



Los Angeles County Probation Reform & Implementation Team RECOMMENDATIONS

PROBATION WORKGROUP REPORT (MARCH 2017)

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TASK 1: COUNTYWIDE JUVENILE JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: Establish a County-based coordinating body to align, coordinate, and oversee policies, practices, and services along a continuum of prevention and rehabilitative intervention programming for children, youth and their families prenatally through the age of 25.

- a. Connect individual partner plans (as they relate to the prevention and/or rehabilitative intervention services for delinquency—e.g., practice models and agency specific strategic plans) with the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- b. Connect the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan to other critical documents that are related to community wellness and safety but focus on issues beyond delinquency (e.g., systemic problems, child maltreatment, educational success, etc.) (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- c. Present and gain investment in the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan across all key partners and identify leaders/champions for the implementation of the Plan (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- d. Hold leadership across County agencies accountable for implementing and adhering to the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan on an annual basis (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- e. Identify and address policies and/or practices across County agencies that distract or become barriers to the implementation of the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- f. Establish a method to regularly incorporate the voices of system impacted communities, families, youth, and children in the discussions and recommended reforms of County policies and practices (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)¹⁷
- g. Develop and support flexible funding streams that cross agency boundaries and ensure funding follows and responds to children, youth, and family needs regardless of immigration status (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- h. When eligibility criteria cannot be established across agencies, coordinate the use of funding to meet the overall needs of children, youth, and families (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- i. Develop, implement, and sustain a wide array of training to support the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan, including multidisciplinary and cross-training curricula and/or opportunities (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- j. Train and incentive staff to (1) meaningfully engage children, youth, and families/caretakers; (2) treating children, youth, and families/caretakers with dignity and respect; and (3) building trust by demonstrating integrity in all their actions (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)



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- k. Incentivize county and city agencies to work in close partnership with the community and key stakeholders to establish consistent and positive support system for the children, youth, and family (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- l. Provide pathways to support the self-sufficiency of children, youth, and families—teach families how to access services and address needs without the necessity of government intervention (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)

Goal 2: Whenever possible, reduce contact between youth and the juvenile justice system (i.e., law enforcement, Probation, and the delinquency court) through the use of evidence-based juvenile justice system diversion programs and other community-based resources.

- a. Take steps to divert youth at the earliest possible points of contact with the justice system (i.e., pre-arrest) (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- b. Only divert youth who would otherwise be processed through the formal juvenile justice system and incorporate safeguards to prevent net-widening (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- c. Focus diversion programming toward positive youth development and community engagement (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- d. Use validated risk and needs assessment tools to inform decision-making and to develop responsive treatment plans, including services and support for all parties involved including families (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- e. When appropriate, provide safe spaces to give all impacted parties a voice (i.e., share what they need, how they were harmed) and contribute to the development of a resolution that repairs the harm to the victim and community, meets youths' underlying needs, and promotes accountability, responsibility, and community connection (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- f. Use evidence-based practices and ongoing data collection to evaluate program impacts (e.g., program and youth characteristics associated with youth outcomes), monitor fidelity, and if applicable, track victim satisfaction (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- g. Provide training and education to juvenile justice and community-based partners to advance evidence-based diversion practices and facilitate opportunities for networking and collaboration (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)

Goal 3: Drive decision-making based on: (1) engaging children, youth and their families based on their developmental stages and with respect to their respective cultures; (2) understanding and interacting with children and youth within the context of family in a trauma-informed manner; and (3) prioritizing children, youth, and family voices and experiences.

