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Los Angeles County Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act

RAND Quarterly Report, October 2008

Terry Fain, Susan Turner, Greg Ridgeway

with

Jesse Jannetta, Alyssa Chamberlain, Randy Myers, Lori Sexton, Sarah Smith, Matthew Valasik

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PREFACE

In 2000, the California State Legislature passed the Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act (AB 1913), which authorized funding for county juvenile-justice programs and designated the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA), formerly named the Board of Corrections, the administrator of funding. A 2001 Senate Bill extended the funding and changed the program's name to the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA). This effort was designed to provide a stable funding source to counties for juvenile programs that have been proven effective in curbing crime among at-risk and young offenders.

The CSA is required to submit annual reports to the California State Legislature measuring the success of JJCPA. The legislation identified six specific outcome measures ("the big six") to be included in annual reports from each of the individual JJCPA programs. These outcome measures are (1) successful completion of probation, (2) arrests, (3) probation violations, (4) incarcerations, (5) successful completion of restitution, and (6) successful completion of community service. Each county can also offer supplemental outcomes to measure locally identified service needs. JJCPA programs were first implemented in the summer and fall of 2001 and are now in their seventh year of funding.

The RAND Corporation received funding from the Los Angeles County Probation Department in February 2008 to conduct the evaluation of the county's JJCPA programs, including analyzing and reporting findings to the CSA for fiscal year 2007–2008. In addition to preparing the annual reports for CSA, RAND prepares quarterly progress reports to Los Angeles County Probation as deliverables under the current contract. This is the second quarterly report being prepared by RAND researchers for the probation department during this first year of the contract. In this quarterly report, we present substantive findings from site visits to JJCPA service providers. The specific providers to be evaluated in each quarter are selected by Probation.

This report replaces the previously issued version TR-621-LAPROB. This version differs from TR-621-LAPROB in two ways: (1) At the request of the Los Angeles County Probation Department, service providers evaluated for this report have been de-identified, and (2) additional information has been made available to RAND researchers by Probation, which resulted in changes in evaluation rankings.

The RAND Safety and Justice Program

This research was conducted under the auspices of the Safety and Justice Program within RAND Infrastructure, Safety, and Environment (ISE). The mission of ISE is to improve the development, operation, use, and protection of society's essential physical assets and natural resources and to enhance the related social assets of safety and security of individuals in transit and in their workplaces and communities. Safety and Justice Program research addresses occupational safety, transportation safety, food safety, and public safety—including violence, policing, corrections, substance abuse, and public integrity.

Information about the Safety and Justice Program is available online (http://www.rand.org/ise/safety). Inquiries about this project or other Safety and Justice research projects should be sent to the following address:

Greg Ridgeway, Director
Safety and Justice Program, ISE
RAND Corporation
1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138
Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
310-393-0411, x7734
Greg_Ridgeway@rand.org

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SUMMARY

This document is the second quarterly progress report for the evaluation of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) programs for the Los Angeles County Probation Department. It focuses on technical assistance to JJCPA home-based-program service providers identified by the County and site-visited by RAND staff using the Correctional Program Checklist (CPC). This report covers the period from July 1, 2008, through September 30, 2008.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The intent of this report is to provide Probation and the community-based organizations (CBOs) that provide services to JJCPA programs with advice, recommendations, and guidance in building sustainable juvenile programs, ultimately elevating program standards.

SITE VISITS TO SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR THE JJCPA HIGH-RISK HIGH-NEEDS PROGRAM

In July 2008, RAND Corporation staff conducted CPC assessments of five service providers for the home-based component of the JJCPA High-Risk High-Needs (HRHN) program.[1] These site visits are part of RAND's ongoing evaluation of JJCPA activities through the Los Angeles County Probation Department. The department selected the service providers to be evaluated.

The objective of these assessments was to conduct a detailed review of the home-based program services and materials in order to compare current practice with the literature on best practices in corrections. More specifically, these assessments determine a baseline from which to assess whether the treatment interventions were consistent with the research literature on evidence-based practices and the principles of effective intervention. The CPC was conducted to provide Probation and the CBOs with advice, recommendations, and guidance for future contracting and a way to elevate future program standards.

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[1] The HRHN program also includes an employment component.

THE CORRECTIONAL PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Probation staff and RAND staff mutually agreed that the instrument to be used for the site visits would be the CPC, a tool developed to assess correctional intervention programs.[2] It is used to ascertain how closely correctional programs adhere to the principles of effective intervention. Several recent studies conducted by the University of Cincinnati on both adult and juvenile programs were used to develop and validate the indicators included in the CPC.[3] These studies yielded strong outcome correlations among individual items, domain scores, and overall scores (Holsinger, 1999; Lowenkamp and Latessa, 2003, 2005a, 2005b; Lowenkamp, 2004).

