

NORTH CAROLINA SENTENCING AND POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

JUVENILE DELINQUENT POPULATION PROJECTIONS FISCAL YEAR 2014 to FISCAL YEAR 2018

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 2013

INTRODUCTION

North Carolina General Statutes §§ 164-40(b) and 164-42.1(b) direct the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission to prepare annual projections of the juvenile delinquent population and help assess North Carolina's long-term resource needs for juvenile dispositions. The projections are prepared in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety's Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice (DACJJ).

The following analysis has two components. The first part examines the 5,711 juveniles with a new delinquent disposition in FY 2013 (referred to in this document as the "new population"). Information about these dispositions is extracted from the North Carolina Juvenile Online Information Network (NC-JOIN), DACJJ's juvenile management information system.¹ The second part of the analysis examines the juveniles who were committed to a Youth Development Center² (YDC) as of July 1, 2013 – the beginning of the current projection period. This group is referred to as the "stock population." The projections model takes into account both the decline of the committed stock population and the buildup of the new YDC population (new adjudicated delinquent dispositions, probation revocations, and post-release supervision revocations). The Juvenile Disposition Chart forms the foundation of the projections (*see* Table 1). It should be noted that the projections only address commitments to a YDC (Level 3 disposition), and not placements on Intermediate or Community probation (Level 2 and Level 1 dispositions).

**TABLE 1
JUVENILE DISPOSITION CHART**

OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION	DELINQUENCY HISTORY LEVEL		
	LOW 0 – 1 points	MEDIUM 2 – 3 points	HIGH 4 or more points
VIOLENT Class A-E felonies	Level 2 or 3	Level 3	Level 3
SERIOUS Class F-I felonies Class A1 misdemeanors	Level 1 or 2	Level 2	Level 2 or 3
MINOR Class 1, 2, 3 misdemeanors	Level 1	Level 1 or 2	Level 2

¹ A delinquent disposition is identified from NC-JOIN records as the disposition imposed for the most serious adjudicated offense for a given disposition hearing date during a fiscal year. Using this definition, 11% of the juveniles in this report were represented in the sample more than once.

² Throughout this document, any reference to the YDC population includes juveniles on-campus and off-campus (*e.g.*, home visit, community commitment, hospitalization, escape).

METHOD AND ASSUMPTIONS

Projections Method

The simulation model used to produce resource projections relies on historical data and other empirical information about how juveniles are processed through the juvenile justice system. The model simulates releases for the stock population while simultaneously processing YDC admissions³ (through Level 3 commitments, and revocations of probation or post-release supervision) to produce the population projections.

Producing the final resource projections is a two-stage process: 1) the “reality check” stage and 2) the projection stage. In the first stage, the validity of the data assumptions (*e.g.*, commitment rates, revocation rates, length of stay) is assessed by using the model to produce the past fiscal year’s admissions to YDCs. Once the model successfully approximates the past fiscal year’s YDC admissions, the second stage of the process begins. In the second stage, the stock population data and growth rates for the number of juvenile delinquent adjudications are added to the model, thereby producing the five-year population projections.

Changes in the juvenile justice system that affect the number of YDC admissions, the number of YDC releases, or the YDC length of stay – all critical factors in projecting the YDC population – directly impact the accuracy of the projections. With a system that is largely policy-driven, it is important to note that these changes can also be the result of changes in policy and/or practice with regard to the use of dispositional resources.

Assumptions for the Projections

The projections are based on the following assumptions that were determined using empirical data from the most recent fiscal year (FY 2013):

- *Growth Rates:* The projections assume a negative two percent growth in delinquent dispositions for the first year, a negative one percent growth for the second year, and no growth for the remaining three years of the five-year projection period. This assumption of the growth in delinquent dispositions is based on census projections for North Carolina’s youth population and several juvenile justice indicators. Population projections prepared by North Carolina’s State Demographics Unit show that the juvenile population (age 6 – 15) in the state is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 0.05% over the next five years.⁴ Although the youth population has been growing and is projected to continue to grow, recent data show declining trends in juvenile crime.⁵

³ The term YDC admission refers to a Level 3 disposition or YDC commitment (whether on-campus or off-campus).

⁴ Source: www.demog.state.nc.us (2013).