- a. Recognize an expanded definition of family for children and youth that includes supportive non-traditional positive adult influences (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)



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- b. Look comprehensively at family—identify supportive and consistent adult(s) for this child/youth and engage them as part of the support system. Undertake family finding efforts to locate potential family support. (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- c. Engage children, youth, and their families/caretakers as early and as often in the process as possible (i.e., see them as collaborative partners), and provide education, support, understanding, and communication throughout the process (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- d. Interact with children, youth, and their families/caretakers as collaborators—engage with them in a developmentally appropriate way and understand their experiences from a unique and holistic perspective (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- e. View fathers and paternal relatives as an essential part of the support system and include fathers and paternal relatives in planning and services. Undertake family finding efforts where father's whereabouts are unknown. (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- f. Build a mindful and trauma informed connection with the children, youth, and family—take the time to really understand why something happened without attributing negative motivations to them—children, youth, and families/caretakers have more positive outcomes when someone took the time to listen, understand and come to know who they were (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- g. Work with children, youth, and their families/caretakers with empathy and help them to find hope in their situations and to identify a pathway to realize those hopes (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- h. Recognize and respond to the trauma and needs of parents/caretakers (e.g., previous abuse, intergenerational gang involvement, mental health and substance abuse issues, unemployment, etc.) and find ways to connect them to appropriate services, workshops and other resources to accomplish positive change and their own healing— family/caretaker participation in their own change process inspires change in their children and potentially breaks a cycle (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- i. Address trauma in the family; families may need support to address their own trauma histories or intergenerational trauma in order to stabilize the family so that they can be part of the recovery/treatment process for their own child. (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- j. Prioritize the building and/or strengthening of positive relationships between children, youth, and their families including their system-involved siblings and their own children as well as build avenues for children and youth to connect with families out of contact. (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- k. Build on children, youth, and family strengths and celebrate their milestones, using this as a leverage point to address risks and needs directly and indirectly (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)

Goal 4: Recognize and address the racial and ethnic disparities related to the access to services and juvenile justice processing and the needs of special populations including (but not necessarily limited to): females, LGBT youth, crossover/dually-involved youth, youth who become parents, undocumented, and transitional age youth without family/caretakers/support systems.



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- a. Develop and track data that have the ability to identify the points of contact with the juvenile justice system (e.g., arrest, intake, court, etc.) and the critical decision-making points (e.g., placement decisions) that are driving Racial and Ethnic Disparity (RED) and Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC). (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- b. Use data to strategically implement targeted programs or practices that reduce RED and DMC (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- c. Work with the early education system to reduce the "preschool to prison pipeline" (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- d. Train staff, including law enforcement, on implicit bias and best practices in reducing RED (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- e. Develop and utilize diversion and community based programs (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- f. Provide training to agency/provider staff on the needs and best practices related to serving LGBT youth (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- g. Ensure that gender responsive services are available to all youth (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- h. Institutionalize seamless collaboration and coordination across the Department of Children and Family Services and Probation as well as other relevant agencies for youth who cross into both the dependency and delinquency systems (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- i. Prepare youth for the transition from childhood to adulthood--connect youth age 14 or older to independent living and other services that prepare them for successful lives as adults (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- j. Provide parenting classes and support for youth who are or become parents (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)

Goal 5: Use comprehensive, multidisciplinary and evidence-based screening and assessment tools to build meaningful case plans and appropriately connect children, youth, and families to appropriate services.

- a. Institute a consistent and multidisciplinary screening process using validated and standardized screening tools as early as possible. These screening tools should assess for educational needs, developmental disabilities, mental health problems, suicidality, traumatic stress reactions, substance abuse problems, sexual victimization, domestic violence issues, gang involvement, and physical health in order to identify critical issues that should be addressed in case planning (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- b. Use validated risk/resiliency assessment tool(s) as early in the process as possible to assess criminogenic needs and areas of dynamic risk factors in need of rehabilitative intervention services (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)



