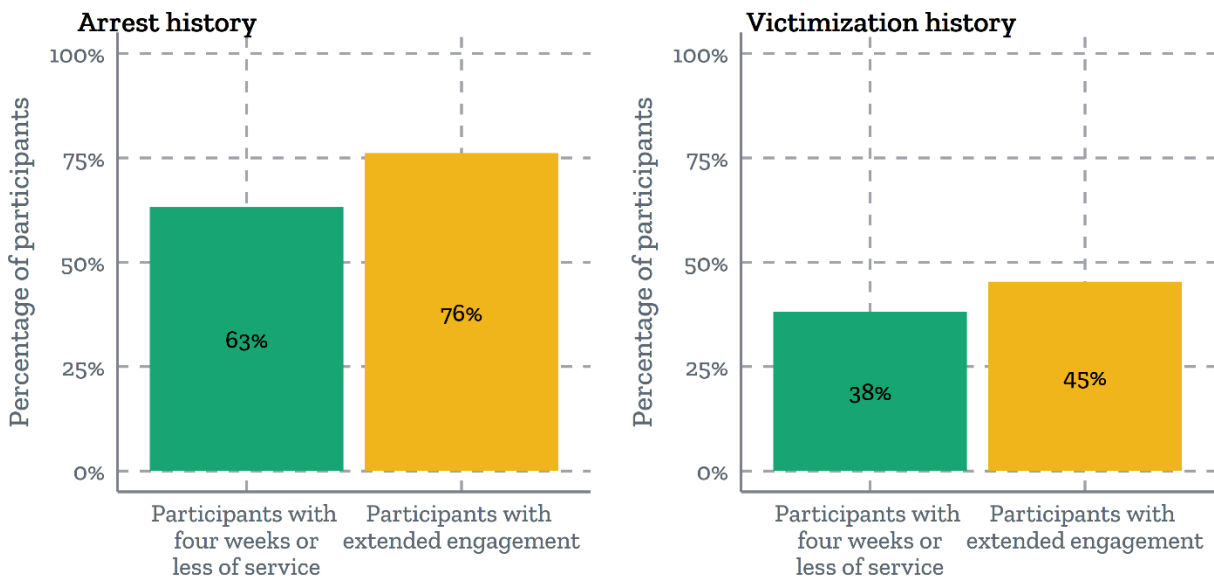
Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan and OPD data for 2016–2019.

Note: Actual victimization rates are likely to be higher than indicated because of underreporting of victimization incidents to the police. Values represent the percentage of participants for the designated category who were arrested or were a victim of a violent crime at any time before starting life coaching services. Participants who received service in 40 or more weeks are placed in the "extended engagement" category and represent the top quintile of participants as measured by the total number of weeks in which a participant received service.

A slight majority (55 percent) of adult life coaching participants had more or less continuous service contact with their programs. We define breaks in service continuity as a period of no less than 30 days during which a participant had no service contact, which was then followed by resumed contact. Of the 45 percent of participants who experienced at least one such break in their service experience (Figure V.14), more participants experienced a single break (23 percent) than multiple breaks. Although over half of participants who have multiple service periods return after one to two months (Figure V.15), many return after a substantially longer time away from contact with the program. We find that 18 percent of participants had a gap of at least six months during which they had no service contact before eventually resuming services.

Figure V.14. Share of adult participants by number of continuous life coaching service periods
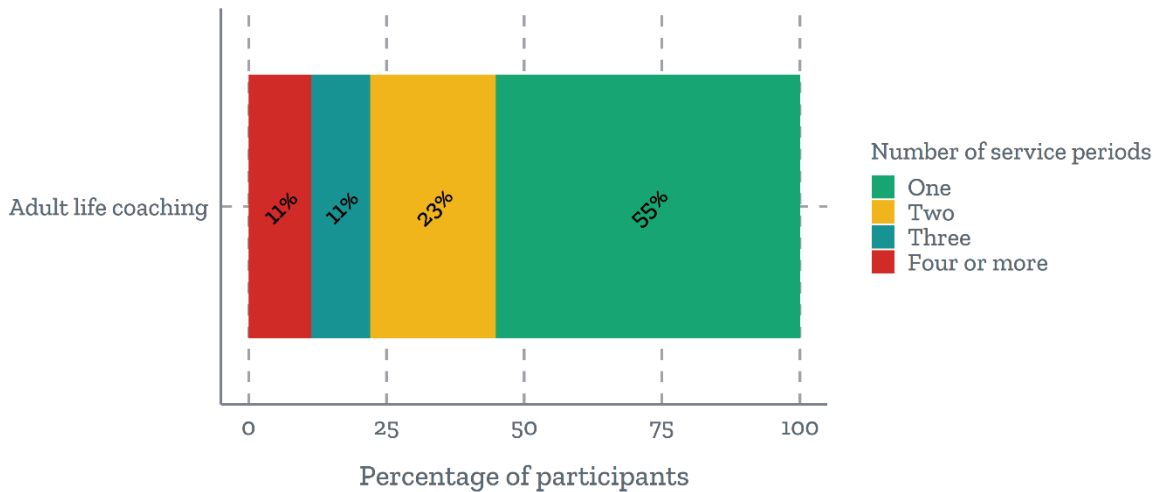
Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Notes: We define a participant as having begun a new service period if more than 30 days have elapsed between consecutive service contacts.

Figure V.15. Share of adult participants by time elapsed before returning to program after first break in service
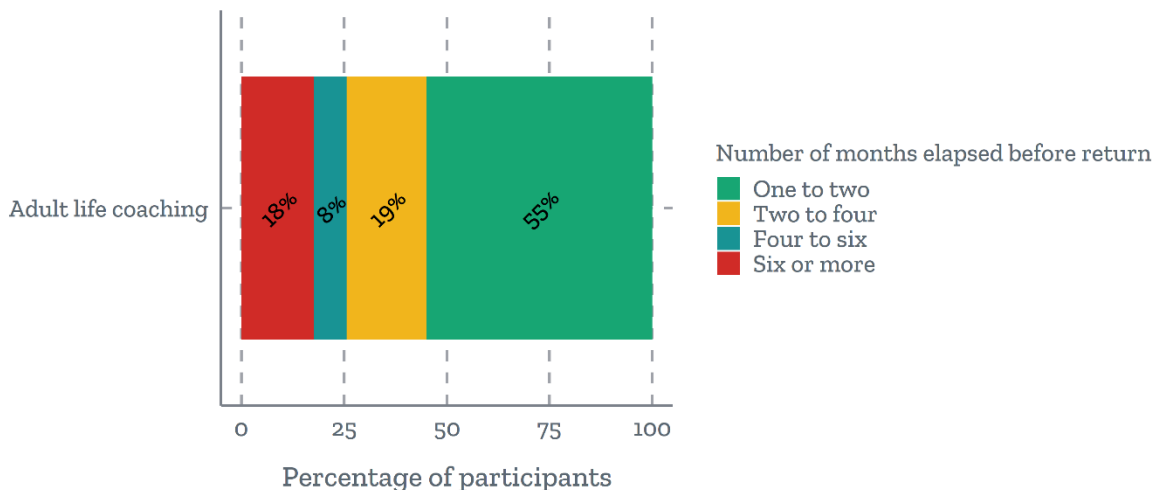
Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Notes: We consider a break in services to be defined by a 30-day break between two consecutive service contacts. This figure displays the time elapsed between participants' first and second service periods, if applicable. For individuals with multiple service breaks, time elapsed after the second break is not shown.

Many adult life coaching participants also received other Oakland Unite services, both before and after starting life coaching. Participants may come into life coaching from other programs, and/or be referred to other programs. The flow of services is illustrated in Figure V.16. More than one in five (22 percent) adult life coaching participants received other Oakland Unite services before starting life

coaching (percentages not shown). A similar share (23 percent) began receiving other Oakland Unite services either the same day, or most commonly, afterwards. The most common connection between adult life coaching and other Oakland Unite programs was with the education and economic self-sufficiency (EESS) strategy, shown in orange in Figure V.16. About 100 participants (12 percent) were involved in EESS before adult life coaching, and a slightly higher number became involved afterward. In contrast, the violent incident and crisis response strategy had a more one-directional relationship, typically leading to referrals into life coaching rather than from life coaching, as intended by the program model.

Figure V.16: How to interpret

This figure visualizes the flow of adult life coaching participants through other Oakland Unite services at three time periods: before starting life coaching, concurrent with life coaching (that is, starting on the same date), and after starting life coaching. The width of the gray areas illustrates the number of individuals flowing from one type of service to another. Most participants only receive life coaching, as reflected by the large gray area at the top of the figure showing the flow of participants from no prior services to life coaching to no further services.

Figure V.16. Adult life coaching participants' engagement with other Oakland Unite programs
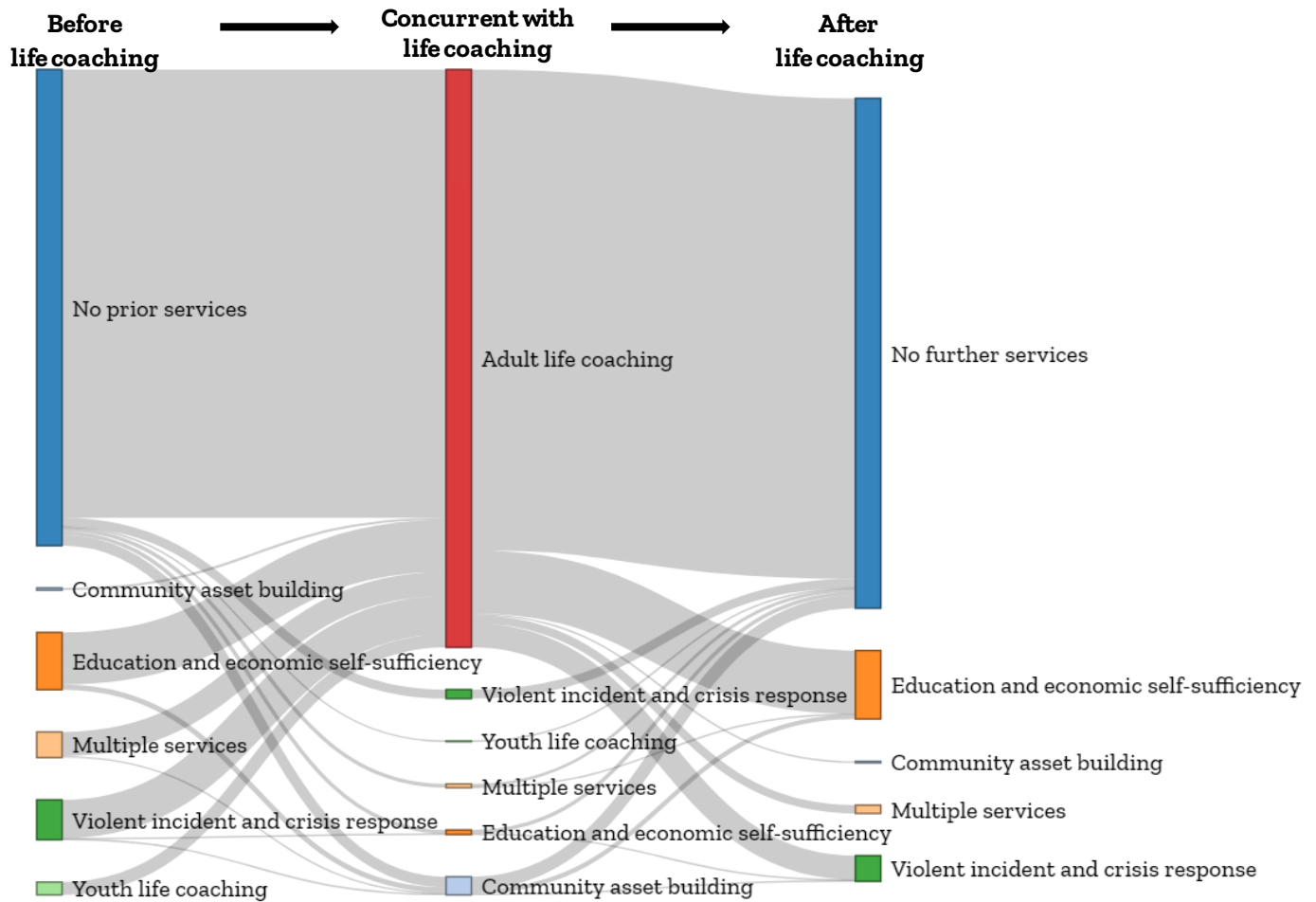
Source: Mathematica calculations using Cityspan data for 2016–2019.

Note: Bar height corresponds to the number of participants. Over the 2016–2019 evaluation period, 815 individuals participated in adult life coaching and consented to share their information with evaluators.

3. Participant experiences

Life coaches tailored services to participants' individual needs and goals, which often involved meeting basic needs and addressing behavioral health issues. According to life coaches, many participants start off without the resources and supports they need to be self-sufficient. Life coaches work with them to identify ways to address their particular needs. As one adult life coach explained, "We [life coaches] address everything case by case, nothing is cookie cutter … we have quite a few resources in our circles that we can refer any client to [based on] their particular needs if they show up." Life coaches helped participants access and navigate social services to meet basic needs, such as getting medical attention or food, navigating court, and most commonly, finding housing. Many adult participants said their life coach helped them find housing, or said they were in the process of obtaining permanent housing. Many participants also mentioned that their life coach helped them obtain an ID or driver's license. Life coaches sometimes connected participants to a mental health therapist or substance abuse expert if they needed it. One adult participant said there are "no limits to the types of services [life coaches] provide." Another said, "If you have any issues they always have a referral for you."