⁵ The rate of delinquent complaints has declined since the late 1990s. In FY 2009 the rate of delinquent complaints was 30 per 1,000 juveniles compared to a rate of 23 in FY 2013. (Source: NCDPS/DACJJ.) In addition, the State Bureau of Investigation reports that from CY 2008 to CY 2012, overall arrests for index crimes committed by juveniles under the age of 16 dropped 30%. (Source: *Crime in North Carolina-2012 Annual Summary Report of 2012 Uniform Crime Reporting Data*, NC Department of Justice, State Bureau of Investigation, <http://crimereporting.ncdoj.gov/Reports.aspx>.) In general, criminal complaints (Class A-I felonies and Class A1-3 misdemeanors) have declined from CY 2007 to CY 2013, with criminal complaints decreasing 6% from CY 2012 to 2013. (Source: NCDPS/DACJJ.)

- *Level 3 Dispositions:* In FY 2013, 2% of juveniles adjudicated delinquent received a Level 3 disposition (or YDC commitment). Over the projection period, the rate of Level 3 dispositions for juveniles adjudicated delinquent is assumed to match the rate found from FY 2013.
- *YDC Length of Stay:* The YDC average length of stay was 14.1 months for all adjudicated juveniles, including juveniles committed to a YDC for a new adjudication or for a technical revocation of their probation or post-release supervision. The average length of stay was 17.7 months for juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a violent offense, 13.3 months for juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a serious offense, and 7.0 months for juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a minor offense. The YDC average length of stay for the projection period is assumed to match the average length of stay by offense classification for juveniles released during FY 2013.
- *YDC Commitments:* In FY 2013, 47% of all YDC commitments resulted from a new delinquent complaint, 42% from a technical revocation of probation, and 11% from a technical revocation of post-release supervision. It is assumed that the distribution of YDC commitments that resulted from a new Level 3 disposition, or from a technical revocation of probation or post-release supervision, will match the distribution from FY 2013. The median lag-time between the imposition of a probation disposition and revocation to a YDC for a technical violation was 12 months. The median lag-time between release from YDC onto post-release supervision and revocation to a YDC for a technical violation was 4 months.
- *Court Practices and Policy Changes:* The five-year projections assume no change in judicial or prosecutorial behavior. In addition, this projection does not incorporate any potential increases or decreases in the YDC population due to recent budgetary changes or policy-driven changes implemented by DACJJ and/or other agencies that provide services for juveniles.⁶

FY 2013 JUVENILE DELINQUENT DISPOSITIONS

Table 2 displays the distribution of the dispositions based on the offense classification and the type of offense (felony or misdemeanor). Most of the 5,711 dispositions were for misdemeanor offenses (82.0%). Most of the dispositions for the 1,026 felony offenses were in the serious category of the Offense Classification (n=903, or 88.0%).

⁶ It is unknown whether the September 2013 consolidation of the Division of Juvenile Justice with the Division of Adult Correction will result in any policy changes that might impact YDC populations.

**TABLE 2
DISPOSITIONS BY OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION AND OFFENSE TYPE
JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION	OFFENSE TYPE		TOTAL
	FELONY	MISDEMEANOR	
VIOLENT Class A-E felonies	123 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	123 (2.1%)
SERIOUS Class F-I felonies Class A1 misdemeanors	903 (63.9%)	511 (36.1%)	1,414 (24.8%)
MINOR Class 1, 2, 3 misdemeanors	0 (0.0%)	4,174 (100.0%)	4,174 (73.1%)
TOTAL	1,026 (18.0%)	4,685 (82.0%)	5,711 (100.0%)

SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2013 Disposition Simulation Data

Table 3 displays the distribution of the 5,711 delinquent dispositions by the offense classification of the most serious adjudicated offense and the delinquency history level of the juvenile adjudicated. Of the juveniles adjudicated delinquent in FY 2013, 2.1% were adjudicated for a violent offense, 24.8% were adjudicated for a serious offense, and 73.1% were adjudicated for a minor offense. Further, 71.6% of the dispositions involved a juvenile with a low delinquency history level, 16.0% involved a juvenile with a medium delinquency history level, and 12.4% involved a juvenile with a high delinquency history level. Of the 5,711 juveniles with a new delinquent disposition, more than half (n=3,154) involved a juvenile with a low delinquency history level adjudicated for a minor offense (Class 1, 2, or 3 misdemeanor).