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- c. Coordinate the tools used across agencies to avoid duplication and redundancy and to improve accuracy and maximize resources. (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- d. Institute a process/protocol for stakeholders to share screening and assessment results when appropriate in order to: (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
 - a. *Connect children and youth to appropriate services by prioritizing their immediate needs and risks*
 - b. *Reduce service lag times*
 - c. *Reduce duplication of assessment processes and services*
- e. Establish a method to share important background information and history of the children and youth across agencies and providers to enhance the appropriateness of services and reduce duplication while protecting the children, youth, and families' right to confidentiality (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- f. Build cumulative case plans that address risk and needs based on results of the screening and assessment tools (i.e., youth should have one case plan that is updated and amended over time by all partners involved with the child, youth, and family/caretaker) (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- g. Communicate results of screening and assessments to court and request orders consistent with case plans that are developed for court-involved youth (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- h. Build case plans that equally build on risks, needs, strengths and positive support systems; facilitate pro-social connections with the community, and work to remove barriers facing the children, youth, and family success with appropriate partners (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- i. Re-administer the risk/resiliency tool and other relevant screening measures in regular intervals to assess progress and areas that need attention/intervention (e.g., every 6 months until case termination)—based on these results, reward progress and adjust supervision, programming, and case/treatment plans levels as necessary. Inform the court of progress, lack of progress, and any adjustments necessary. (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)

Goal 6: Deliver services using promising practices, best practices, and a continuum of evidence-based programs.

- a. Establish seamless connections with community-based providers to facilitate access to a continuum of services (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- b. Ensure case plans match services to the needs of children, youth, and family based on the outcomes of screening and assessment and prioritize their input. Communicate to court what services are necessary/unnecessary for court-involved youth. (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- c. Connect children, youth, and families/caretakers to appropriate services and support systems within their communities (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)



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- d. Establish continuity in relationships between children, youth, families/caretakers, agency staff, and service providers—reduce the number of fragmented relationships in their experience (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- e. Deliver programming that is individualized, interdisciplinary, strength-based, and trauma informed (when appropriate) (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- f. Deliver services in a timely, unified and coordinated way across different agencies—avoid duplication and redundancy and do not overload children, youth, and families with unreasonable expectations (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- g. Engage children, youth, and families in a developmentally-appropriate way, meeting them where they are in the process of change and helping them to become a strong family unit—build positive interpersonal interactions utilizing motivational interviewing and using positive reinforcement (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- h. Recognize and incorporate cultural competence and the availability of bilingual providers when delivering services to children, youth, and families (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- i. Deliver services to children, youth, and families in diverse, consistent, and affordable ways and through a variety of service providers in their communities to increase the level of engagement and willingness to participate. Immediately address any gap in services in under-resourced regions of the county. (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- j. Provide an array of services and support to children, youth, and families in a convenient and effective manner through in home family-based services (e.g., wraparound) and/or “one-stop shop” locations (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- k. Strengthen family/caregivers’ understanding of the educational process, foster effective communication skills between family/caregivers and school, and empower them to advocate for their youth educational needs (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- l. Use restorative pathways to facilitate a process of healing and recovery for victims and to forge foundations for strong, positive connections between the community and children, youth, and their families (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- m. Promote and support self-sufficiency for children, youth, and families/caretakers (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- n. Ensure that each child or youth has at least one significant adult who will continue to support the child/youth into adulthood (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)
- o. Hold service providers accountable for serving children, youth, and families and achieving effective outcomes with their clients (see Goal 8) (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)



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- p. Maintain a database of County contracted services for youth and families to assure timely access to and prioritize necessary services (Source: Probation Workgroup Report)

Goal 7: When the use of out of home placements-non-secure or secure-is necessary, utilize family-based settings (e.g., relative, NREFM, and foster care placements) whenever possible, maintain safe environments in placements, engage/deliver services within a therapeutic milieu, and provide reentry services to ensure a seamless and positive return to the community.