Life coaches took an active role in helping participants follow through on their goals. Life coaches go beyond referring participants to services. They actively accompany them on and guide them through the process of addressing their needs. According to an adult participant, "I feel like coaches actually say what they mean, and do what they say … they gave me the specific steps I need to achieve a goal and help [me] do them, like going to DMV and getting a license … my coach and I both write down my goals, so that the coach can keep track of my progress towards those goals." Another adult participant stated, "Life coaches call your bluff on all the stuff you said you were gonna do. They call you. That helps to make somebody successful. You gotta man up and do the stuff you said you wanted to do." The coaches serve as guides, instead of dictating which services the participant should pursue.

Life coaches helped adult participants develop the soft skills they need for employment, and leveraged their networks to help participants find the right jobs. If a participant's goal is to find a job, the life coaches guide them through the process. In most cases, life coaches connect clients to employment opportunities by referring them to outside agencies (including Oakland Unite agencies offering employment support services) or using their personal connections. Coaches emphasized the importance of establishing trusting relationships with employers by making sure their clients are equipped with the tools, support systems, and professionalism they need to prepare for and sustain employment. For example, life coaches help participants with interviews and resumes and developing soft skills.

Behavioral health, substance abuse, and housing needs are ongoing challenges for participants, and sometimes cause them to drop life coaching. Some participants continue to encounter challenges with behavioral health, substance abuse, and housing. For example, one adult life coach said participants with trauma experiences have dropped out of the program because "they were not willing to talk about their issues at the time with the mental health therapist," and the idea of a therapist "might have scared them away." Part of the challenge is the availability of suitable services. One adult participant said, "I wish we could get more mental health services. [There is] a lot of violence around me, and that affects people mentally. I wish I could get mental health services for myself and other people around us." One life coach suggested "there could be more training" to address mental health issues, but recognized that life coaches "are not considered therapists" and "there should be more mental health professionals as well". Another challenge is the stigma that surrounds use of behavioral health services. Key informants and life coaches also pointed out the high demand for substance abuse treatment.

Despite initiatives like the Oakland Path Rehousing Initiative (OPRI), [21] an effort that housed many formerly homeless Oakland residents, demand for housing support has remained high among life coaching participants throughout the evaluation period. In 2017, life coaches noted that housing instability sometimes affected participants' ability to fully engage with services and that the rising cost of housing in Oakland meant it could take longer for participants to sustain housing on their own. In 2019, life coaches again reported struggling to address participants' housing needs. One adult life coach said that "housing is the number one thing" participants need help with because it can "take forever" to find someone housing, especially in the Bay Area. One key informant noted that participants might not engage with life coaching if they don't believe they can get the help they need for housing, a fundamental need.

Participants credited life coaching with promoting personal growth and maturity. Thanks to life coaching, participants interviewed believed they had reasons to look forward to the future and the power to change their behavior. Participants and their families credited life coaching with helping the participants control their anger and address substance abuse.

"I just turned 33, and I've been to jail many times .... I've never been out of jail for this long until right now. Now I've been out of prison for two years."

-Adult participant▲

One participant said, "My [life coach] helped me a lot with my anger, [I] think about things before I express myself." Staff consistently cited behavioral and attitudinal changes toward violence and retaliation as intermediate outcomes in attaining stability in a client's life.

These views were also expressed in participant surveys: One hundred percent of the adult life coaching participants surveyed reported it was likely or very likely that a year into the future they would feel more hopeful about their lives and be better able to deal with crisis. Almost all (97 percent) said it was likely or very likely that they would be able to resolve conflicts without violence (65 percent said it was very likely). A somewhat lower share (91 percent) said it was likely or very likely that they would avoid unhealthy drug or alcohol abuse (56 percent said it was very likely).

Life coaching staff described these behavioral and cognitive shifts manifesting through increased engagement in the program and increased self-efficacy, and many cited examples of success stories of participants who engaged with services. As one agency staff member said, "Not all participants are successful, some disappear or don't want to be involved—but those who are engaged succeed."

Participants surveyed expressed satisfaction with services. Over 90 percent of adult life coaching participants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their life coaching agency, and 63 percent strongly agreed. Similar proportions agreed or strongly agreed that staff were available when they needed them, staff listened, staff treated them with respect, and staff understood their situation and needs. Eighty-eight percent of adult life coaching participants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their situation was better because of the services they received, with 59 percent strongly agreeing.

D. Impact findings

As described in Chapter III, we analyzed the effects of participating in adult life coaching on outcomes in the 30-month period after participants began Oakland Unite services. Among adults included in the impact analysis, 32 percent were arrested in the 12 months before starting services, compared to 25

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[21] OPRI is a collaboration between the City of Oakland, Oakland Housing Authority, Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS), and multiple nonprofit service providers that successfully housed more than 190 formerly homeless Oakland residents.

percent in the 12 months after starting services, reaching 40 percent in the 30 months after starting services. In contrast to the youth life coaching program, there is no clear pattern of arrests in the period surrounding the start of adult life coaching services (Figure V.17). To assess whether there was an impact from participating in adult life coaching, we matched participants to other Oakland adults with similar demographics and criminal justice and victimization histories and compared their outcomes in the same 30-month follow-up period.

Figure V.17. Participant arrest rates by month, before and after starting adult life coaching services
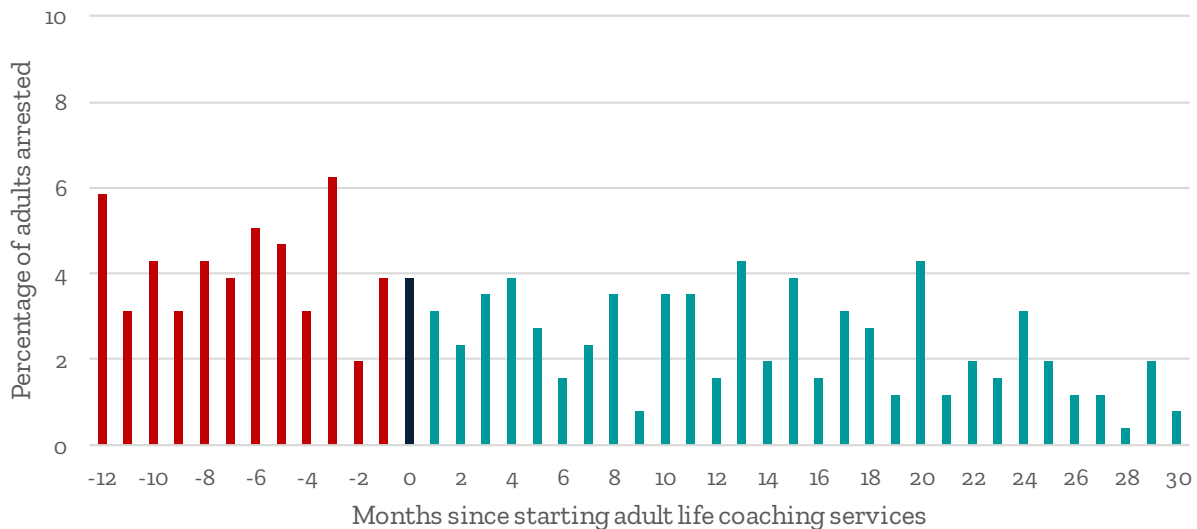
Source: Cityspan, OPD, and ACPD data.

Note: This figure is based on 257 adult life coaching participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and June 30, 2017, consented to share their information for evaluation, and were included in the impact analysis.

Adult life coaching participants had similar rates of new arrests, convictions, and victimization as the comparison group in the 30 months after beginning services. During this period, 40 percent of adult life coaching participants were arrested, 18 percent were convicted for a new offense, and 12 percent were victims of a violent offense reported to OPD (Figure V.18). These rates were similar for the matched comparison group over the same follow-up period.

Adult life coaching participants were 3 percentage points less likely to be arrested for a violent offense in the 12 months after beginning services, but this reduction faded over the 30-month follow-up period. We also examined outcomes during a shorter 12-month follow-up period (see Table B.8 in Appendix B). During those first 12 months, approximately 2 percent of adult life coaching participants were arrested for a violent offense, compared to 5 percent of adults in the comparison group (the difference is statistically significant). Over time, however, the percentage of adult life coaching participants increased and caught up with the arrest rate among comparison adults (Figure V.19). Aside from violent offenses, we found no other differences between the groups in the 12 months after services. These findings are consistent with the results of a previous adult life coaching analysis (Gonzalez et al. 2017), which found that participating in adult life coaching decreased the likelihood of arrest for a violent

offense in the six months after enrollment by 1 percentage point, but had limited impacts on other short-term outcomes.

Figure V.18. Impact of adult life coaching on rates of contact with law enforcement 30 months after enrollment

Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 6,436, including 257 adult life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between Oakland Unite participants and adults in the comparison group.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Figure V.19. Cumulative arrest rates for violent offenses by month, before and after starting adult life coaching services

Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 6,436, including 257 adult life coaching participants.

Adult life coaching participants were 6 percentage points more likely to violate probation in the 30 months after beginning services. In the 30 months after beginning services, life coaching participants were 6 percentage points more likely to violate probation compared to comparison adults (16 percent versus 10 percent). This 6 percentage point difference between the two groups is statistically significant (Figure V.18). There were no notable differences in other exploratory measures examined, including the likelihood of arrest for a gun or violent offense and being sentenced to probation in the 30 months after beginning services.

In the previous 12 months, adult life coaching participants had similar rates of probation violations compared to comparison adults (Figure V.20). In addition, similar shares of individuals in both groups were linked to the Ceasefire program (14 percent of adult life coaching participants versus 11 percent of comparison adults) and had been sentenced to probation in the 12 months prior (19 versus 17 percent; see Table B.5 in Appendix B). These similarities suggest that both groups should be equally likely to be monitored by law enforcement in the outcome period (which could be a factor explaining a higher likelihood of violating probation despite similar rates of arrest for new offenses). However, we cannot rule out this possibility that the degree of monitoring by law enforcement could differ between the two groups.

Figure V.20. Cumulative probation violations rates by month, before and after starting adult life coaching services

Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 6,436, including 257 adult life coaching participants.

Adult life coaching participants who received at least 40 service hours had similar rates of contact with law enforcement in the 30 months after beginning services compared to comparison adults.
The findings presented thus far are based on adult life coaching participants who received at least 10 hours of services, which is less than the recommended dosage in just phase 1 of the life coaching model. This minimum threshold is intentionally low in order to be inclusive of participants in examining their outcomes. The participants in these analyses received a median of 51 hours of services (42 percent received less than 40 hours). Thus, as an exploratory analysis, we also examined outcomes for the subset of participants who received 40 or more service hours. Among this subgroup, the median number of service hours received was 88.

During the 30-month follow-up period, adult life coaching participants who had received 40 or more service hours had similar rates of law enforcement contact for all the outcomes we explored compared to a matched comparison group. This included the rate of probation violations, suggesting that the adverse impact of participation in life coaching on the likelihood of being arrested for a probation violation, as observed in the overall sample, was concentrated among those with fewer than 40 hours of services (Figure V.21). Participants who received more hours of services had slightly better outcomes than the overall sample—for example, 13 percent violated probation in the 30-month follow-up period, compared to 16 percent overall.[22]

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[22] In addition to estimating impacts among the subset of adults who received at least 40 hours of services, we conducted an additional exploratory analysis assessing whether there was a linear relationship between program impact and number of service hours received (not shown). We found some evidence that, in the first 12 months of services, adult life coaching becomes more effective the more hours a participant receives. For instance, we found that for each additional service hour received, the likelihood of being convicted of a violent crime or being sentenced to probation decreased by 0.05 percentage points, on average, and the likelihood of being arrested for a

Figure V.21. Impact of adult life coaching on rates of contact with law enforcement 30 months after enrollment, participants with at least 40 hours of services

Source: Oakland Unite, OPD and ACPD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 3,766, including 149 adult life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 40 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between Oakland Unite participants and adults in the comparison group.

Adult life coaching participants who were also part of Ceasefire were less likely to be convicted for a new offense in the 30 months after beginning services compared to similar individuals also in Ceasefire. As an additional exploratory analysis, we examined impacts among the subset of participants linked to Ceasefire. During the 30-month follow-up period, 13 percent of life coaching participants who also participated in Ceasefire were convicted for a new offense, compared to 34 percent of comparison adults who also participated in Ceasefire (Figure V.22). This 21 percentage point difference between the two groups is statistically significant. In the 12 months prior, adult life coaching participants had higher rates of new convictions compared to comparison adults (see Figure V.23), though the difference between the two groups during this baseline period is not statistically significant (see Table B.5 in Appendix B). In additional analyses (not shown), we found that the decrease in the likelihood of a conviction was concentrated in felony convictions specifically.

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violent offense decreased by 0.03 percentage points. These differential impacts were statistically significant. However, there was no meaningful relationship between impacts and number of hours received over the longer 30-month outcome period.