The CPC is divided into two basic areas: capacity and content. The capacity area is designed to measure whether a correctional program has the capability to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders. There are three domains in this area: (1) leadership and development, (2) staff characteristics, and (3) quality assurance. The content area focuses on the substantive domains of offender assessment and treatment. The CPC includes a total of 77 items worth up to 83 total points (some items are weighted). It should be noted that not all of the five domains are given equal weight and that some items may be considered not applicable, in which case they are not included in the scoring. Each area and all domains are scored and rated as highly effective (65–100 percent), effective (55–64 percent), needs improvement (46–54 percent), or ineffective (45 percent or less). Table 1.1 lists the domains evaluated by the CPC and the items evaluated within each domain.

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[2] This section uses template language provided to RAND for the write-up of the CPC description and format for results. We provide clarifying information for the current evaluation in footnotes. Template language is from Sleyo and Smith (2007) and the Utah Criminal Justice Center (2007).

The CPC is modeled after the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI), developed by Gendreau and Andrews (1996); however, the CPC includes a number of items not contained in the CPAI. In addition, items that were not found to be positively correlated with recidivism were deleted.

[3] These studies involved more than 40,000 offenders (both adult and juvenile) and more than 400 correctional programs, ranging from institutional to community-based. All of the studies are available from the University of Cincinnati (undated). A large part of this research involved identifying program characteristics that were correlated with outcomes.

Table S.1

Areas Evaluated by the Correctional Program Checklist

Area	Domain	Item Evaluated
Capacity	Leadership and Development	Qualifications and involvement of the program director
		Initial design of the program
	Staff Characteristics	Qualifications, experience, stability, training, supervision, and involvement of program staff
	Quality Assurance	Internal and external quality-assurance mechanisms used to monitor how well the program is functioning
Content	Offender Assessment	Selection of offenders for services (i.e., inclusion and exclusion criteria)
		Assessment of risk, need, and responsiveness factors
	Treatment	Types of treatment used to target criminogenic behaviors
		Specific treatment procedures
		Use of positive reinforcement and punishment
		Methods used to train offenders in new prosocial skills
		Provision and quality of aftercare services

Several limitations to the CPC should be noted. First, as with any research process, objectivity and reliability are an issue. Although steps are taken to ensure that the information collected is reliable and accurate, given the nature of the process, the assessor invariably makes judgments about the data gathered.[4] Second, the process is time-specific. That is, the assessment is based on how the program is functioning at the time the assessment is conducted. Changes or modifications may be planned for the

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[4] These judgments might include reconciling conflicting sources of information in order to make assessments or basing assessments on imperfect sources. For instance, assessment of community support for the programs is based almost entirely on the perspective of CBO staff members, as program materials yield no relevant information here. Further, this information is secondhand, as community members are not surveyed to corroborate these responses.

future or may be under consideration; however, only those activities and processes that are present at the time of the review are considered in the scoring. Third, the process does not take into account all the system issues that can affect program integrity. Lastly, the process does not address the reasons that a problem exists within a program.[5]

Despite these limitations, there are a number of advantages to CPC assessments. First, the criteria are based on empirically derived principles of effective intervention. Second, the process provides a measure of program integrity and quality; it provides insight into the "black box" of a program—something an outcome study alone does not provide. Third, the results can be obtained relatively quickly. Fourth, it identifies both the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention. It provides the program with feedback on what it is doing that is consistent with the research on effective interventions, as well as those areas that need improvement. Fifth, it provides some recommendations for program improvement. Finally, it allows for comparisons with other programs that have been assessed using the same criteria. Since program integrity and quality can change over time, it allows a program to reassess its progress at a later date.

Norm Information

Researchers at the University of Cincinnati have assessed more than 400 programs nationwide and have developed a large database on correctional intervention programs. Approximately 7 percent of the programs assessed have been classified as highly effective, 18 percent as effective, 33 percent as needs improvement, and 42 percent as ineffective.

Assessment Process

The assessment process consisted of a series of structured interviews conducted with staff members in July 2008 during on-site visits to the five CBOs that provide home-

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[5] For example, funding constraints or program capacity issues might preclude the execution of one or more program components. Although these factors are addressed in isolation, they are not taken into account when assessing other aspects of program delivery.

In addition to limitations of the CPC tool itself, there are transferability issues with the applicability of the CPC to home-based programs. There are certain obstacles in administering this tool to the specific Los Angeles County Probation Department programs that were selected for review. Specifically, the individualized, home-based nature of the programs selected rendered CPC criteria that focused on group services difficult to assess. This limitation is common with standardized instruments, which are designed for the assessment of a wide range of programs.

based services. Additionally, data were gathered by examining representative case files (for both open and closed cases) and other relevant materials. Data from the various sources were then combined to generate a consensus CPC score for each of the five providers.[6] Scores for the five service providers were then averaged to determine the overall CPC score for each of the domains evaluated.

SUMMARY OF JJCPA SITE-VISIT FINDINGS

Figure S.1 shows the average evaluations in each of the five domains, as well as totals for each area (capacity and content) and overall CPC score.

