



# Los Angeles County Probation Reform & Implementation Team RECOMMENDATIONS

## PROBATION WORKGROUP REPORT (MARCH 2017)

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### TASKS 5 AND 6: KEY OUTCOMES AND PLAN FOR ESTABLISHING PROBATION BASED RESEARCH UNIT

*Note: Key Descriptive Data Measures are contained within this report under "Data to Document and Monitor System Decisions and Operations".*

#### Data and IT:

1. Build a strong data infrastructure that is aligned with and facilitates Probation practice rather than detracting from it (i.e., additional paperwork with little to no relevance to the interactions with the supervised youth).
2. Probation's data system should be a dynamic, flexible, and adaptable web-based platform that interfaces with other systems and supports direct data entry by community-based providers serving Probation-involved youth.
3. Data system should be centralized around the use of a validated risk and needs tool that drives the development of case plans and youth goals.
4. Whenever possible, data system should capture information using drop-down menus instead of documenting everything in case notes. Case narratives should only be used to augment key information collected in an objective way.
5. The use of the data system should be mandated for all client decisions and supervision. It should be built to facilitate consistent and accurate data entry through ease of use and regular training should be given to all probation officers.
6. Data system should provide access to a referral system and house a database of services available for Probation-involved youth with the type of services offered, the service areas served, the population served (including risk assessment levels and exclusionary criteria), etc., and align with the youth's case plan.
7. Data system should produce regular reports (e.g., daily, monthly, etc.) to guide meaningful oversight and supervision of case management and be used to develop a regular real-time feedback loop to impact practice.
8. Data should be reported on a regular basis and presented in a way that compares the current time period to earlier time periods to identify patterns of change over time.
9. Data should include demographics (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, age, zip code) to understand and identify disproportionate minority contact and specific patterns related to gender.
10. To inform internal policy decisions, assess patterns and trends, and deploy resources effectively, measures should be looked at across Probation area offices, SPAs, Supervisorial Districts and cities.



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11. Data should capture all arrests/referrals that come into the juvenile justice system, characteristics of the population served (i.e., demographics and current charges at a minimum), and the processing decisions related to these referrals beginning at arrest and ending with case dismissal or termination.
12. Data should capture the nature of the work done with Probation clients and the quantity and quality of services received by Probation youth and their families should be reported.
13. Youth should be tracked relative to the services they receive and specific outcomes related to those services.
14. Emphasis should be placed on well-being and stability measures which would help measure progress on the root causes of recidivism.

## **Research and Evaluation Unit:**

15. The Research and Evaluation Unit should produce regular reports to directors and managers and work with them to integrate data into regular (e.g., weekly) progress reports for staff.
16. The Probation Research and Evaluation Unit should produce quarterly and/or annual reports that summarize the population served by Probation and key characteristics and outcomes related to this population.
17. Probation Research and Evaluation Unit should develop a web-based system that allows for real time report generation on a wide range of process and outcome related questions similar to other states such as Florida and Georgia.
18. The internal Probation Research and Evaluation Unit needs strong leadership and should be comprised of juvenile justice subject matter experts and statistical analysts.
19. The Probation Research and Evaluation Unit will need to have partnerships with external researchers from local universities and independent research organizations who specialize in various juvenile justice issues. This brings objectivity and credibility to the research, provides technical assistance, and/or peer review of the work completed internally.
20. Data sources should include Probation Case Management System (PCMS) and individual youth Probation case files.
21. Data sources should include other agency (County agencies and community-based organizations) and school systems data.
22. Data sources should include self-report perception surveys and/or interviews with youth and parents/caregivers.
23. Data sources should include Probation officer focus groups at all levels (e.g., the deputy probation officers [DPOs] of record, supervising DPOs, and Probation management.
24. Data sources should include service providers' feedback and information sharing.



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## Integrated Data Systems:

25. County should invest in an integrated data system as a shared responsibility across a variety of stakeholders (i.e., DCFS, DMH, DPH, school systems) that protects individual confidentiality.