Figure V.22. Impact of adult life coaching on rates of contact with law enforcement 30 months after enrollment, Ceasefire participants
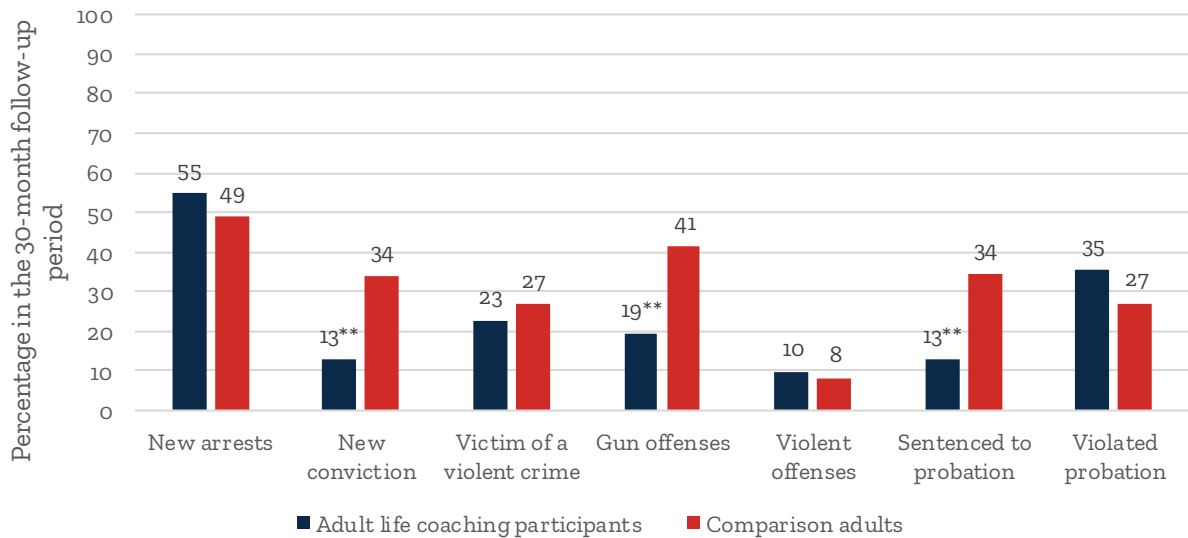
Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 321, including 31 adult life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, have consented to share their data for evaluation, and have participated in Ceasefire. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between Oakland Unite participants and adults in the comparison group.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Figure V.23. Cumulative conviction rates for new offenses for Ceasefire participants by month, before and after starting adult life coaching services
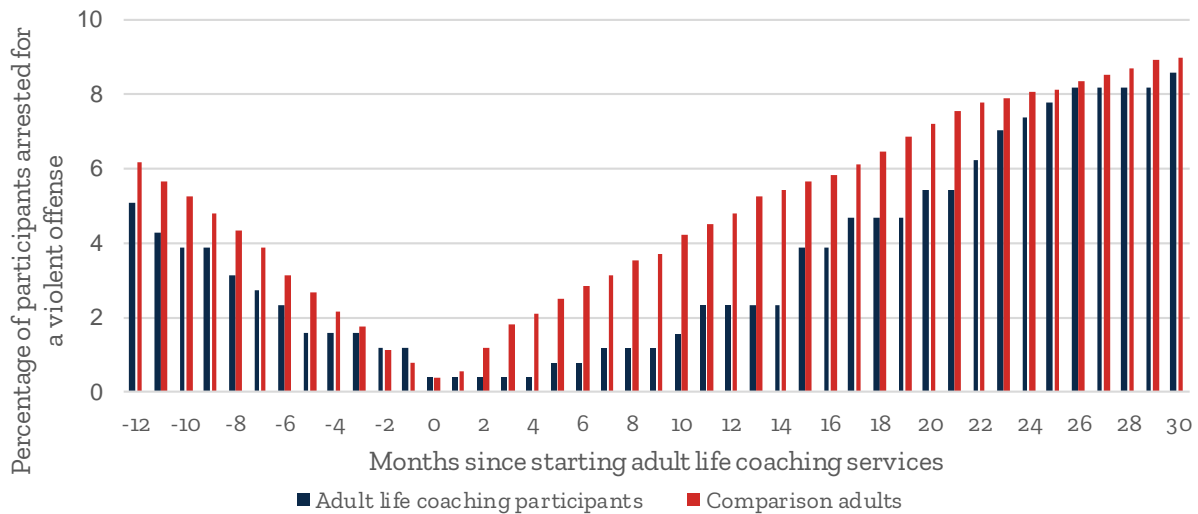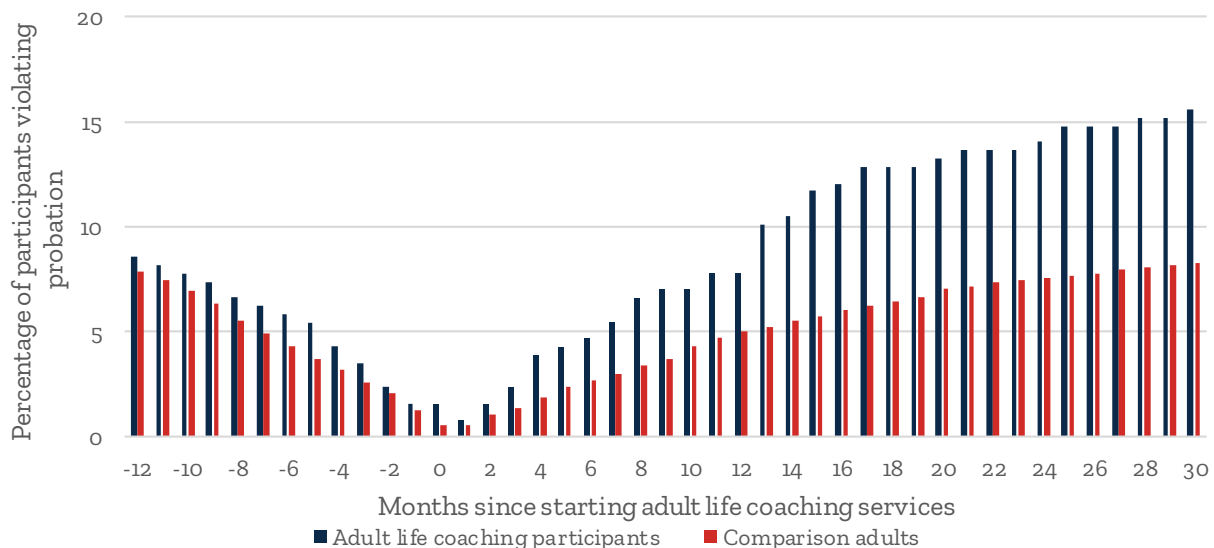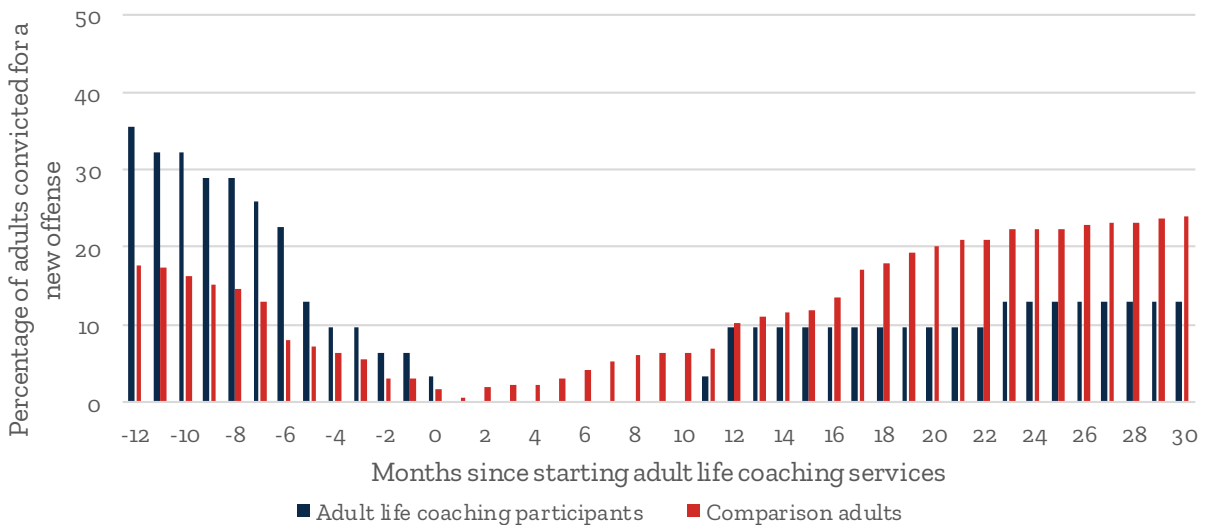

Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 321, including 31 adult life coaching participants.

Adult life coaching participants who were also part of Ceasefire were less likely to be arrested for a gun offense and sentenced to probation in the 30 months after beginning services compared to similar individuals also in Ceasefire. In the 30 months after beginning services, life coaching participants who had participated in Ceasefire were approximately 22 percentage points less likely to be arrested for a gun offense compared to comparison adults (41 percent versus 19 percent, respectively), a statistically significant difference (Figure V.22). In the 12 months prior, adult life coaching participants had similar rates of gun offenses compared to comparison adults (see Figure V.24).

In the 30 months after beginning services, these same life coaching participants were approximately 22 percentage points less likely to be sentenced to probation compared to comparison adults (34 percent versus 13 percent, respectively). This 22 percentage point difference is statistically significant. Meanwhile, in the 12 months prior, adult life coaching participants had higher rates of probation sentences compared to comparison adults, though the difference at baseline was not statistically significant (see Figure V.25).

Approximately 55 percent of adult life coaching participants linked to Ceasefire were arrested in the outcome period (Figure V.22). These rates were similar for the comparison group of other Ceasefire participants in the same follow-up period. When we examined additional measures of arrests involving a violent offense or probation violation, we found similar rates among the life coaching and comparison groups linked to Ceasefire. Rates of victimization reported to OPD were also similar between the two groups.

Figure V.24. Cumulative arrest rates for gun offenses for Ceasefire participants by month, before and after starting adult life coaching services
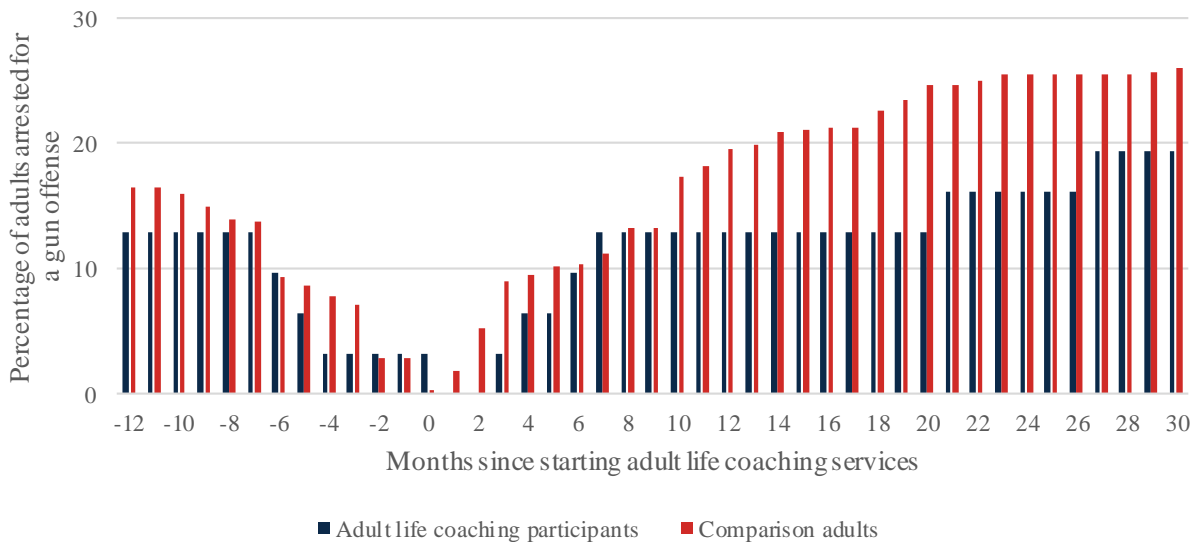
Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 321, including 31 adult life coaching participants.