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[6] The site visits, as well as the program reporting, used materials and templates supplied by the University of Cincinnati and the Utah State Courts (Sleyo and Smith, 2007; Utah Criminal Justice Center, 2007). RAND was asked to use the templates provided, with minor style modifications made for the current service providers evaluated.

Figure S.1

Summary of Site Visit Findings for Five Sites Combined

NOTES: CPC ratings are grouped into highly effective (65–100 percent), effective (55–64 percent), needs improvement (46–54 percent), or ineffective (45 percent or less).

Overall, three of the five visited CBO sites were rated highly effective, while two were rated effective. Four sites were rated highly effective in their capacity total, while only one was rated highly effective in content. All five sites were rated effective or highly effective in staff characteristics, and four were rated effective or highly effective in program leadership and development.

Quality assurance was rated highly effective at three sites and effective at two, due to their inclusion in the JJCPA evaluation. Treatment characteristics were rated ineffective at two sites, needs improvement at two sites, and effective at one site.

Three sites scored highest in the domain of offender assessment—all five were rated highly effective—due to the Probation-administered Los Angeles Risk and

Resiliency Checkup (LARRC), which is used to determine risk and needs scores for program participants.

None of the sites had a method for piloting new program components, with all sites citing the restricted nature of their contracts with Probation as a barrier to piloting new program components.

Recommendations

Our recommendations below target the areas where the service providers need to make improvements based on the CPC:

- CBO directors should have an educational and experiential background related to the services that the CBO provides and should be conversant with the principles on which the JJCPA program is based.
- All staff should have prior experience in providing services to probationers and at-risk youth.
- Staff should be given regular training that includes the theoretical basis for the program, as well as techniques to be employed in providing program services that are tailored to youth needs.
- Programs that incorporate social learning need to ensure that they follow standard model components.
- Staff should be given clear guidelines on any positive or negative sanctions utilized in the program as well as program completion criteria.
- Staff should have regularly scheduled clinical supervision.
- Probation needs to work with CBOs to develop a protocol for piloting program modifications as part of the CBOs' contract to provide JJCPA program services to Probation.
- Probation should share recidivism data with the providers to allow them to assess their effectiveness in reducing the number repeat offenders.
- At all five sites, treatment characteristics were rated lowest of the five domains. The processes that Probation is using—assessment and quality assurance—have a positive effect on CPC scores, but the treatment characteristics of the sites themselves are still falling short.

CHAPTER ONE

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO JJCPA SERVICE PROVIDERS IDENTIFIED BY THE COUNTY

This document is the second quarterly progress report for the evaluation of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) programs for the Los Angeles County Probation Department. This chapter focuses on technical assistance to JJCPA home-based-program service providers identified by the County and site-visited by RAND staff. This report covers the period from July 1, 2008, through September 30, 2008.

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The intent of this report is to provide Probation and the community-based organizations (CBOs) that provide services to JJCPA programs with advice, recommendations, and guidance in building sustainable juvenile programs, ultimately elevating program standards.

SITE VISITS TO HOME-BASED PROGRAMS

During this quarter, RAND Corporation staff conducted Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) assessments of five home-based programs as part of its ongoing evaluation of the Los Angeles County Probation Department's JJCPA activities. These five home-based programs are subcomponents of the JJCPA High-Risk High-Needs (HRHN) program. The department selected the service providers to be evaluated and included one provider in each of Los Angeles County's five supervisory districts, or *clusters*.

The objective of these assessments was to conduct a detailed review of the home-based-program services and materials in order to compare current practice with the literature on best practices in corrections. More specifically, these assessments determine whether the treatment interventions were consistent with the research literature on evidence-based practices and the principles of effective intervention (for a review of these principles, see Andrews and Bonta, 2003).

This report provides a summary of the five home-based programs, the procedures used to administer them, and the CPC findings. Recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the services delivered by each home-based program are also provided.

THE CORRECTIONAL PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Probation staff and RAND staff mutually agreed that the instrument to be used for the site visits would be the CPC, a tool developed to assess correctional intervention programs.[1] It is used to ascertain how closely correctional programs adhere to the principles of effective intervention. Several recent studies conducted by the University of Cincinnati on both adult and juvenile programs were used to develop and validate the indicators included in the CPC.[2] These studies yielded strong outcome correlations among individual items, domain scores, and overall scores (Holsinger, 1999; Lowenkamp and Latessa, 2003, 2005a, 2005b; Lowenkamp, 2004).

The CPC consists of 77 items across five domains. These domains are divided into two basic areas: capacity and content. The capacity area is designed to measure whether a correctional program has the capability to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders. There are three domains in this area: (1) leadership and development, (2) staff characteristics, and (3) quality assurance. The content area focuses on the substantive domains of offender assessment and treatment. The CPC items are worth up to 83 total points (some items are weighted). Each area and all domains are scored and rated as highly effective, effective, needs improvement, or ineffective. Table 1.1 lists the domains evaluated by the CPC and the items evaluated within each domain.