Table 4 summarizes dispositions imposed in FY 2013 by the offense classification of the most serious adjudicated offense. The court imposed a Level 3 disposition (Commitment to a YDC) for 2.0% of the juveniles adjudicated delinquent, ordered Level 2 (Intermediate) dispositions for 34.5% of the juveniles adjudicated delinquent, and ordered the remaining 63.5% juveniles adjudicated delinquent to Level 1 (Community) dispositions. Of the 5,711 juveniles with a new delinquent disposition, over half (n=3,189) involved a juvenile adjudicated for a minor offense who received a Level 1 (Community) disposition.

**TABLE 3
DISPOSITIONS BY OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION AND DELINQUENCY HISTORY LEVEL
JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION	DELINQUENCY HISTORY LEVEL			TOTAL
	LOW 0 – 1 point	MEDIUM 2 – 3 points	HIGH 4+ points	
VIOLENT Class A-E felonies	79 (64.2%)	17 (13.8%)	27 (22.0%)	123 (2.1%)
SERIOUS Class F-I felonies Class A1 misdemeanors	859 (60.7%)	254 (18.0%)	301 (21.3%)	1,414 (24.8%)
MINOR Class 1, 2, 3 misdemeanors	3,154 (75.6%)	642 (15.4%)	378 (9.0%)	4,174 (73.1%)
TOTAL	4,092 (71.6%)	913 (16.0%)	706 (12.4%)	5,711 (100.0%)

SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2013 Disposition Simulation Data

**TABLE 4
DISPOSITIONS BY OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION AND DISPOSITION LEVEL
JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION	DISPOSITION LEVEL			TOTAL
	LEVEL 1 Community	LEVEL 2 Intermediate	LEVEL 3 Commitment	
VIOLENT Class A-E felonies	4 (3.3%)	88 (71.5%)	31 (25.2%)	123 (2.1%)
SERIOUS Class F-I felonies Class A1 misdemeanors	432 (30.5%)	909 (64.3%)	73 (5.2%)	1,414 (24.8%)
MINOR Class 1, 2, 3 misdemeanors	3,189 (76.4%)	975 (23.4%)	10 (0.2%)	4,174 (73.1%)
TOTAL	3,625 (63.5%)	1,972 (34.5%)	114 (2.0%)	5,711 (100.0%)

SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2013 Disposition Simulation Data

TABLE 5
DISPOSITIONS OF JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT BY THE DISPOSITIONAL CHART

OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION	DELINQUENCY HISTORY LEVEL			TOTAL
	LOW 0 – 1 point	MEDIUM 2 – 3 points	HIGH 4+ points	
VIOLENT Class A-E felonies	<u>Level 2/Level 3</u> Level 1: 4 (5.0%) Level 2: 62 (78.5%) Level 3: 13 (16.5%) n = 79	<u>Level 3</u> Level 1: 0 (0.0%) Level 2: 12 (70.6%) Level 3: 5 (29.4%) n = 17	<u>Level 3</u> Level 1: 0 (0.0%) Level 2: 14 (51.9%) Level 3: 13 (48.1%) n = 27	Level 1: 4 (3.3%) Level 2: 88 (71.5%) Level 3: 31 (25.2%) n = 123 (2.1%)
SERIOUS Class F-I felonies Class A1 misdemeanors	<u>Level 1/Level 2</u> Level 1: 414 (48.2%) Level 2: 445 (51.8%) Level 3: 0 (0.0%) n = 859	<u>Level 2</u> Level 1: 16 (6.3%) Level 2: 236 (92.9%) Level 3: 2 (0.8%) n = 254	<u>Level 2/Level 3</u> Level 1: 2 (0.7%) Level 2: 228 (75.7%) Level 3: 71 (23.6%) n = 301	Level 1: 432 (30.5%) Level 2: 909 (64.3%) Level 3: 73 (5.2%) n = 1,414 (24.8%)
MINOR Class 1, 2, 3 misdemeanors	<u>Level 1</u> Level 1: 3,067 (97.2%) Level 2: 87 (2.8%) Level 3: 0 (0.0%) n = 3,154	<u>Level 1/Level 2</u> Level 1: 115 (17.9%) Level 2: 526 (81.9%) Level 3: 1 (0.2%) n = 642	<u>Level 2</u> Level 1: 7 (1.8%) Level 2: 362 (95.8%) Level 3: 9 (2.4%) n = 378	Level 1: 3,189 (76.4%) Level 2: 975 (23.4%) Level 3: 10 (0.2%) n = 4,174 (73.1%)
TOTAL	Level 1: 3,485 (85.2%) Level 2: 594 (14.5%) Level 3: 13 (0.3%) n = 4,092 (71.6%)	Level 1: 131 (14.3%) Level 2: 774 (84.8%) Level 3: 8 (0.9%) n = 913 (16.0%)	Level 1: 9 (1.3%) Level 2: 604 (85.5%) Level 3: 93 (13.2%) n = 706 (12.4%)	Level 1: 3,625 (63.5%) Level 2: 1,972 (34.5%) Level 3: 114 (2.0%) n = 5,711 (100.0%)

SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2013 Disposition Simulation Data

NOTE: In FY 2013, there were 154 juveniles (or 2.7%) with a disposition not specified by the dispositional chart. However, it must be noted that certain provisions of the juvenile code allow a judge to impose a disposition other than those specified by the chart. Under G.S. 7B-2508(e), judges may find “extraordinary needs” and impose a lower level disposition. Under G.S. 7B-2508(g), juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a minor offense with four or more prior adjudications may be committed to a YDC. Finally, under G.S. 7B-2508(d), juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a minor offense with a previous Level 3 disposition may be committed to a YDC.

Table 5 combines the information contained in Table 3 and Table 4, displaying how judges used dispositional resources given each combination of offense classification and delinquency history level. Along with the data for the stock population, these data form the basis of the five-year resource projections. As indicated by the vertical “Total” column, the likelihood of the imposition of a Level 3 YDC commitment increased as the seriousness of the offense classification increased. Similarly, the likelihood of the imposition of a Level 3 YDC commitment increased as the delinquency history level increased.⁷

YDC COMMITTED POPULATION

YDC Population on July 1, 2013

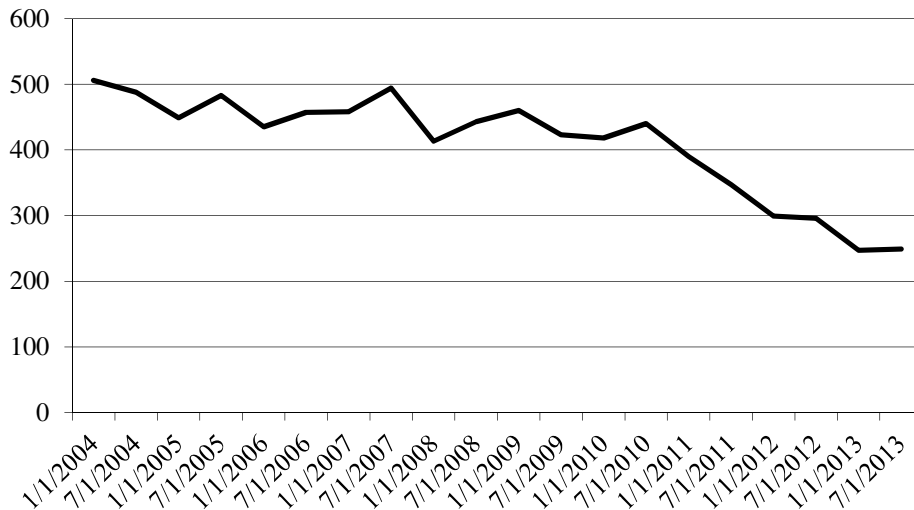
The committed population or stock population is the number of juveniles committed to a YDC at the beginning of the projection period, which is July 1, 2013, for the current projection. Stock population is an important component of the model as it represents the starting point of the projection. On July 1, 2013, there were 249 juveniles committed to a YDC. Seventy-six percent of the juveniles had a high delinquency history level. The majority of the committed juveniles (89.2%) were adjudicated with a felony as their most serious offense; 26.1% were adjudicated for a violent offense, 72.3% were adjudicated for a serious offense, and 1.6% were adjudicated for a minor offense. Overall, 46.6% were committed to a YDC due to a technical revocation of probation, 44.2% were committed to a YDC due to a new crime, and 9.2% were committed to a YDC due to a technical revocation of post-release supervision.

⁷ There were 154 juveniles (2.7%) with a disposition not specified by the dispositional chart. These dispositions were used in the projections, as imposed, to ensure the accuracy of the projections.

Historical YDC Population Trends

Overall, the YDC population has been declining over the past ten years (*see* Figure 1). The next section discusses the factors that contribute to this trend.