Figure V.25. Cumulative rates of probation sentences for Ceasefire participants by month, before and after starting adult life coaching services
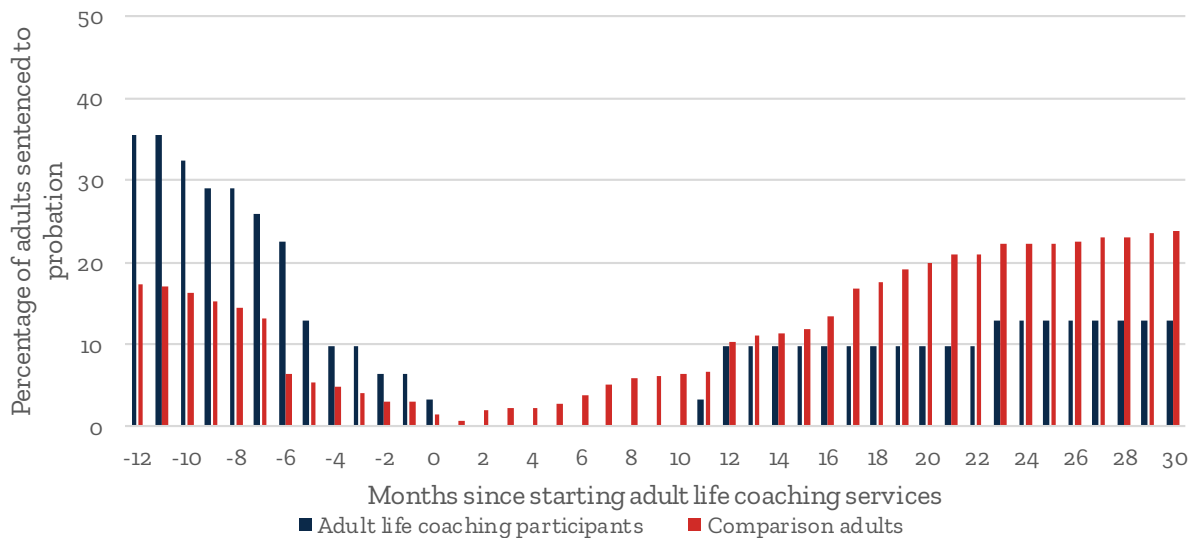
Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

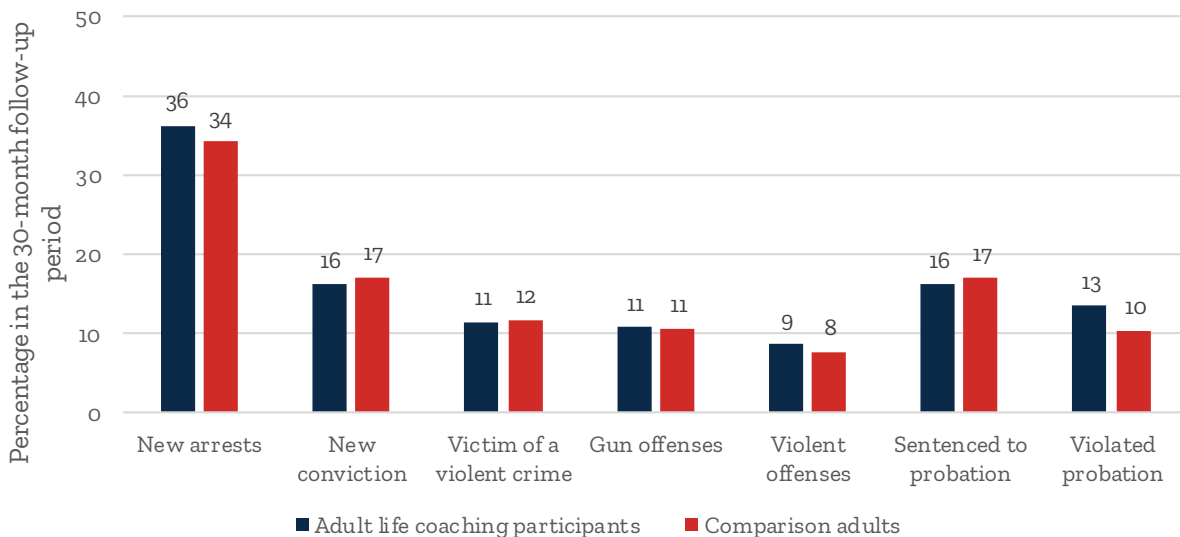Note: The total sample is 321, including 31 adult life coaching participants.

Because the comparison group was also linked to Ceasefire, these results reflect only the impact of life coaching. These findings suggest that life coaching may be more effective among participants linked to Ceasefire than among participants from other referral sources. As noted earlier, participants linked to Ceasefire were at higher risk at the start of services, and were more likely to complete the life coaching model as intended. In addition, they were primarily served by two agencies (HSD and CYO). They may also have exhibited different levels of readiness of change. Thus, it is difficult to determine what explains the greater efficacy of life coaching among this subgroup of individuals. It is also important to note that the Ceasefire subgroup is small, comprising only 31 of the 257 life coaching participants in the impact analyses. Therefore, the impacts shown here are driven by a small number of individuals.

VI. Conclusion

This evaluation assessed the implementation and impacts of the adult life coaching strategy, which was designed to improve outcomes for participants at highest risk of violence and thus ultimately lead to less violence in Oakland. The evaluation period (2016 to 2019) marked a time of transition for life coaching and Oakland Unite more broadly. The strategy evolved from intensive case management to a life coaching model that emphasized transformative relationships between participants and their coaches and required additional training and certification. In recent years, the programs expanded their eligibility criteria for participation, accepting more individuals who met certain risk factors but were not directly referred by law enforcement. In 2017, the City of Oakland founded the Department of Violence Prevention led by the manager of Oakland Unite on an interim basis. A new chief of DVP was hired in 2019 and Oakland Unite formally became a part of the DVP in 2020. These transitions occurred in the context of broader policy changes. For example, there was new state legislation affecting CSEC and juvenile offenders during this period. This report's findings should be viewed within this changing context.

Some important caveats should also be considered. To assess program impacts, we conducted quasi-experimental analyses in which we attempted to identify as similar a comparison group as possible, taking into account multiple factors such as individuals' histories of contact with law enforcement, including the timing, frequency, and types of contact. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that some differences between the groups may exist but be unobserved in the data. This is particularly relevant in the context of an intervention that is offered at a pivotal moment (such as when youth are about to be released from detention) yet is voluntary, requiring the individual to make a choice about engaging. It is also worth noting that the impact analyses were based on individuals who received services from January 2016 through June 2017 so that we could measure their outcomes over a 30-month period. To the extent that services have changed since then (for example, as more life coaches completed certification training), the results may be less applicable today. Another important caveat regards our outcome measures. Aside from the limitations of each administrative data source described earlier, there are other important outcomes, such as socio-emotional learning and employment, that the evaluation does not consider. Finally, we relied on service data entered by grantee staff to study implementation. Potential issues with data quality over time could affect the interpretation of the findings.

A. Key findings and implications

Below we offer a summary of key findings for the youth and adult life coaching programs and discuss implications of each key finding for Oakland Unite and future research.

1. Youth life coaching

- **Youth life coaching increased the likelihood of graduating high school by 11 percentage points but had mixed impacts on other outcomes.** Despite having improved educational outcomes, youth who participated in life coaching were 13 percentage points more likely to be a victim of a violent incident reported to OPD than youth in the comparison group.

    Although we found a short-term decrease in the likelihood of being arrested for a violent offense, over a longer 30-month window there were no reductions in multiple measures of contact with law enforcement. These results include all participants who received at least 10 hours of services; results were similar when examining just youth with at least 40 hours of services.

The increased rate of high school graduation is both large and meaningful. The estimated 11 percentage point impact suggests that as many as 67 additional Oakland youth obtained a high school degree as a result of participating in life coaching over the last four years.[23] Having a high school degree correlates strongly with improved social and economic outcomes for both the individual and their community. Research has found that, for an African American male aged 20, obtaining a high school degree amounts to a public benefit of about $332,200 per new graduate due to increased tax revenues and lower spending on health and crime (Levin et al. 2007).[24]

Oakland Unite invested approximately $7,000 per person in grant funds for these youth, though the total costs of providing life coaching are higher, as they involve time and support from other sources.[25] These costs should be weighed against the benefits of increased educational attainment, as well as the costs associated with a higher likelihood of victimization. Studies suggest that an assault has a cost of approximately $30,100, taking into account monetary costs as well as costs to individuals' mental health and quality of life (Miller et al. 1993).[26] It will be important to consider the strategy's goal of violence reduction in taking stock of its potential costs and benefits.

Implications: Oakland Unite should consider how to help youth reduce their risk of victimization, which could involve discussing the issue during planned convenings with life coaches and identifying next steps (including engaging youth who have been victimized). Going forward, understanding the cost-effectiveness of youth life coaching, as well as other Oakland Unite strategies, remains an important area for future research.

- **The number of new participants served by youth life coaching declined by almost 30 percent between 2016 and 2019, even as the number of youth arrested for gun offenses in Oakland increased slightly.** Consistent with state and national trends, however, the number of youth in Alameda County facilities and detention decreased in recent years as emphasis on youth diversion grew. In response to fewer youth being detained in the JJC, eligibility criteria for participation expanded in 2019. Though the vast majority of youth life coaching participants had contact with the justice system in the year leading up to services, participants beginning services in 2019 had notably lower prior arrest rates compared to participants in earlier years. This may be a direct result of the expanded eligibility criteria, as participants who had not been previously in the JJC were half as likely to have a prior arrest (53 percent compared to 100 percent of youth who had been detained). These findings suggest that grantees found it more difficult to identify youth at high risk of violence as fewer youth were referred to life coaching by the JJC Transition Center.

  Implications: Oakland Unite should revisit its recommended referral pathways for youth and how their risk level is assessed (for example, offering a validated risk assessment for all grantees to use). A meta-analysis of reentry and aftercare programs for juvenile and young adult offenders suggests that

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[23] Between January 2016 and December 2019, 605 youth received at least 10 hours of life coaching. Our impact estimates are based on youth who received at least 10 hours of services between January 2016 and July 2017, so the estimated number of additional graduates assumes our estimates also apply to later cohorts.

[24] We adjusted this value for inflation to reflect 2020 dollars.

[25] The per-person grant spending was obtained by dividing the total youth life coaching grant amount from January 2016 through June 2019 ($3,998,400) by the number of youth served during this same period who received at least 10 hours of services (565). Because grantees are required to match funds from other sources and receive training and technical assistance from DVP, the total costs associated with providing services is higher.

[26] We adjusted this value for inflation to reflect 2020 dollars.

these interventions are most effective when they are targeted toward youth at the highest risk of recidivism (James et al. 2013).

- **Only a quarter of youth completed the first of four recommended phases of life coaching. Over the years, both participant retention and weekly service intensity declined.** Over a quarter of youth dropped out of the program in the first four months, and about half engaged for at least four months but received fewer than the recommended number of weekly contacts during this initial phase. Life coaches said they tailored services to the needs of each participant, so in practice not everyone might need—or want—to engage in services for as long or as intensely as the full model recommends. However, average service duration and intensity both decreased with each new cohort of youth, leading fewer youth to complete the recommended model over time. It is unclear what may have driven this apparent decline in service provision, but factors that appear to have changed over this period include grantees' data entry practices, the level of oversight from Oakland Unite, and the characteristics of participants. The same meta-analysis suggested that interventions that were more intensive in terms of number of contacts per month (although not necessarily longer in duration) were most effective for youth (James et al. 2013).

  Implications: Future research should inform the ideal sequence, duration, and intensity of services based on the participant's needs, including for youth who may not be interested initially in engaging, to help improve and standardize practice across life coaches. In the meantime, Oakland Unite could consider introducing an assessment of readiness for change to inform both practice and future research.[27] Oakland Unite could also consider offering more guidance and oversight to grantees in terms of service provision as well as data tracking.

- **The subset of youth interviewed or surveyed for the evaluation credited life coaching with improving their lives.** In interviews and focus groups conducted throughout the evaluation period, participants and their families described a high level of personal involvement from coaches leading to positive changes in their lives. They described how life coaches helped them set and follow through on goals—for example, by accompanying them to court, checking in on them in school, and connecting them to jobs, training programs, and other support services. Youth and their families described successes in school, such as regularly attending classes, improving grades, and graduating high school. They also spoke about being able to get off probation and "stay out of trouble" as a result of the support they received. These positive experiences were mirrored in a survey of 63 youth participants, in which 87 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their situation was better because of Oakland Unite.

  These perspectives suggest that life coaching has the potential to make a difference in youths' lives though they may not be representative of everyone's experiences, as they are based only on a subset of people who agreed to participate in these evaluation activities. Findings from quantitative analyses that include all participants suggest this is the case. It is important to remember that life coaching is a relationship-based model and therefore depends heavily on both the participant and the life coach. Coaches, participants, and family members agreed that whether a participant is "willing or ready to change" influences how much the program will benefit them. As for the life coach, respondents described the importance of being willing to get intensively involved in the participants' lives. For

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[27] Two measurement tools focused on the Stages of Change model are the University of Rhode Island Change Assessment scale (URICA; McConnaughy et al., 1983) and the Violence Risk Scale (VRS; Wong and Gordon, 2000).

youth in particular, respondents placed a high value on life coaching providing a support system through a caring mentor.

Implications: Future research should identify the characteristics of a successful relationship to inform future practice. As a first step, Oakland Unite could ask grantees to log the life coach that works with each participant in Cityspan and use that data to track participant experiences, including retention and program completion, by life coach. Gathering input from more participants more regularly (such as through pulse surveys delivered via text messaging) could also be helpful. More broadly, Oakland Unite could consider ways to assess life coaches' performance in order to promote learning across coaches and provide targeted support or training as needed.