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	Treatment	Types of treatment used to target criminogenic behaviors
		Specific treatment procedures
		Use of positive reinforcement and punishment
		Methods used to train offenders in new prosocial skills
		Provision and quality of aftercare services

The scores in all five domains were totaled, and the same scale was used for the overall assessment score. It should be noted that not all of the five domains were given equal weight and that some items may be considered not applicable, in which case they were not included in the scoring. Table 1.2 shows the scoring range for each of the five rating areas, the capacity and content ratings, and the overall CPC score.

Table 1.2

Correctional Program Checklist Ratings

Range (%)	Rating
65–100	highly effective
55–64	effective
46–54	needs improvement
45 or less	ineffective

Several limitations to the CPC should be noted. First, as with any research process, objectivity and reliability are an issue. Although steps are taken to ensure that the information collected is reliable and accurate, given the nature of the process, the assessor invariably makes judgments about the data gathered.[3] Second, the process is time-specific. That is, the assessment is based on how the program is functioning at the time the assessment is conducted. Changes or modifications may be planned for the future or may be under consideration; however, only those activities and processes that are present at the time of the review are considered in the scoring. Third, the process does not take into account all the system issues that can affect program integrity. Lastly, the process does not address the reasons that a problem exists within a program.[4]

Despite these limitations, there are a number of advantages to CPC assessments. First, the criteria are based on empirically derived principles of effective intervention.

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[4] For example, funding constraints or program capacity issues might preclude the execution of one or more program components. Although these factors are addressed in isolation, they are not taken into account when assessing other aspects of program delivery.

In addition to limitations of the CPC tool itself, there are transferability issues with the applicability of the CPC to home-based programs. There are certain obstacles in administering this tool to the specific Los Angeles County Probation Department programs that were selected for review. Specifically, the individualized, home-based nature of the programs selected rendered CPC criteria that focused on group services difficult to assess. This limitation is common with standardized instruments, which are designed for the assessment of a wide range of programs.

Second, the process provides a measure of program integrity and quality; it provides insight into the "black box" of a program—something an outcome study alone does not provide. Third, the results can be obtained relatively quickly. Fourth, it identifies both the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention. It provides the program with feedback on what it is doing that is consistent with the research on effective interventions, as well as those areas that need improvement. Fifth, it provides some recommendations for program improvement. Finally, it allows for comparisons with other programs that have been assessed using the same criteria. Since program integrity and quality can change over time, it allows a program to reassess its progress at a later date.

Norm Information

Researchers at the University of Cincinnati have assessed more than 400 programs nationwide and have developed a large database on correctional intervention programs. Approximately 7 percent of the programs assessed have been classified as highly effective, 18 percent as effective, 33 percent as needs improvement, and 42 percent as ineffective.

Assessment Process

The assessment process consisted of a series of structured interviews with staff members during on-site visits to the five home-based programs conducted in July 2008. Additionally, data were gathered by examining representative case files (for both open and closed cases) and other relevant program materials. Data from the various sources were then combined to generate a consensus CPC score for each of the five providers.

SERVICE PROVIDER A

The Service Provider A home-based program is operated by a community-based nonprofit organization located in San Gabriel, California. This CPC rating was specific to the program as executed in cluster 5, area 1, and serving the Glendale, Pasadena, and Arcadia areas. Primary services are delivered through home visits based around a social-learning curriculum targeting improved school performance, improved family relationships, and increased prosocial interactions. The Service Provider A home-based program began operating in 2005. Services are funded through the Los Angeles County Probation Department, using JJCPA funds. At the time of the CPC assessment, the Service Provider A home-based program employed three full-time staff. The client population being served was approximately 45 juvenile probationers. Contrary to what

the name implies, the program provides services to high-risk, high-needs youth regardless of race.

Leadership and Development

The first subcomponent of this domain examines the qualifications and involvement of the Service Provider A home-based-program director (i.e., the individual responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the Service Provider A home-based program), his or her qualifications and experience, his or her current involvement with the staff and participants, and the development, implementation, and support (both organizational and financial) for the program.

The second subcomponent of this domain concerns the initial design of the Service Provider A home-based program. Effective interventions are designed to be consistent with the literature on effective correctional treatments, and program components should be piloted before full implementation. Program values and goals should also be consistent with existing values in the community or institution, and the program should meet an identified need. Lastly, the Service Provider A home-based program should be perceived as both cost-effective and sustainable.

Strengths. The program director of the Service Provider A home-based program has held the position since the inception of the program three years ago and holds an M.S. in human development. The program director is actively involved in operating the program, selecting and training the staff, and supervising them through weekly meetings. The director also works directly in service delivery, carrying a caseload and engaging in all program activities.

The second subcomponent of this domain concerns the initial design of the Service Provider A home-based program and the degree to which it is consistent with the existing values in the at-large and criminal-justice communities. The Social Learning Model (SLM) curriculum that is the basis for program services reflects an extensive literature review, although this was done by the Los Angeles County Probation Department rather than by Service Provider A. The criminal-justice community values the program, as particularly evidenced by the close working relationship between program caseworkers and the probation officers who supervise participants. The program also receives good support from the community at large, particularly in the form of cooperation from the schools that program participants attend.