FIGURE 1
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER (YDC) POPULATION TRENDS
JANUARY 2004 – JULY 2013



SOURCE: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

YDC ADMISSIONS,⁸ RELEASES, AND LENGTH OF STAY TRENDS

As previously mentioned, changes in the juvenile justice system that affect the number of YDC admissions, the number of YDC releases, or the YDC length of stay – all critical factors in projecting the YDC population – directly impact the accuracy of the projections. The following section highlights YDC statistics showing the year-to-year variations in several key components used to produce the projections.

YDC Admissions

Admissions to YDCs include court admissions (for new offenses), technical probation revocation admissions, and technical post-release supervision revocation admissions. From FY 2004 to FY 2013, the number of YDC admissions decreased 52% (*see* Table 6). More recently, YDC admissions decreased nearly 20% from FY 2012 to FY 2013, continuing the overall decreasing trend in the number of YDC admissions. In FY 2013, the average number of admissions per month was 19.

⁸ As previously mentioned, the term YDC admission refers to a Level 3 disposition or YDC commitment (whether on-campus or off-campus).

YDC Releases

As the YDC admissions decreased from FY 2004 to FY 2013, YDC releases also decreased (53%). (See Table 6.) From FY 2012 to FY 2013, the number of YDC releases decreased almost 16%. In FY 2013, the average number of releases per month was 21.

It is important to note that the number of admissions and releases is extremely sensitive to changes in policies and practices. Looking at the average number of YDC admissions and releases per month over the past ten years, admissions appear to experience fewer fluctuations than do releases. These trends will continue to be monitored given their influence on the resource projections.

**TABLE 6
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER (YDC) ADMISSIONS AND RELEASES
JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

Fiscal Year	YDC ADMISSIONS			YDC RELEASES		
	Total Number	Percent Change	Average Number Per Month	Total Number	Percent Change	Average Number Per Month
2004	469	---	39	548	---	46
2005	473	0.9	39	470	-14.2	39
2006	448	-5.3	37	479	1.9	40
2007	470	4.9	39	420	-12.3	35
2008	450	-4.3	38	499	18.8	42
2009	401	-10.9	33	422	-15.4	35
2010	395	-1.5	33	378	-10.4	32
2011	325	-17.7	27	418	10.6	35
2012	285	-12.3	24	303	-27.5	25
2013	229	-19.6	19	255	-15.8	21

SOURCE: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

YDC Length of Stay

In FY 2013, the overall average length of stay was 14.1 months (*see* Table 7). For juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a serious offense (76% of YDC admissions in FY 2013), the average length of stay was 13.3 months, which represents an increase from FY 2012. The average length of stay for juveniles adjudicated for a violent offense has gradually increased from FY 2009 to FY 2013, with an increase from 16.6 to 17.7 months from FY 2012 to FY 2013. For juveniles adjudicated delinquent of a minor offense (who represented only 3% of YDC admissions in FY 2013), the average length of stay has fluctuated over the past five fiscal years. After an increase in the average length of stay from FY 2009 to FY 2011, YDC length of stay for minor offenses decreased in FY 2012 and 2013, with an average of 7.0 months in FY 2013.

**TABLE 7
AVERAGE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER (YDC)
LENGTH OF STAY (IN MONTHS)
FOR RELEASED JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT**

	Length of Stay (in months) by Fiscal Year					% Change	
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	FY 2012 to FY 2013	FY 2009 to FY 2013
Juveniles Adjudicated of a:							
Violent Offense	14.9	15.5	16.7	16.6	17.7	6.6	18.8
Serious Offense	11.2	12.7	12.3	12.1	13.3	9.9	18.8
Minor Offense	6.4	8.7	9.8	7.1	7.0	-1.4	9.4
Overall	11.7	13.2	13.3	13.0	14.1	8.5	20.5

SOURCE: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

PROJECTED JUVENILE DELINQUENT POPULATIONS⁹

Table 8 shows the projected Level 3 (YDC) resource needs over the five-year projection period.¹⁰ Level 3 resource needs are projected to remain stable over the period with a projected need for 251 YDC beds by June 2014 and 257 YDC beds by June 2018.¹¹ The YDC population was 249 on July 1, 2013, and 242 on November 1, 2013.¹²

TABLE 8
LEVEL 3 COMMITMENT RESOURCE PROJECTIONS:
JUVENILES ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT
RELEASED NOVEMBER 2013

PREPARED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY'S
DIVISION OF ADULT CORRECTION AND JUVENILE JUSTICE

Fiscal Year	Current Projection as of June 30
2014	251
2015	253
2016	257
2017	259
2018	257

SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission,
FY 2013 Disposition Simulation Data

⁹ YDC population figures (projected and actual) include juveniles on-campus and off-campus (*e.g.*, home visit, community commitment, hospitalization, escape).