2. Adult life coaching

- **Adult life coaching reduced the likelihood of being arrested for a violent offense after 12 months by 3 percentage points, but over time had a limited impact on contact with law enforcement.** During those first 12 months, approximately 2 percent of adult life coaching participants were arrested for a violent offense, compared to 5 percent of adults in the comparison group. Over a 30-month window, however, the percentage of adult life coaching participants arrested for a violent offense gradually increased to 9 percent and was no longer different from the comparison group. Adult life coaching participants had similar rates of new arrests, convictions, and victimization as the comparison group both in the short and longer term. The results were consistent whether examining participants who received at least 10 hours or 40 hours of services.

  Implications: The limited reductions on contact with law enforcement raise questions about how to improve the effectiveness of service delivery. Future research should look to inform the most effective sequence, duration, and intensity of services based on participants' needs.[28] At the same time, using administrative data to measure violence has limitations and can miss important intermediate outcomes. A theory of change for life coaching could inform the development and collection of additional outcome measures.

- **Exploratory findings suggest that life coaching may be more effective among participants linked to Ceasefire, leading to large reductions in their likelihood of being arrested for a gun offense.** Compared to other adults also in Ceasefire, life coaching led to large reductions in the likelihood of being arrested for a gun offense, having a new conviction, or being sentenced to probation over a 30-month window. For example, in the 30 months after beginning services, life coaching participants who also participated in Ceasefire were approximately 22 percentage points less likely to be arrested for a gun offense than comparison adults who were also in Ceasefire but did not participate in life coaching (19 percent versus 41 percent, respectively). This translated into a similar

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[28] Randomized trials can be used to identify the sequence, duration, and intensity of services that is most effective for individuals with different needs, leading to greater program engagement and improved outcomes. For example, Sequential Multiple Assignment Randomized Trials (SMART) are often used to develop substance abuse and mental health interventions in which individuals' response to treatment can vary widely and some people might not be initially responsive to treatment. Evidence from these trials can be used to develop "adaptive interventions"—that is, interventions defined by a sequence of decision rules that specify whether, how, and or/when to alter the intensity, type, dosage, or delivery of treatment at critical points in the course of care based on the needs of each individual (Almirall et al. 2014).

decrease in the likelihood of having a felony conviction. There were limited impacts on other measures of contact with law enforcement, including new arrests and probation violations.

Several factors could explain the greater efficacy of life coaching among this subgroup of individuals. Participants linked to Ceasefire were at higher risk at the start of services and were also more likely to complete the life coaching model as intended. In addition, they were primarily served by two of the five agencies. It is also important to note that the Ceasefire subgroup is small, comprising only 31 of the 257 life coaching participants included in the impact analyses. Therefore, the impacts discussed here are driven by a small number of individuals.

Oakland Unite invested approximately $7,700 per person in grant funds for adult participants.[29] Although the impacts among the Ceasefire subgroup are based on a small number of individuals, even a small reduction in gun violence can be extremely beneficial to society; a single shooting injury is estimated to cost over $1 million (Muhammad 2018).

Implications: Future research should build on these findings to identify the factors that make life coaching more effective, such as the risk level of the individual and their readiness for change, the service model they received, and the characteristics of their life coach. In addition, understanding the cost-effectiveness of adult life coaching (and other Oakland Unite programs) requires a more complete accounting of both costs and benefits.

- **Three-quarters of participants had a prior arrest record before starting life coaching, but most had not been arrested within two years of their start date.** Participants were referred through multiple channels, including law enforcement partners, other Oakland Unite agencies, and word of mouth, though the number of referrals from Ceasefire decreased over the four-year period. Whereas 37 percent of participants had been previously arrested for a gun offense, only 16 percent had an arrest for a gun offense within two years of starting life coaching. In addition, participants who began life coaching in 2019 had lower rates of arrest and victimization than participants who began in earlier years. For example, 81 percent of participants in 2016 had been previously arrested, compared to 65 percent of those who began life coaching in 2019. Because participants linked with Ceasefire had substantially higher rates of both arrest and victimization than other participants, the decrease in risk levels over time may be explained in part by the decline in Ceasefire referrals.

  Implications: Given the program's goals of serving adults at highest immediate risk of violence, Oakland Unite should consider working with law enforcement and grantees to discuss referral pathways and processes that most effectively identify these highest-risk individuals.

- **Less than 40 percent of adult participants completed the first of four phases of life coaching.** Over the years, participant retention declined. Participants were somewhat more likely to fail to complete phase 1 due to not receiving the minimum recommended intensity of services than due to stopping services altogether before the end of the phase, although both were important factors. The number of service hours adult participants received also declined in recent cohorts. Among adult participants, the primary driver seems to be a decrease in participant retention, as weekly service intensity remained consistent throughout the evaluation period. Whereas only 6 percent of those starting services in 2016 stopped participating in the first month, this share increased each year, up to 18 percent for the 2019 cohort.

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[29] The per-person grant spending was obtained by dividing the total adult life coaching grant amount from January 2016 through June 2019 ($4,551,900) by the number of adults served during this same period who received at least 10 hours of services (595).

Unfortunately, exit reasons are not entered into the Oakland Unite database. In addition to changes in referral sources and participant risk profiles over time, other factors may help explain why early attrition from the program increased over time. Life coaches emphasized that they do not force participants to engage in services if they are not motivated to make a change. They also said that continued exposure to violence in participants' communities, as well as housing and other instability, are common obstacles for adults who do not fully engage in services. However, it is unclear whether or how these factors may have changed over time. In addition, despite being higher risk, participants linked to Ceasefire were twice as likely to complete all of the life coaching model's phases.

Implications: Improving data tracking and use could inform decisions about service provision. As noted above, collecting standardized risk and readiness data could help inform services. Grantees could also consistently log exit dates and reasons. Oakland Unite could monitor retention on a regular basis to understand how it varies by agency, referral source, life coach, and participant risk level and readiness for change. This type of data monitoring would require that grantees maintain accurate and up-to-date records (rather than waiting until the end of a reporting period to enter data, for example). It might also require developing an interface or dashboard that makes the data accessible to program managers. As with youth life coaching, future research should inform how the program model should be adapted to adults with varying needs, including those who may be harder to engage in services.

- **The subset of adults interviewed or surveyed for the evaluation credited life coaching with improving their lives.** As with youth, adult participants and family members who took part in interviews and focus groups spoke positively of their experiences with life coaching. They described how coaches helped them set goals, provided intensive support for accomplishing them (such as accompanying them to the DMV to obtain a driver's license), and tracked progress towards those goals. Participants and their families credited life coaching with promoting personal growth and maturity, describing better outlooks toward the future, improved relationships, and behavioral and attitudinal changes toward violence. Among the 66 adult participants surveyed, 87 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their situation was better because of the services they received.

  Across both the youth and adult programs, key informants identified three key strengths of life coaching: (1) shared backgrounds and experiences between coaches and participants, (2) trusting mentoring relationships, and (3) hands-on support. They also noted the challenge of engaging individuals who do not exhibit willingness or readiness for change. These factors likely affect the quality of the life coaching relationship and thus the effectiveness of the program. As noted above, the positive perspectives shared by participants who were interviewed or surveyed highlight the potential of life coaching.

  Implications: As noted above under implications for youth life coaching, we recommend that additional data tracking and research be used to better understand the factors that make for successful relationships like the ones described by participants and their families. Given that the life coach is integral to program success, assessing life coaches' performance could also promote learning and improvement.

B. Looking ahead

In the coming months, DVP will have an opportunity to gather input from grantees, community members, and other stakeholders to re-envision the future of Oakland Unite. It will do so in a challenging context: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, funds raised through Measure Z are expected to decline. Although many areas for future research remain, the findings from this four-year evaluation period point to life coaching

as a promising model of violence prevention that is still being refined. Below, we summarize key implications across the two life coaching programs.

Target population. With limited funding available, it may be important to re-prioritize the target population for life coaching services. This evaluation's findings suggest that the program may be more effective in engaging and improving outcomes for individuals who have a recent history of contact with law enforcement. Oakland Unite may consider working with law enforcement partners and grantees to define referral pathways that appropriately identify the target population while addressing concerns about the referral process. At the same time, readiness for change emerged as an important factor in participant success. Thus, systematically assessing risk and readiness may be important for identifying the target population and tailoring services to individuals' needs.

Data quality and use. The quality of data entered into the Oakland Unite database has varied across time, grantees, and data fields, limiting its use. At the same time, key fields such as exit reasons or which life coach worked with an individual are not recorded. Although data entry can be burdensome to grantees (many have their own database systems), Oakland Unite, grantees, the evaluator, and the database developer should consider working together to improve the quality of the data as well as its use. Grantees may be more incentivized to enter data accurately and on time if the data are visible and useful to them and their program managers. Greater data use and monitoring, in turn, can inform practice and policy. A dashboard or other interface that makes key indicators by grantee and life coach accessible could support this goal. Finally, Oakland Unite may wish to revisit the process for obtaining participant consent to promote greater data sharing.[30]

Future research. In this chapter, we described several questions for future research that could be prioritized by Oakland Unite and stakeholders and integrated into future evaluation plans. In the next evaluation period, we recommend studying the characteristics of life coaches and participants that make for a successful relationship; measuring additional participant outcomes such as employment and earnings,[31] feelings of safety and well-being, and social-emotional learning; taking a fuller accounting of program costs and benefits; and using rigorous methods, such as random assignment, to not only test the overall effectiveness of life coaching but also identify the most effective sequence, duration, and intensity of services based on participants' needs. Foundations and other funders interested in community-based approaches to decreasing recidivism and violence may consider supporting the DVP's learning and evaluation efforts.

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[30] Although life coaching agencies have among the highest rates of participant consent across Oakland Unite, consent rates have been declining over time (from 94 percent in 2016 to 85 percent in 2019 for youth and adult combined). Improving consent rates may be an even higher priority in other Oakland Unite strategies, however, where fewer than half of participants consent to share their personally identifiable information for evaluation purposes. One potential approach is to make the consent an opt-out rather than opt-in process.

[31] To link individual records to employment data from the California Employment Development Department, the agency requires social security numbers, which are not currently collected for participants.

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Appendix A:

Additional Information on Data Sources

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This report is based on qualitative and quantitative analyses of multiple data sources. We discuss both the qualitative and administrative data sources in this appendix. All data collection procedures were reviewed and approved by the Health Media Lab Institutional Review Board.

Qualitative data

The qualitative component of this report included primary data collection through interviews and focus groups with grantee staff, stakeholders, participants, and family members and a review of materials provided by Oakland Unite, including statements of work, quarterly reports, and program description. During interviews and focus groups, a note taker recorded responses, linking the feedback to specific interview questions. The evaluation team then coded responses across informants by program to identify key themes about the implementation of each program.

The evaluation team conducted site visits and interviews in 2017 to gather information about Oakland Unite strategy implementation from agency staff. The general topics of study included participant engagement, program implementation, program progress and tracking, collaboration networks, and successes and challenges. Site visits took place in July and August 2017 and were followed by telephone interviews in August 2018 (for youth life coaching only). During each visit, Mathematica staff interviewed grantee staff members, including managers and line staff. We also spoke with adult participants who agreed to participate in interviews and were on site. The purpose of interviews with program participants was to obtain feedback about the experiences they had with the life coaching program. The general topics discussed in the interviews included referrals, case management, family involvement, and opinions of the services received. A total of 50 interviews were conducted overall.

The evaluation team also conducted focus groups and additional interviews between July and November 2018. The evaluation team led nine focus groups and seven interviews with life coaching participants (adults and youth), life coaches (certified and non-certified), key informants (working in law enforcement, public health, behavioral health, employment support, school districts, policy and advocacy), and participants' family members. Oakland Unite and grantee staff identified program participants and family members who would be willing to take part in focus groups. Focus groups ranged in size but typically included 5–7 people. All interviews and focus groups were semi-structured, meaning the evaluation team asked the same questions, as applicable, but responses were open-ended, and the interviewer had flexibility to probe for details and clarification in the responses.

Although the qualitative data provided rich information about the grantees and the life coaching program, this evaluation approach has some limitations. As with all data from interviews, particularly those including sensitive topics, a potential for social desirability bias exists, as respondents may provide responses that reflect favorably upon themselves or their agencies. Although we specifically informed each informant that their answers would be kept confidential and would have no impact on their employment or the grantee's participation in Oakland Unite, they may still have felt that negative responses could have repercussions. In addition, these perspectives may not reflect those of all staff, stakeholders, participants, and family members.

Quantitative data

The quantitative findings presented in this report are derived from five administrative data sources: Oakland Unite's Cityspan database, the Oakland Police Department (OPD), the Alameda County Probation Department (ACPD), the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE), and the Oakland

Unified School District (OUSD). Table A.1 presents the total number of individual records retrieved from each of these data sources and the date ranges covered.

Table A.1. Administrative data sources

Data source	Total number of individual-level records retrieved	Date range
Alameda County Probation Department	30,570	January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2019
Oakland Unite Agency Data	10,896	January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2019
Oakland Police Department		
Arrest incidents	79,480	January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2019
Victimization incidents	423,958	January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2019
Alameda County Office of Education	1,492	August 1, 2014 to June 30, 2018
Oakland Unified School District	23,377	January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2018

Oakland Unite data

All Oakland Unite agencies are required to maintain administrative records in a common database managed by Cityspan. Agencies use the database to record service contacts and hours, milestones reached, incentives received, referral sources, and demographic and risk information about each participant. The data extract we received from Cityspan included participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2019.