Program funding appears adequate to deliver services as designed to participants and has been stable over the past two years.

Areas That Need Improvement. The Service Provider A home-based program does not currently have a process in place for the piloting of new program interventions or other modifications to the program. This is largely due to the tightly defined contract with the Los Angeles County Probation Department for delivery of home-based-program services.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Staff Characteristics

This domain of the CPC concerns the qualifications, experience, stability, training, supervision, and involvement of Service Provider A home-based-program staff. Staff members considered in this domain include all full-time and part-time internal and external providers who conduct groups or provide direct service or treatment to the residents. Excluded from this group are security and support staff, as well as the program director (who was evaluated in the previous domain).

Strengths. The program's staff are hired based on skills and values related to effective service delivery. The program director meets weekly one-on-one with each caseworker to discuss the progress of all of that caseworker's clients, and the entire staff meets together weekly for clinical supervision with a psychologist that Service Provider A retains as a consultant for this purpose. Training for new staff includes job shadowing, with new staff carrying a small caseload after two weeks, at which point they begin conducting home visits under the supervision of an experienced caseworker. Staff members are also assessed annually on service delivery, with the program director monitoring quality of service delivery in the interim through the weekly meetings and quarterly conversations with the families of participants.

The staff evidence strong support for the treatment model and goals of the program. The agency has specific ethical guidelines for staff conduct, of which the staff are aware and which are recorded in the employee handbook.

Areas That Need Improvement. The Service Provider A home-based-program caseworkers (aside from the program director) do not have degrees in helping professions (e.g., counseling, psychology, social work, criminal justice), although one of the two is working toward obtaining one. Neither has worked in offender-treatment programs for as long as two years.

While training for new staff has many strong elements, Service Provider A relies on the Los Angeles County Probation Department to provide training on the SLM and its curriculum. This training is provided only once a year, meaning that a newly hired

caseworker could be delivering program services for a long time prior to receiving formal training on the curriculum and principles on which those services are built. There is also no formal process for soliciting staff input on the program or instances of such input resulting in modifications in the program structure.

Rating: EFFECTIVE

Offender Assessment

The extent to which offenders are appropriate for the service provided and the use of proven assessment methods are critical to effective treatment programs. Effective programs assess the risk, need, and responsiveness of offenders and then provide services and treatment accordingly. This domain examines two specific areas regarding assessment: (1) the selection of offenders for services (i.e., inclusion and exclusion criteria) and (2) the assessment of risk, need, and responsiveness factors.

Evaluation of risk and needs levels and determination of program eligibility are made for each program by Probation. Probation administers the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist (LARRC) to juveniles on both formal and informal probation. The LARRC generates a summary risk and needs score used to match each individual to programs based on a high-risk, high-needs designation. The LARRC is a standardized tool that has been validated by the RAND Corporation. Although service providers do not receive the copies of the LARRC, each program has intervention requirements specified by Probation to provide youth with services appropriate for their risk and needs designations. The summary sheet provided to the program sites by Probation includes case plan interventions for both family and youth support services.

Strengths. Youth are referred to the Service Provider A home-based program by their probation officers. Staff report that program participants have issues with drug use (primarily marijuana), poor school performance, family dysfunction, and difficulty adjusting to the community after release from juvenile camps. Inappropriate participants are rarely referred to the program.

Caseworkers record need factors, such as school performance, criminal peer associations, and family functioning, on a Baseline Measures form at intake into the program. The Baseline Measures form was present in all files reviewed. Caseworkers consistently determine and note responsiveness factors in their case notes at intake.

Areas That Need Improvement. The program does not assess clients' personal characteristics, such as verbal ability, intelligence, and learning style, and thus does not tailor treatment delivery accordingly.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Treatment

This domain of the CPC examines whether the Service Provider A home-based program targets criminogenic behavior, the types of treatment used to target these behaviors, specific treatment procedures, the use of positive reinforcement and punishment, the methods used to train offenders in new prosocial skills, and the provision and quality of aftercare services. Other important elements of effective intervention include matching the offender's risk, needs, and personal characteristics with appropriate treatment programs, treatment intensity, and staff. Finally, the use of relapse-prevention strategies designed to assist the offender in anticipating and coping with problem situations is considered.

Strengths. The Service Provider A home-based program focuses primarily on improving family functioning in such areas as promoting family affection and communication, promoting family monitoring and supervision, and improving family problem-solving, as well as improving school performance and attendance. The program also targets the reduction of antisocial peer associations. Caseworkers note additional problems, such as substance abuse and anger-management issues, but make referrals to services outside of the program to address them.

Services are based primarily on the SLM curriculum, a structured social-learning approach. The staff consistently and systematically uses this model, which is embodied in a curricular manual supplied to all caseworkers. Skills are modeled consistently during program sessions, and caseworkers employ role-playing to so that participants can practice new behaviors. Scenarios increase in difficulty over the course of the curriculum, and participants are encouraged to use their skills outside of program sessions and report back subsequently. The program, based on the file review, has a high completion rate.

Participants are monitored outside of program sessions through caseworker consultation with probation officers, the parents and other family members, and the schools they attend. Caseworkers conduct all program sessions, and the group is generally the participant and his or her parent. (Caseworkers meet with both parents whenever possible, but it is almost always the mother only.) Additional family members, such as siblings and grandparents, are occasionally included. Parents are provided with skill-building services as well, and training in parenting curricula is made available to caseworkers for this purpose.

Caseworkers do not apply punishments directly. This is a function of the probation-officer half of the partnership. Probation officers sanction for program noncompliance in consultation with caseworkers. Sanctions can include imposition of curfews, community service, and other sanctions.

The most recent RAND report on home-based outcomes, which was not specific to Service Provider A's program, used a comparison group and found that home-based-program participants experienced slightly fewer arrests than the comparison group.

Areas That Need Improvement. The length of time in the program varies but is close to a year on average; effective programming generally lasts between three and nine months. Participants usually engage in two sessions per week, for a total of four hours. They must also attend school as a condition of probation, but in the summer or at any other time when a participant is not attending school, structured activities may take up much less than 40 percent of a participant's time, and the program has no mechanisms to introduce more activities. Additionally, the lack of responsiveness assessment makes it difficult for Service Provider A to match treatment and offender or staff and offender based on responsiveness factors.

The Service Provider A home-based program does not have a consistent policy or structure on the administration of incentives or rewards, nor does it have one for the administration of punishments and monitoring their effects for potential negative consequences. The program does not solicit offender input into the program.

The program does not use clear criteria for program completion; the probation officer, in consultation with the caseworker, determines this on a case-by-case basis. Discharge planning is not offered, nor is aftercare provided.

Rating: NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Quality Assurance

This domain examines the quality-assurance and evaluation processes used to monitor how well the Service Provider A home-based program is functioning. This includes both internal and external quality-assurance mechanisms.

Strengths. Participant progress is gauged at each session by use of the Parent/Youth Contact Sheet, which includes measures paralleling those assessed on the Baseline Measures assessment. As part of an ongoing study of JJCPA-funded programming, the RAND Corporation is evaluating home-based programming funded by the Los Angeles County Probation Department (including Service Provider A and other contract providers). The program has an internal quality-assurance process that includes

quarterly solicitation of client feedback on service delivery, file review, and regular monitoring of program staff.

Areas That Need Improvement. Participants are surveyed regarding satisfaction with the Service Provider A home-based program, but this is done for the purpose of staff spot-checking and not collected or analyzed. The program began an attempt to track recidivism in July 2008, but this effort had not been under way long enough to assess its quality or consistency at the time of the site visit. The probation department presumably collects data on recidivism, but these are not shared with Service Provider A.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Overall Program Rating

Service Provider A home-based program received an overall score of 68 percent on the CPC, which falls into the highly effective category.

The overall capacity score, designed to measure whether the home-based program has the *capability* to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders, was 76 percent, which falls into the highly effective category. The overall content score, which focuses on the *substantive* domains of offender assessment and treatment, was 62 percent. This falls into the effective category. Overall, capacity, content, and domain scores for Service Provider A are shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1

CPC Scores for the Service Provider A Home-Based Program
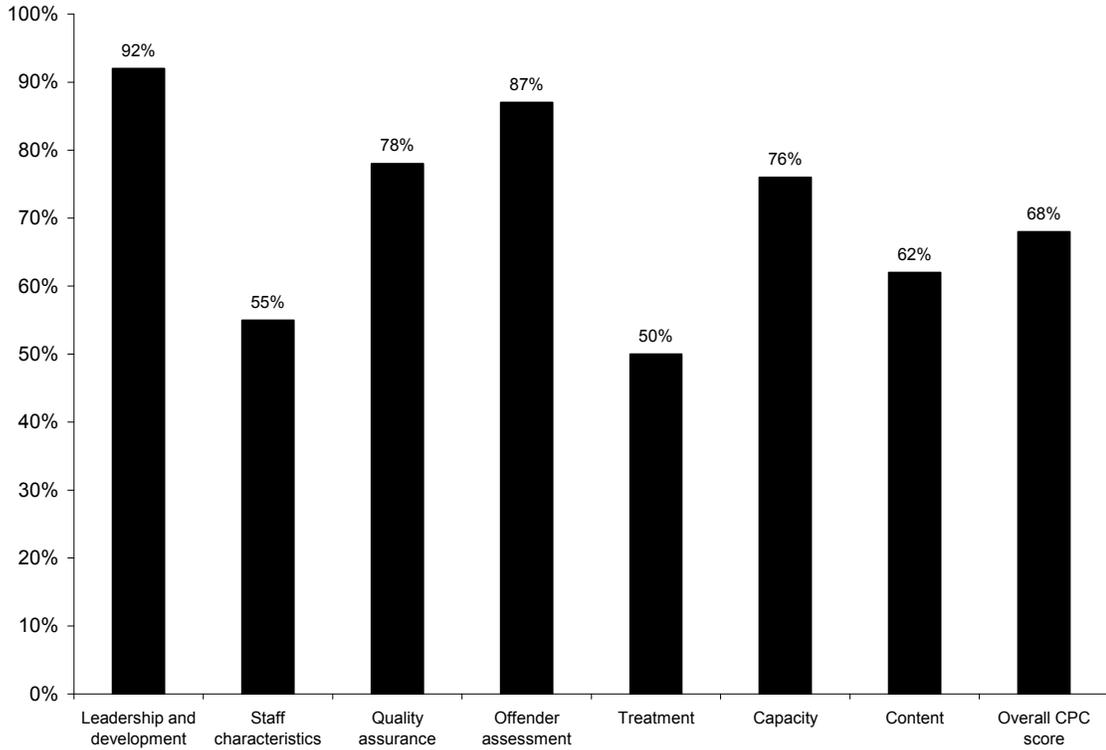
NOTE: 65–100% = highly effective, 55–64% = effective, 46–54% = needs improvement, 45% or less = ineffective.