¹⁰ Table 8 does not present available capacity for Level 3 dispositional resources.

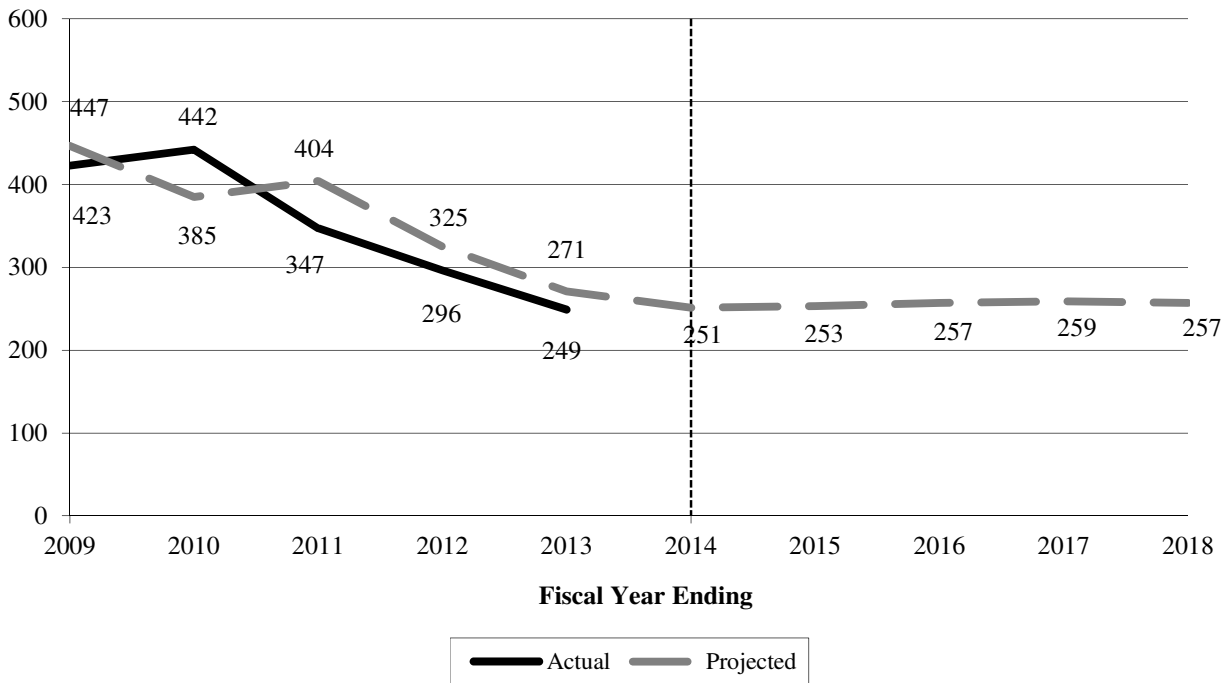
¹¹ Of the projected YDC beds needed for each year of the five year projections, 93% are for males.

¹² Source: NCDPS/DACJJ's *Committed Youth Report* (produced on November 1, 2013)

Accuracy of the Level 3 Resource Projections

Figure 2 provides a comparison of the previous Level 3 (YDC) resource projections with the actual YDC population. The figure also includes the current five-year projections. The chart shows a graphic representation of the historical accuracy of the first year of the juvenile resource projections produced for the previous five projections. The difference between the projected Level 3 (or YDC) population and the actual YDC population ranged between 22 to 57 beds (or between 8% and 14%). Again, it is important to note that the system is largely policy-driven and any change in policy and/or practice with regard to the use of dispositional resources greatly influences the accuracy of the resource projections.

**FIGURE 2
ACTUAL AND PROJECTED
LEVEL 3 (YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER) POPULATION**



SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, Disposition Simulation Data and NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

NOTE: The actual YDC population is based on the number of juveniles adjudicated delinquent with a Level 3 disposition (or YDC commitment) on June 30th of each fiscal year provided. This number includes Level 3 community-based commitments.