Table A.2 shows the percentage of Oakland Unite participants in the data extract who consented to share their personal information for evaluation purposes.

Table A.2. Participant consent rates

Program	Number of participants	Consent rate (%)
Youth life coaching	2,047	26
Adult life coaching	1,354	14

Source: Oakland Unite administrative data.

OPD data

OPD provided data on arrests and victimization incidents that occurred between January 1, 2006, and December 31, 2019. The arrest data included information about each arrest incident, including its location, statute code, and UCR statute category code, as well as information about the arrestee, including name, date of birth, address, and demographics. The victimization data included similar information for each incident involving a victim of a crime. We used the UCR statute categories and statute codes to determine each arrest or victimization incident's type, as detailed in Table A.3. For arrest or victimization incidents with multiple offenses, we used the most serious offense to determine the severity.

Table A.3. Definition of outcome variables

Outcome	Definition
Victim of violence	Any incident in the OPD victimization records associated with one or more of the following UCR statute code categories: • Criminal homicide • Forcible rape • Robbery with a firearm, knife or cutting instrument, or other dangerous weapon • Assault with a firearm, knife or cutting instrument, or other dangerous weapon • Assault and aggravated injury • Assault, simply not aggravated • Prostitution and commercialized vice • Sex offenses • Offenses against the family and children
Gun offense	Any incident in the OPD arrest records associated with one or more of the following UCR statute code categories: • Robbery with a firearm, knife or cutting instrument, or other dangerous weapon • Strong-arm robbery • Assault with a firearm • Any other UCR statute code violation that includes the words "handgun", "firearm", "machine gun", "shotgun", and/or "zip gun."
Violent offense	Any incident in the OPD arrest records associated with one or more of the following UCR statute code categories: • Criminal homicide • Forcible rape • Robbery with a firearm, knife or cutting instrument, or other dangerous weapon • Strong-arm robbery • Assault with a firearm, knife or cutting instrument, or other dangerous weapon
Arrests	Any incident in the OPD arrest records

ACPD data

ACPD provided data on state and local Criminal Offender Record Information for individuals ages 13 and older served through the Juvenile Division between 2010 and 2019, and records for individuals ages 18 to 40 served through the Adult Division, including realigned populations, between 2010 and 2019. The Juvenile Division data files include arrest date and arrested offenses, sustained offenses, disposition, and facility information. These files include juveniles arrested throughout Alameda County, including the City of Oakland. The Adult Division file includes only information on sustained offenses for individuals who are on formal probation. The ACPD data were matched to the other data sources using first and last name, date of birth, race and ethnicity, and gender. Mathematica conducted the match onsite at ACPD and removed identifying information from the matched file before conducting the analysis.

OUSD data

OUSD provided data on all individuals enrolled in the district at any point between August 1, 2010, and June 30, 2018. For each academic year, the data included information about the student's school, days enrolled, days absent, days suspended, and academic performance. In addition, the data contained demographic and identifying information about each student.

ACOE data

ACOE provided data on all individuals enrolled in the county's community schools at any point between August 1, 2014, and June 30, 2018. For each academic year, the data included information about the student's days enrolled, days absent, days suspended, and academic performance. In addition, the data contained demographic and identifying information about each student.

Data matching

To conduct the analyses, we needed to link individuals within and across datasets. To conduct these matches, we used an algorithm to assign individuals a unique identifier both within and across datasets. The algorithm used consenting individuals' identifying information, including their first and last name, date of birth, gender, and address, to perform matches. All data points did not have to be available or match exactly for records to be matched. Instead, the algorithm was designed to consider the likelihood that two or more records represented the same person, even if there were minor differences across records (such as in the spelling of the name). The algorithm placed the most weight on name and date of birth, but also used gender and address if available. These weights were carefully calibrated to avoid erroneous matches while still allowing flexibility.

Survey data

In addition to using the administrative data sources described above, the evaluation team conducted a survey to gather information about Oakland Unite directly from participants. The general topics of study included experiences and satisfaction with services, importance of agency characteristics, thoughts about the future, experiences with violence, and demographic characteristics. Before the survey was administered, it was pretested with former Oakland Unite participants in two strategies. The pretest focused on whether respondents understood the questions, whether anything was difficult to answer, and the time required to complete. Based on this pretest, the survey was revised, and a final version was translated into Spanish.

The surveys were fielded with participants at each agency during September and October 2018. Survey administration was typically conducted on two back-to-back days where any Oakland Unite participant who visited that agency on one of the days was asked to complete a survey. Due to the differences in services provided and the number of participants at each agency, some sites delayed the start of data collection or included additional days. Nearly all surveys were conducted using a paper copy of the survey, with 5 percent of respondents electing to use a web version. The survey took approximately five minutes to complete. No identifying information was included on the survey, so all responses were anonymous. In total, 129 participants completed a survey across the 10 agencies providing life coaching (see Table A.4). Because the number of surveys varied by agency, the responses were weighted proportional to the number of completed surveys at each agency. This means that each agency contributed equally to the program-level averages regardless of the number of participants who completed a survey.

Table A.4 Participant survey summary

Program	Number of agencies	Number of completed surveys
Youth life coaching	6	63
Adult life coaching	5	66

Data security

Mathematica exercises due care to protect all data provided for this evaluation from unauthorized physical and electronic access. Per our current data sharing agreements, we do not share identifiable data with Oakland Unite or any other entity. All data are stored in an encrypted project-specific folder in a secure server. Access to this folder is restricted to authorized users through access control lists that require approval from the evaluation's project director. Only staff members needed to complete the evaluation objectives were granted access to the restricted data folder. These staff members have all completed data security training and background checks and are up to date on Mathematica's data storage and security policies.

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Appendix B:

Methods and Results

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In this appendix, we describe the sample selection, matching, and analysis steps for the impact analyses and present the impact estimates that form the basis of the results summarized in the main text.

Sample selection

We applied a number of sample selection criteria to the Oakland Unite data before matching participants to comparison individuals. First, we restricted the sample to Oakland Unite participants who began receiving services by June 2017 because we wished to examine outcomes in a 30-month follow-up window and outcome data were consistently available only through December 2019 at the time we began the analyses. We then excluded participants who did not consent to share their personally identifiable information for evaluation purposes. Consent rates were 91 percent for both the youth and adult life coaching analysis samples. We also required participants to meet a minimum service threshold of 10 hours to be included in the analyses. Oakland Unite participants also had to have demographic information in order to be matched.

After these restrictions were applied, there were 302 participants in youth life coaching and 264 participants in adult life coaching available for matching. Table B.1 describes how each restriction affected the sample sizes, where each row includes a new restriction added to the previous restriction(s) listed.

Table B.1. Summary of Oakland Unite sample size restrictions for the outcome analyses

		Youth life coaching	Adult life coaching
(1)	Number of participants who received services by June 2017	414	361
(2)	Those in (2) who consented to share data for evaluation	377	327
(3)	Those in (1) and (2) who met the minimum service hour threshold	304	268
(4)	Those in (1) through (3) who had demographic data (that is, those available for matching)	302	264

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, OUSD, and Ceasefire administrative data.

We also applied some criteria to the potential comparison group, drawn from OPD, ACPD, ACOE, and OUSD data, before conducting the matching. First, comparison individuals could not participate in any Oakland Unite program during the period available in the Cityspan data (January 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017). We then restricted the age range of comparison individuals to overlap with the age range of Oakland Unite participants in the relevant program. We also restricted the potential comparison group to individuals residing in Oakland to increase the likelihood that any future outcomes would occur in Oakland and thus appear in the available data. In addition, we removed a small number of individuals who were arrested or convicted for homicide or rape in the months leading up to the service window, because they were likely to be incarcerated during the follow-up period. As with Oakland Unite participants, comparison individuals had to have demographic information recorded to be matched.

After these restrictions were applied, there were 30,522 potential comparison individuals for the youth life coaching analysis and 46,190 potential comparison individuals for the adult life coaching analysis.

Matching

We matched Oakland Unite participants in each program to similar comparison individuals using an approach known as propensity-score matching. For adult life coaching, we estimated a propensity score for each eligible Oakland Unite participant and comparison individual using a logistic regression model. For the youth life coaching sample, finding a similar comparison group was more challenging, so we used a more complex approach called generalized boosted modeling. Both methods estimate propensity scores, which indicates an individual's likelihood of participating in life coaching given his or her gender, ethnicity, age, area of residence, and prior educational and juvenile justice histories (for youth) and Ceasefire participation and criminal justice histories (for adults) before participation in Oakland Unite. Due to the wide range of start dates (spanning 18 months) and the fact that some individuals are referred to Oakland Unite shortly after an arrest or other incident, we divided participants into groups (three groups of youth and four groups of adults) based on their service start dates, with each time frame spanning up to six months.[32] We then generated sets of covariates for each potential comparison member that measured their baseline data relative to each of these start windows. To find matches with similar patterns of behavior over time, we matched on criminal or juvenile justice and education history data in the previous 3, 6, and 12 months from the start month of each window, as well as baseline data before the 12-month baseline period. We then estimated propensity scores separately for each group. Table B.2 lists the variables used to estimate the propensity scores.

After estimating these propensity scores, we matched each Oakland Unite participant with up to 20 comparison individuals for youth life coaching and up to 25 comparison individuals for adult life coaching who had similar propensity scores within a given threshold, or radius, of the Oakland Unite participant's propensity score. After conducting the match, we recalculated baseline measures for each participant and all of his or her matched comparison individuals to align with that participant's start month (rather than the longer start window used in the matching). Using these realigned data, we then combined all participants and their matches and reassessed the quality of the baseline match for the combined treatment and comparison groups.

Some Oakland Unite participants did not resemble any comparison individuals closely enough and therefore were not matched. Of the 302 participants in the youth life coaching sample, 192 were matched to an average of 15 comparison individuals each. For adult life coaching, 257 out of 268 participants received matches (24 each, on average).[33] We matched comparison individuals to Oakland Unite participants with replacement, meaning that the same comparison individual could be matched to more than one Oakland Unite participant.

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[32] Ideally, we would have liked to match Oakland Unite participants separately by each start month to identify comparison members with the most similar patterns of behavior around the exact same time period. However, monthly sample sizes were too small to reliably predict program participation. For instance, about one-third of youth participants had a service onset date in January 2016, so these youth were matched as one group, whereas the remaining two-thirds who started services in the subsequent 17 months were divided into three groups of similar proportions.

[33] Sixty-four percent of youth life coaching participants received the maximum number of allowable matches (20), whereas about one-quarter matched with 10 or fewer comparison individuals. Meanwhile, 95 percent of adult life coaching participants matched with the maximum number of allowable matches (25), whereas the remaining 10 percent matched with between 1 and 23 comparison individuals.

To analyze individuals who received a higher dose of life coaching services, we subset the matched sample to include participants who received 40 or more service hours and their matched comparison individuals. To analyze school attendance and discipline outcomes for youth, we subset the matched sample to include youth life coaching participants who were enrolled in school in the 30-month outcome period and only their matches who were also enrolled in school in the 30-month outcome period. Of the 192 participants in the main youth life coaching sample, 116 were enrolled in school in the outcome period and had an average 8 comparison individuals who were also enrolled in school in the outcome period. Similarly, the adult Ceasefire analytic sample included all adult life coaching participants who participated in Ceasefire and only their matched comparison members who also participated in Ceasefire.[34] Of the 257 participants in the main adult life coaching sample, 31 were included in our Ceasefire analysis sample and had an average of 9 comparison individuals who also participated in Ceasefire.

Table B.2. Baseline variables used in the propensity-score models

- Demographics (gender, race/ethnicity, age)
- Area of residence (east Oakland, west Oakland, central Oakland, other)
- Indicators of whether the individual had been arrested, convicted, incarcerated, placed in juvenile hall (youth only), or monitored with a GPS or electronic tracking device at any time before the start of Oakland Unite services, as well as in the 3, 6, and 12 months before the start of services. Arrests and convictions were counted both overall and by type of offense (felony, misdemeanor, gun, violent, violation of probation, and other offenses)
- Categories of the number of arrests, convictions, and times in juvenile hall (youth only) in the 3, 6, and 12 months before the start of Oakland Unite services
- Indicators of whether the individual had been a victim of any crime or a violent crime specifically any time before the start of Oakland Unite services, as well as in the 3, 6, and 12 months before the start of services
- Categories of the number of times the individual had been a victim of any crime in the 12 months before the start of Oakland Unite services
- Indicators of whether the individual was enrolled in OUSD or ACOE before 2015 and in the year before the start of Oakland Unite services, as well as whether they were enrolled in an alternative school during these periods (youth only)
- School attendance rate before 2015 and in the year before the start of Oakland Unite services (if enrolled in school)[a] (youth only)
- Indicators of whether the individual was chronically absent, suspended, involved in a school discipline incident, involved in a violent school incident, or had a GPA below 2.0 before 2015 and in the year before the start of Oakland Unite services (if enrolled in school)[a] (youth only)
- Categories of the number of school discipline incidents in the 12 months before the start of Oakland Unite services[a] (youth only)
- Indicator for whether the individual participated in Ceasefire (adults only)
- Interactions of whether the individual was African American and various demographic, justice, and education variables

[a] For youth who were not enrolled in school during the baseline periods, we imputed all education-related baseline data to zero and controlled for an enrollment indicator in the matching.

Table B.3 presents summary statistics showing how well youth life coaching participants were matched to comparison individuals on baseline characteristics. On average, comparison youth were not significantly

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[34] Five adult life coaching participants who also participated in Ceasefire were omitted from the Ceasefire analysis because none of their matched comparison individuals participated in Ceasefire.

different from Oakland Unite participants on most of the baseline characteristics used in the analyses. However, youth in life coaching were more likely than the matched comparison group to be charged with a violent offense in the three months before the start of services and less likely to be sentenced to probation before 2015 and in the year before the start of Oakland Unite services. Table B.3 also includes the summary statistics comparing participants in the high-dosage subgroup to their matched comparison youth. This subgroup of participants differed from their matched comparison group similarly as the full group of participants.

Table B.3. Baseline characteristics of matched youth life coaching participants and comparison youth: Full sample and high-dosage subgroup

	Full sample		High dosage	
	Youth life coaching	Matched comparison	Youth life coaching	Matched comparison
Total arrests 3 months before OU (mean)	0.47	0.39	0.41	0.38
Any arrest 3 months before OU (%)	0.33	0.26	0.30	0.26
Any gun offenses 3 months before OU (%)	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.02
Any violent offenses 3 months before OU (%)	0.08*	0.04	0.08*	0.03
Any new conviction 3 months before OU (%)	0.18	0.13	0.15	0.13
Any probation 3 months before OU (%)	0.10	0.11	0.09	0.10
Any violation of probation 3 months before OU (%)	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.08
Ever a victim of violent incident 3 months before OU (%)	0.06	0.04	0.08	0.03
Any juvenile hall 3 months before OU (%)	0.23	0.20	0.21	0.19
Any arrest 6 months before OU (%)	0.41	0.37	0.38	0.36
Any gun offenses 6 months before OU (%)	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.04
Any violent offenses 6 months before OU (%)	0.09	0.05	0.09	0.04
Any new conviction 6 months before OU (%)	0.20	0.19	0.17	0.18
Any probation 6 months before OU (%)	0.14	0.18	0.13	0.18
Any violation of probation 6 months before OU (%)	0.11	0.10	0.09	0.10
Ever a victim of violent incident 6 months before OU (%)	0.07	0.06	0.08	0.06
Any juvenile hall 6 months before OU (%)	0.26	0.28	0.23	0.27
Any arrest 12 months before OU (%)	0.53	0.60	0.52	0.60
Any gun offenses 12 months before OU (%)	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.07
Any violent offenses 12 months before OU (%)	0.12	0.07	0.12	0.07
Any new conviction 12 months before OU (%)	0.28	0.32	0.26	0.32
Any probation 12 months before OU (%)	0.18**	0.31	0.17**	0.32
Any violation of probation 12 months before OU (%)	0.13	0.13	0.11	0.14
Ever a victim of violent incident 12 months before OU (%)	0.13	0.12	0.15	0.11
Any juvenile hall 12 months before OU (%)	0.35	0.40	0.34	0.40
Any arrest any time before OU (%)	0.79	0.82	0.78	0.83
Any gun offenses any time before OU (%)	0.14	0.19	0.14	0.18
Any violent offenses any time before OU (%)	0.21	0.16	0.21	0.15
Any new conviction any time before OU (%)	0.44	0.51	0.42*	0.52
Any probation any time before OU (%)	0.29**	0.43	0.29**	0.44

Any violation of probation any time before OU (%)	0.22	0.25	0.19	0.24
Ever a victim of violent incident any time before OU (%)	0.39	0.39	0.40	0.38
Any juvenile hall any time before OU (%)	0.47	0.54	0.45	0.55
Enrolled in OUSD 12 months before OU (%)	0.76	0.72	0.77	0.73
Enrolled in OUSD alternative school 12 months before OU (%)	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.09
Chronically absent in the 12 months before OU (%)	0.32	0.40	0.33	0.40
Any violent school incidents 12 months before OU (%)	0.13	0.14	0.12	0.14
Female (%)	0.30	0.33	0.32	0.33
White (%)	0.01**	0.03	0.00**	0.03
African American (%)	0.63	0.65	0.66	0.65
Asian or Pacific Islander (%)	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.02
Hispanic (%)	0.27	0.26	0.25	0.26
Other race/ethnicity (%)	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.04
Age (mean)	15.77	15.49	15.69	15.46
Resides in West Oakland (%)	0.22	0.25	0.23	0.24
Resides in Central Oakland (%)	0.26	0.24	0.26	0.24
Resides in East Oakland (%)	0.47	0.48	0.46	0.48
Other area of residence (%)	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.04
Number of individuals	**192**	**2,809**	**149**	**2,166**

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

*Difference is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

**Difference is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Table B.4 includes summary statistics for the matched sample of youth enrolled in school in the 30-month outcome period. In addition to juvenile justice data, we also assessed the equivalence of additional educational background characteristics for this sample, including the student's free and reduced-priced school lunch recipient status, special education status, English language learner status, total credits earned in the baseline year, and whether the student was behind the expected grade level for his or her age. On average, comparison youth enrolled in school were not significantly different from Oakland Unite participants on most of the baseline characteristics used in the analyses. However, youth in Oakland Unite were more likely to be English language learners and less likely to be female.

Table B.4. Baseline characteristics of matched youth life coaching participants and comparison youth, for those enrolled in school in the outcome period

	Enrolled in school	
	Youth life coaching	Matched comparison
Enrolled in OUSD 12 months before OU (%)	0.86	0.87
Enrolled in OUSD alternative school 12 months before OU (%)	0.03	0.06
Attendance rate 12 months before OU (%)	0.70	0.74
Chronically absent in the 12 months before OU (%)	0.37	0.44
GPA 12 months before OU (mean)	0.95	1.02/
GPA less than 2.0 12 months before OU (%)	0.58	0.61
Enrolled in OUSD any time before OU (%)	0.96	0.97

Enrolled in OUSD alternative school any time before OU (%)	0.20	0.15
Attendance rate before OU (%)	0.83	0.82
Chronically absent before OU (%)	0.43	0.51
Ever special education (%)	0.34	0.26
English language learner before 2015 (%)	0.22*	0.12
Behind expected grade level (%)	0.06	0.06
Ever free or reduced-price lunch recipient (%)	0.92	0.92
Any violent school incidents 3 months before OU (%)	0.09	0.09
Any school incidents 3 months before OU (%)	0.26	0.21
Any suspensions 3 months before OU (%)	0.13	0.11
Any violent school incidents 6 months before OU (%)	0.11	0.14
Any school incidents 6 months before OU (%)	0.35	0.30
Any suspensions 6 months before OU (%)	0.16	0.17
Any violent school incidents 12 months before OU (%)	0.17	0.18
Any school incidents 12 months before OU (%)	0.40	0.38
Any suspensions 12 months before OU (%)	0.22	0.22
Any violent school incidents any time before OU (%)	0.22	0.21
Any school incidents any time before OU (%)	0.48	0.48
Any suspensions any time before OU (%)	0.28	0.26
Any arrest 3 months before OU (%)	0.30	0.27
Any gun offenses 3 months before OU (%)	0.04	0.02
Any violent offenses 3 months before OU (%)	0.08	0.04
Any new conviction 3 months before OU (%)	0.16	0.09
Any probation 3 months before OU (%)	0.09	0.10
Any violation of probation 3 months before OU (%)	0.10	0.07
Ever a victim of violent incident 3 months before OU (%)	0.07	0.04
Any juvenile hall 3 months before OU (%)	0.18	0.17
Any arrest 6 months before OU (%)	0.38	0.39
Any gun offenses 6 months before OU (%)	0.05	0.04
Any violent offenses 6 months before OU (%)	0.08	0.06
Any new conviction 6 months before OU (%)	0.16	0.13
Any probation 6 months before OU (%)	0.09	0.14
Any violation of probation 6 months before OU (%)	0.10	0.08
Ever a victim of violent incident 6 months before OU (%)	0.08	0.05
Any juvenile hall 6 months before OU (%)	0.21	0.25
Any arrest 12 months before OU (%)	0.49	0.58
Any gun offenses 12 months before OU (%)	0.07	0.06
Any violent offenses 12 months before OU (%)	0.09	0.07
Any new conviction 12 months before OU (%)	0.22	0.23
Any probation 12 months before OU (%)	0.13	0.20
Any violation of probation 12 months before OU (%)	0.11	0.10
Ever a victim of violent incident 12 months before OU (%)	0.14	0.09
Any juvenile hall 12 months before OU (%)	0.30	0.33

Any arrest any time before OU (%)	0.73	0.77
Any gun offenses any time before OU (%)	0.13	0.14
Any violent offenses any time before OU (%)	0.14	0.16
Any new conviction any time before OU (%)	0.36	0.32
Any probation any time before OU (%)	0.22	0.27
Any violation of probation any time before OU (%)	0.20	0.15
Ever a victim of violent incident any time before OU (%)	0.34	0.35
Any juvenile hall any time before OU (%)	0.41	0.41
Female (%)	0.23*	0.36
White (%)	0.00*	0.02
African American (%)	0.66	0.66
Asian or Pacific Islander (%)	0.03	0.02
Hispanic (%)	0.28	0.26
Other race/ethnicity (%)	0.03	0.03
Age (mean)	15.32	14.96
Resides in West Oakland (%)	0.23	0.24
Resides in Central Oakland (%)	0.23	0.27
Resides in East Oakland (%)	0.50	0.46
Other area of residence (%)	0.03	0.03
Number of individuals	**116**	**903**

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

*Difference is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

Table B.5 presents summary statistics on baseline characteristics for each of the adult life coaching analytic samples: full sample, Ceasefire subgroup, and high dosage subgroup. On average, matched comparison adults were not significantly different from Oakland Unite participants on most of the baseline characteristics used in the analyses. Oakland Unite participants, particularly in the Ceasefire subgroup, had higher rates of victimization of a violent crime in all baseline periods we analyzed; however, the differences were not always statistically significant.

Table B.5. Baseline characteristics of matched adult life coaching participants and comparison individuals: Full sample and high-dosage and Ceasefire subgroups

	Full Sample		High dosage		Ceasefire	
	Adult life coaching	**Matched comparison**	**Adult life coaching**	**Matched comparison**	**Adult life coaching**	**Matched comparison**
Total arrests 3 months before OU (mean)	0.23	0.21	0.26	0.20	0.39	0.46
Any arrest 3 months before OU (%)	0.15	0.12	0.15	0.11	0.29	0.17
Any gun offenses 3 months before OU (%)	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.07
Any violent offenses 3 months before OU (%)	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.01
Any new conviction 3 months before OU (%)	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.06
Any probation 3 months before OU (%)	0.07	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.10	0.04
Any violation of probation 3 months before OU (%)	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.16	0.04
Ever a victim of violent incident 3 months before OU (%)	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.03	0.13	0.02
Any arrest 6 months before OU (%)	0.19	0.16	0.17	0.15	0.35	0.25
Any gun offenses 6 months before OU (%)	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.09
Any violent offenses 6 months before OU (%)	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02
Any new conviction 6 months before OU (%)	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.13	0.07
Any probation 6 months before OU (%)	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.13	0.05
Any violation of probation 6 months before OU (%)	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.19	0.06
Ever a victim of violent incident 6 months before OU (%)	0.07	0.04	0.09*	0.04	0.19*	0.04
Any arrest 12 months before OU (%)	0.32	0.30	0.32	0.27	0.58	0.45
Any gun offenses 12 months before OU (%)	0.10	0.09	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.16
Any violent offenses 12 months before OU (%)	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.05
Any new conviction 12 months before OU (%)	0.18	0.17	0.20	0.15	0.32	0.17
Any probation 12 months before OU (%)	0.19	0.17	0.21	0.15	0.35	0.17
Any violation of probation 12 months before OU (%)	0.08	0.07	0.09	0.07	0.23	0.10
Ever a victim of violent incident 12 months before OU (%)	0.11	0.09	0.13	0.08	0.29	0.19
Any arrest any time before OU (%)	0.81	0.79	0.77	0.76	0.97	0.96
Any gun offenses any time before OU (%)	0.39	0.35	0.40	0.33	0.58	0.57

Any violent offenses any time before OU (%)	0.28	0.29	0.30	0.27	0.26	0.40
Any new conviction any time before OU (%)	0.60	0.57	0.53	0.53	0.81	0.87
Any probation any time before OU (%)	0.58	0.56	0.53	0.53	0.81	0.84
Any violation of probation any time before OU (%)	0.43	0.42	0.36	0.39	0.58	0.74
Ever a victim of violent incident any time before OU (%)	0.47	0.42	0.46	0.40	0.77	0.57
Ceasefire participant	0.14	0.11	0.11	0.08	1.00	1.00
Female (%)	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.00
White (%)	0.00*	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
African American (%)	0.77	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.61	0.73
Asian or Pacific Islander (%)	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.03
Hispanic (%)	0.18	0.15	0.14	0.15	0.32	0.24
Other race/ethnicity (%)	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.06	0.00
Age (mean)	25.51	25.80	26.01	26.18	23.74	23.56
Resides in West Oakland (%)	0.12	0.12	0.16	0.13	0.03	0.11
Resides in Central Oakland (%)	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.43
Resides in East Oakland (%)	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.48	0.42
Other area of residence (%)	0.11	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.16	0.04
Number of individuals	**257**	**6,179**	**149**	**3,617**	**31**	**290**

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and Ceasefire administrative data.

*Difference is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

Impact model

After identifying the matched comparison samples, we analyzed arrest, victimization, and recidivism outcomes in the 30-month period after participants began Oakland Unite services. As additional exploratory analyses, we examined short-term and long-term outcomes in 12-month and 36-month windows, following the same procedure as described below for 30-month outcomes. Participants began receiving services between January 2016 and June 2017 and therefore had different follow-up periods. The 12-month follow-up periods ranged from February 2016–January 2017 (for individuals who began services in January 2016) through July 2017–June 2018 (for individuals who began services in May 2017).[35] The 30-month follow-up periods ranged from February 2016–July 2018 through July 2017–December 2019. Because data were consistently available only through December 2019 at the time we began the analyses, 36-month follow-up data were only available for individuals who began services in 2016; thus, the follow-up periods ranged from February 2016–January 2019 (for individuals who began services in January 2016) through January 2017–December 2019 (for individuals who began services in December 2016). The follow-up periods of comparison individuals corresponded to the same follow-up periods of the Oakland Unite participants to whom they were matched. In these follow-up periods, we determined whether individuals had any of the outcomes listed in the main text. With input from Oakland Unite, we classified outcomes as either confirmatory—indicating the main outcomes used to assess program effectiveness—or exploratory, indicating additional outcomes that could shed light on these main impacts.

To measure the impacts of participating in life coaching on these outcomes, we estimated an ordinary least squares regression model that accounted for any remaining differences between Oakland Unite and comparison individuals in their demographic characteristics as well as juvenile justice and educational histories for youth, and criminal justice and Ceasefire histories for adults:

$$(B1) \qquad y_i = \alpha + X_i\beta + \delta T_i + \varepsilon_i,$$

where y_i is a 30-month outcome; X_i is a vector of baseline characteristics for individual i accounting for demographics, educational, and juvenile justice histories for youth and demographics, criminal justice, and Ceasefire histories for adults, that takes into account the timing of incidents relative to the start of services;[36] T_i is the treatment status, indicating whether individual i participated in the Oakland Unite program of interest; ε_i is a random error term that reflects the influence of unobserved factors on the outcome; and δ and β are parameters or vectors of parameters to be estimated, with δ representing the impact of participating in Oakland Unite.

We used a weighting scheme in which each Oakland Unite participant had a weight of one, and the total weight of each participant's matched comparison individuals also summed to one. To accomplish this, each comparison individual had a weight inverse to the number of other comparison individuals matched to the same Oakland Unite participant. A similar approach was taken to compute the weights of the youth subgroup enrolled in school in the 30-month outcome period and the adult subgroup enrolled in Ceasefire. As noted above, these subgroups include Oakland Unite participants in the subgroup and only their

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[35] Some youth who received services in the early months of 2016 had begun participating in Oakland Unite in the previous year. However, we did not have information about services received before January 1, 2016 for this report.

[36] To better account for the timing of juvenile and criminal justice incidents in the months leading up to the start month, we additionally controlled for incidents that occurred in the 12 months before the start month by dividing them into three-month windows.

matched comparison individuals who were also part of the subgroup. Thus, each comparison individual included in the OUSD and Ceasefire analyses had a weight equal to the inverse of the number of other comparison individuals in the subgroup matched to the same Oakland Unite participant in the subgroup. The standard errors were clustered at the individual level to account for the fact that the same comparison individual could appear multiple times in the data depending on the number of Oakland Unite participants to which they were matched.

Results

Youth life coaching

Table B.6 presents the impact estimates for youth life coaching outcomes at 12, 30, and 36 months in percentage point units. As discussed in the main text, youth life coaching participants were significantly more likely to be enrolled in school and graduate from high school in the 30 months after starting services. They were also more likely to be victims of a violent crime. Rates of arrest and conviction, however, were comparable to those of a similar comparison group of youth during this follow-up period. (The impact estimates presented in the main text were rounded to whole numbers.) Impact estimates were similar among the subgroup of youth who received a higher dosage of services, meaning that having received 40 or more hours of life coaching services did not alter the impacts of life coaching in a statistically meaningful way (Table B.7).

Table B.6. Impacts of youth life coaching 12, 30, and 36 months after enrollment

Impact of Oakland Unite on the probability of:	12-month follow-up period		30-month follow-up period		36-month follow-up period	
	Impact	Sample size	Impact	Sample size	Impact	Sample size
Confirmatory outcomes						
An arrest for any offense in Alameda County	0.5	3,001	-0.4	3001	2.2	2,466
	(3.5)		(3.7)		(4.2)	
Any delinquent finding or conviction in Alameda County	0.3	3,001	0.2	3001	0.2	2,466
	(2.6)		(3.0)		(3.3)	
Being a victim of any violent crime reported to OPD	5.4*	3,001	12.8**	3001	11.0**	2,466
	(2.7)		(3.3)		(3.6)	
Enrolling in an OUSD or ACOE school	18.0**	2,237	13.7**	2237	11.5**	1,810
	(3.8)		(3.7)		(4.3)	
Graduated from an OUSD or ACOE school	10.4**	3,001	10.8**	3001	9.5*	2,466
	(3.4)		(3.6)		(3.9)	
If enrolled in school, being chronically absent	0.8	961	-5.0	1019	-8.7	774
	(4.8)		(4.9)		(5.8)	
If enrolled in school, having a recorded violent school incident	2.4	1,019	4.7	1019	1.7	774
	(3.5)		(3.7)		(4.3)	
Exploratory outcomes						
An arrest for an offense involving a gun in Alameda County	-0.9	3,001	0.8	3001	3.1	2,466
	(2.0)		(2.7)		(3.4)	

Impact of Oakland Unite on the probability of:	12-month follow-up period		30-month follow-up period		36-month follow-up period	
	Impact	Sample size	Impact	Sample size	Impact	Sample size
An arrest for a violent offense in Alameda County	-3.1	3,001	-1.2	3001	3.1	2,466
	(1.9)		(2.9)		(3.3)	
Being sentenced to formal probation supervision in Alameda County	7.4**	3,001	6.0	3001	5.2	2,466
	(2.6)		(3.2)		(3.6)	
Violating probation in Alameda County	2.4	3,001	2.7	3001	1.3	2,466
	(2.4)		(2.4)		(2.7)	

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: The sample sizes include the total number of Oakland Unite participants and matched comparison youth. Standard errors appear below the impact estimates in parentheses. Impacts and standard errors are presented in percentage points. A negative number indicates that Oakland Unite participants had a lower rate than the comparison group.

* Impact is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Table B.7. Impacts of youth life coaching in the 30 months after enrollment, high-dosage subgroup

Impact of Oakland Unite on the probability of:	High dosage	
	Impact	Sample size
Confirmatory outcomes		
An arrest for any offense in Alameda County	-0.9	2,470
	(4.0)	
Any delinquent finding or conviction in Alameda County	0.5	2,470
	(3.1)	
Being a victim of any violent crime reported to OPD	13.8**	2,470
	(3.6)	
Enrolling in an OUSD or ACOE school	14.2**	1,843
	(3.8)	
Graduated from an OUSD or ACOE school	12.2**	2,470
	(3.8)	
If enrolled in school, being chronically absent	-8.7	876
	(5.1)	
If enrolled in school, having a recorded violent school incident	3.9	876
	(3.7)	
Exploratory outcomes		
An arrest for an offense involving a gun in Alameda County	1.8	2,470
	(3.0)	
An arrest for a violent offense in Alameda County	-0.7	2,470
	(3.1)	
Being sentenced to formal probation supervision in Alameda County	5.3	2,470

	(3.3)	
Violating probation in Alameda County	2.1	2,470
	(2.7)	

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: The sample sizes include the total number of Oakland Unite participants who received 40 or more service hours and their matched comparison youth. Standard errors appear below the impact estimates in parentheses. Impacts and standard errors are presented in percentage points. A negative number indicates that Oakland Unite participants had a lower rate than the comparison group.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Adult life coaching

Table B.8 presents the impact estimates of adult life coaching outcomes at 12, 30, and 36 months in percentage point units. In the short-term (12 months after starting services), adult life coaching is associated with a statistically significant reduction in the rate of arrest for a violent offense (a three percentage point decrease relative to comparison adults). Although the impact remains favorable in the 30 and 36 months after starting services, it is no longer statistically significant. Adult life coaching participants were significantly more likely to violate probation in the 30 months after starting services. Rates of arrest and conviction, however, were comparable to those of a similar comparison group of adults during this follow-up period.

Table B.8. Impacts of adult life coaching 12, 30, and 36 months after enrollment

Impact of Oakland Unite on the probability of:	12-month follow-up period		30-month follow-up period		36-month follow-up period	
	Impact	Sample size	Impact	Sample size	Impact	Sample size
Confirmatory outcomes						
An arrest for any offense in Alameda County	2.5	6,436	4.7	6,436	3.5	5,185
	(2.6)		(3.0)		(3.3)	
Any delinquent finding or conviction in Alameda County	-1.1	6,436	-1.1	6,436	-1.9	5,185
	(1.7)		(2.3)		(2.5)	
Being a victim of any violent crime reported to OPD	-1.2	6,436	0.7	6,436	1.2	5,185
	(1.3)		(2.0)		(2.4)	
Exploratory outcomes						
An arrest for an offense involving a gun in Alameda County	-1.3	6,436	0.3	6,436	-0.5	5,185
	(1.5)		(2)		(2.3)	
An arrest for a violent offense in Alameda County	-2.9**	6,436	-1.0	6,436	-1.9	5,185
	(1.1)		(1.8)		(2.1)	
Being sentenced to formal probation supervision in Alameda County	-1.0	6,436	-1.0	6,436	-1.8	5,185
	(1.7)		(2.3)		(2.5)	
Violating probation in Alameda County	2.0	6,436	6.0**	6,436	6.1**	5,185
	(1.5)		(2.0)		(2.2)	

Source: Oakland Unite, ACPD, OPD, and Ceasefire administrative data.

Note: The sample sizes include the total number of Oakland Unite participants and matched comparison adults. Standard errors appear below the impact estimates in parentheses. Impacts and standard errors are

presented in percentage points. A negative number indicates that Oakland Unite participants had a lower rate than the comparison group.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Table B.9 presents the 30-month impact estimates for the adult life coaching high-dosage and Ceasefire subgroups in percentage point units. Unlike the full sample, adults who received 40 or more hours of life coaching services were just as likely to violate probation as a similar comparison group. Impacts on rates of arrest, conviction, victimization, and probation sentencing were comparable for this subgroup. Among adults who participated in Ceasefire in addition to Oakland Unite, we found large and statistically significant reductions in conviction rates, gun offenses, and probation sentences compared to a similar comparison group that participated in Ceasefire only. Among Ceasefire participants, adult life coaching is associated with a 21 percentage point decrease in new convictions and a 22 percent decrease in both arrests for a gun offense and probation sentences.

Table B.9. Impacts of adult life coaching in the 30 months after enrollment, high-dosage and Ceasefire subgroups

	High dosage		Ceasefire	
Impact of Oakland Unite on the probability of:	**Impact**	**Sample size**	**Impact**	**Sample size**
Confirmatory outcomes				
An arrest for any offense in Alameda County	2.1	3,766	5.9	321
	(3.4)		(17)	
Any delinquent finding or conviction in Alameda County	-1.0	3,766	-21.2**	321
	(2.8)		(6.3)	
Being a victim of any violent crime reported to OPD	-0.3	3,766	-4.2	321
	(2.3)		(9.7)	
Exploratory outcomes				
An arrest for an offense involving a gun in Alameda County	0.2	3,766	-21.9**	321
	(2.3)		(7.3)	
An arrest for a violent offense in Alameda County	1.1	3,766	1.5	321
	(2.1)		(11.2)	
Being sentenced to formal probation supervision in Alameda County	-0.9	3,766	-21.6**	321
	(2.8)		(6.3)	
Violating probation in Alameda County	3.1	3,766	8.3	321
	(1.9)		(6.4)	

Source: Oakland Unite, ACPD, OPD, and Ceasefire administrative data.

Note: The high dosage sample sizes include the total number of Oakland Unite participants who received 40 or more service hours and their matched comparison adults. The Ceasefire sample sizes include the total number of Oakland Unite participants who also participated in Ceasefire and their matched comparison adults who also participated in Ceasefire. Standard errors appear below the impact estimates in parentheses. Impacts and standard errors are presented in percentage points. A negative number indicates that Oakland Unite participants had a lower rate than the comparison group.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

To illustrate these impacts relative to the matched comparison group in the report, we calculated the percentage of Oakland Unite participants with each outcome and then subtracted the impact estimates

from this rate to obtain a counterfactual rate for the comparison group. These regression-adjusted rates are presented in the main text.

To check the sensitivity of the results to our choice of a linear probability (ordinary least squares) model, we also estimated a logistic regression model. A logistic regression models a linear relationship between the log of the odds of the outcome and the dependent variables, whereas an ordinary least squares regression models a linear relationship between the probability of the outcome and the dependent variables. The results (not shown) were consistent with those obtained from the linear probability model.