SERVICE PROVIDER B

Service Provider B is operated by a nonprofit organization located in North Hills, California, and serving Hollywood, Fairfax, Venice, and contiguous areas in cluster 3, area 1. Primary services include a variety of direct services for gang-involved high-risk youth, including education, anger management, tutoring, family therapy, and referrals to other service providers. Service Provider B began operating in 2005. Services are funded primarily through the Los Angeles County Probation Department, using JJCPA funds. At the time of the CPC assessment, Service Provider B employed six full-time staff. Service Provider B operates two gender-based programs: The Venice program, serving male and female clients, currently has five participants; the Gender program, serving female clients, currently has six participants. The client population for both the Venice and

Gender programs are gang-involved youth who are designated high-risk and high-needs by the Los Angeles County Probation Department.

Leadership and Development

The first subcomponent of this domain examines the qualifications and involvement of the program director (i.e., the individual responsible for overseeing the daily operations of Service Provider B), his or her qualifications and experience, his or her current involvement with the staff and participants, and the development, implementation, and support (both organizational and financial) for Service Provider B.

The second subcomponent of this domain concerns the initial design of Service Provider B. Effective interventions are designed to be consistent with the literature on effective correctional treatments, and program components should be piloted before full implementation. Program values and goals should also be consistent with existing values of the community or institution, and the program should meet an identified need. Lastly, Service Provider B should be perceived as both cost-effective and sustainable.

Strengths. The program director is well qualified, with eight years of experience at Service Provider B. The director is a gang-intervention specialist who holds a J.D. and a B.A. in English and is currently working toward a master's degree in public administration and business. The program director is actively involved in the administration of the program and selects, trains, and supervises staff.

Service Provider B is based on a Multisystemic Therapy (MST) model that entails delivering services to the youth and the youth's parents in their home. The program receives support from both the criminal-justice community and the community at large. The Los Angeles County Probation Department consistently refers juveniles from the JJCPA HRHN program to Service Provider B. The efforts of caseworkers are generally supported by probation officers, who exchange client information, attend home visits as needed, and ensure client participation. The probation department also provides staff with periodic training and education. Staff members have obtained numerous certifications, and many are certified as gang-intervention specialists. Service Provider B also receives support from local schools: Caseworkers are able to access clients in the school environment and are provided information about clients from teachers and counselors.

The program is also well established in the community. The parent organization has been in operation for more than a decade, and Service Provider B has been in existence since 2005.

Areas That Need Improvement. The program director does provide some direct services to clients but does not carry a formal caseload and does not deliver services on a consistent basis.

Although Service Provider B is modeled after MST, it is heavily influenced by a combination of interventions that have not been derived from a comprehensive, systematic literature review. The hybrid nature of the program is particularly apparent in the manner by which new interventions are piloted. Staff members are allowed to modify programmatic features, and the introduction of new program elements are not formally piloted. The specific intervention administered to a client depends on the caseworker assigned to him or her.

Service Provider B has also experienced fluctuations in its funding from Probation. Over the past few years, funding for the program has consistently declined, and these budgetary cuts have had a direct impact on the program's ability to serve youth in the HRHN program.

Rating: EFFECTIVE

Staff Characteristics

This domain of the CPC concerns the qualifications, experience, stability, training, supervision, and involvement of staff. Staff members considered in this domain include all full-time and part-time internal and external providers who conduct groups or provide direct service or treatment to the residents. Excluded from this group are security and support staff, as well as the program director (who was evaluated in the previous section).

Strengths. Staff members at Service Provider B have extensive experience working with juveniles, with more than 80 percent of staff members having two years or more of experience working with troubled youth. Staff are selected and hired based on their experience and knowledge of gang-involved youth as well as for their communication skills. Many staff members are familiar with the challenges facing gang-involved youth, and this knowledge assists them in program delivery.