- a. Address school of origin issues prior to placement. If youth to remain in school of origin, create a transportation plan in consultation with placement and local education agency
- b. Ensure that services required in the youth's Individualized Education Plan and/or Individual Program Plan through Regional Center will continue without interruption once youth is placed.
- c. Begin transition case planning before a youth goes to the placement, continue while in placement, and drive their transition back into the community (particular emphasis on aftercare should be placed on school programming, transitional planning, immediate needs, and permanency)
- d. Operate youth-centered and innovative facilities that build, support, and maintain relationships with family/ caretakers, siblings, and their own children throughout the time spent in placement and are located in close proximity to the communities in which the youth's family resides.
- e. Interact with youth using a trauma-informed care approach
- f. Prioritize, encourage, and facilitate family/caretaker connections while in placement through in-person visitation, family engagement activities, and the use of technology (e.g., video conferencing) when appropriate
- g. Deliver treatment using the small-group care model and within a therapeutic milieu focused on consistency, building positive relationships, creating homelike living spaces, and sharing responsibility for daily activities
- h. Create supportive and innovative learning environments in which children, youth, and families can build the skills they need to be successful (e.g., utilize the performing and visual arts, provide access to extracurricular activities, and offer programs to enhance educational success; parenting skills and techniques; life skills, and employment) and provide opportunities to reinforce these skills in their communities through reentry planning
- i. Ensure that group homes serving youth promote the youths' safety, well-being, educational progress, and successful completion of probation, and progress toward the new standards set by the Continuum of Care legislation regarding provision of core services; access to mental health care; accreditation, etc. Facility staff should maintain hands-on relationship with the youth's Education Rights Holder and the youth's school, and monitor attendance, grades, and behaviors.
- j. Placements should provide a drug and alcohol free environment.
- k. Integrate facility staff into program delivery and train them to be mentors for youth



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- l. Provide structure for youth and access to opportunities to build skills for independence to prepare youth for transition to adulthood including work readiness training and exploration of transitional housing and independent living programs when available
- m. Provide aftercare services for youth that connect them to continued services structure/expectations, prosocial activities, and supportive relationships in the community
- n. Promote safety at placements through positive mechanisms (e.g., praise and reward positive behaviors) integrated into daily interactions and activities to facilitate an atmosphere for learning and recovery
- o. Respond to non-compliance in a proportionate, equitable and personalized way-deescalation techniques should be used as a first response.

Goal 8: Collect and report consistent and meaningful outcomes on program impact and effectiveness on an annual basis (at minimum) to assess the impact of policies, practices, and programs.

- a. Clearly define and consistently measure and report a list of clearly defined key outcomes (e.g., dashboard outcomes)
- b. Establish a clear definition of recidivism and track recidivism whenever possible
- c. Regularly collect data within an agency-based information system that aligns with practice, supports case management, and is capable of real-time analysis
- d. Identify new technologies to facilitate an effective case management information system, real-time reports and dashboards, and interagency data-sharing
- e. Continuously assess effectiveness and improve practice based on a data-informed feedback loop that includes input from youth, families and community based service providers
- f. Institute a comprehensive case review process of successful and challenging cases to augment the use of data dashboards and to ensure practice aligns with best practices generally
- g. Ensure opportunities for staff feedback in order to recognize and support effective case management strategies as well as identify areas for improvement and training
- h. Conduct full-scale evaluations of the various programs and services provided to Probation clients as part of the research, practice and policy feedback loop
- i. Collaborate with external researchers and evaluators to develop and implement a research agenda and generate a regular data reporting plan

Goal 9: Encourage transparency and accountability from all partners engaged in delinquency prevention and rehabilitative intervention services for fiscal management, measuring outcomes related to their work, and implementing effective practices.



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- a. Give authority to the County based coordinating body to (see Goal 1) to monitor progress on the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan and hold County agencies (and other key partners as appropriate) accountable for implementing and adhering to the Strategic Plan
- b. Develop a clear, multisystem data linkage and sharing plan that would operate as a single, coordinated system-this should include agencies such as: DCFS; DPSS; DMH; DPH; OHS; Probation; LACOE; and school districts
- c. All community-based service providers who provide services to Probation children, youth, and families should be held accountable for the services they provide and the impact of those services on outcomes
- d. Annually produce a summary of all juvenile justice funds across stakeholders and how funds were expended to support the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan
- e. Annually produce a list of outcomes related to the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan