Interpretations of Findings

Based on the fact that 47 of the cases did not further offend, and the documentation of only one primary violent offense, it is concluded that the diversion of this population of juvenile domestic violence offenders was warranted and beneficial because it kept youth away from the dangers of being confined to the detention center. Compared to the CALM program, juvenile detention for low-risk, low-level offenders is not an appropriate intervention, as it increases the likelihood of the juvenile moving deeper into the juvenile justice system (Araji, 2012). Additionally, these juveniles tend to get bullied and/or coaxed into committing negative behaviors by high-risk, high-level offenders who have implications for their future development and well-being (Forman, 2010; Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006).

Another benefit of this program was that our sample was almost entirely African American thereby allowing the diversion of these minorities from the juvenile justice system. The importance of this benefit cannot be overstated because of a great deal of national attention being given to the disproportionate detention of minority youth and ways in which this can be prevented. This program provides a means to prevent such detention.

In addition, the average cost of service provided to the CALM participants was $1,000, while the average cost of incarcerating a juvenile domestic violence perpetrator in the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Facility is approximately $5,000, exclusive of auxiliary services.

Implications

The CALM program was successful in diverting youth from juvenile detention with the commitment of minimal violent crime by diverted youth. The program can provide a model for communities interested in juvenile domestic violence diversion, particularly in African American populations. Given the high monetary expense of juvenile detention and its synergistic adverse effects on low-risk, low-level offenders, this and similar programs should be a top priority consideration for communities interested in alternative ways of treating juvenile domestic violence offenders.

References