Staff members are supportive of the service provider's treatment goals and objectives, and their opinions are solicited at regular biweekly staff meetings. These meetings follow a set agenda that allows staff to discuss their cases and seek guidance regarding problematic clients from fellow staff members. This guidance also includes clinical supervision from a staff member trained and certified in social work. In addition to discussing substantive issues regarding current cases, staff meetings also allow caseworkers an opportunity to introduce new interventions into the program.

The program director conducts periodic reviews and assessments of staff handling of casework. This includes reviewing case notes and treatment plans and attending home visits; this information is then used to provide feedback to caseworkers to enhance service delivery. Caseworkers also receive annual training from a variety of sources, including tutorials from Communities in Schools, Probation, and local colleges. This ongoing training averages approximately 80 hours per year.

The conduct of Service Provider B employees is guided by written ethical guidelines that cover interaction with clients, their families, and other staff members, as well as other legal obligations.

Areas That Need Improvement. Most staff members have completed some college-level courses, but no direct-service staff members hold an undergraduate degree.

While staff members receive more than 40 hours of training annually, this training does not reinforce the MST treatment model. Instead, staff members receive tutorials on a disparate range of treatments and interventions, resulting in a nonstandardized treatment model and service delivery method. This inconsistency in program model is further compounded by the manner in which staff members are able to implement new programmatic features. While staff-member input regarding new interventions guides the revision and expansion of program curricula, it is not a requirement that these changes be based on best practices, and new interventions are not tested prior to implementation.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Offender Assessment

The extent to which offenders are appropriate for the service provided and the use of proven assessment methods are critical to effective treatment programs. Effective programs assess the risk, need, and responsiveness of offenders and then provide services and treatment accordingly. This domain examines two specific areas regarding assessment: (1) the selection of offenders for services (i.e., inclusion and exclusion criteria) and (2) the assessment of risk, need, and responsiveness factors.

Evaluation of risk and needs levels and determination of program eligibility are made for each program by Probation. Probation administers the LARRC to juveniles on both formal and informal probation. The LARRC generates a summary risk and needs score used to match each individual to programs based on a high-risk, high-needs designation. Although service providers do not receive the copies of the LARRC, each program has intervention requirements specified by Probation to provide the youth with services appropriate for their risk and needs designations. The summary sheet provided to

the program sites by Probation includes case plan interventions for both family and youth support services.

Strengths. Clients referred to Service Provider B are appropriately matched to the program. The HRHN program youth who participate in the program are typically involved in gangs, a population that Service Provider B prefers to serve. The program uses a need-assessment instrument, which is used to develop an individual case plan for each program participant. Although the assessment tool is not validated, clients are assessed in four categories: education, gang involvement, substance abuse, and family problems.

Service Provider B informally gauges some responsiveness factors to inform case planning. These factors include reading ability, maturity, personality, and depression.

Areas That Need Improvement. While responsiveness factors are informally measured and guide the treatment plan, no standardized instrument is used.

Rating: EFFECTIVE

Treatment

This domain of the CPC examines whether Service Provider B targets criminogenic behavior, the types of treatment used to target these behaviors, specific treatment procedures, the use of positive reinforcement and punishment, the methods used to train offenders in new prosocial skills, and the provision and quality of aftercare services. Other important elements of effective intervention include matching the offender's risk, needs, and personal characteristics with appropriate treatment programs, treatment intensity, and staff. Finally, the use of relapse-prevention strategies designed to assist the offender in anticipating and coping with problem situations is considered.

Strengths. Service Provider B targets a variety of criminogenic factors, including education, antisocial attitudes, negative peer associations, problems associated with drugs and alcohol, anger and hostility, and familial communication. The majority of factors targeted by Service Provider B are criminogenic. Treatments are tailored to clients based on individual assessments and are delivered to youth both individually and with their parents. Parents are also provided with referrals to services, including job placement, medical care, and food banks. In addition to providing direct treatment to the youth's parents, staff members collaborate with parents to monitor the youth's peer associations and daily activities. Treatment participation lasts, on average, between four and six months.

Probation officers are notified when youth are noncompliant with their treatment plan. Calls to Probation are the most frequently used negative sanction to ensure program compliance.

The program-completion rate is approximately 80 percent, indicating that the majority of clients successfully complete their treatment plan. During home visits, staff members lead and monitor treatment sessions that often include both youth and their families. The youth's parents receive training on a variety of subjects, such as parenting and communication skills.

Areas That Need Improvement. The program does not have a consistent manual or curriculum. The curriculum is constantly changing, as caseworkers have the ability to compile and implement their own program materials with little oversight. Although Service Provider B has developed an expansive curriculum, the research basis supporting these interventions is insufficient, and their implementation is inconsistent. Staff members do seek the input of participants regarding the content of their treatment plans, but these modifications are not implemented in a standardized manner.

Participants receive two home visits per week; each visit is two to three hours in duration. Program participants are required to be enrolled in school; however, the program does not supplement activities during the summer months when school is not in session. In addition, since Service Provider B does not assess risk, the program cannot vary in intensity and treatment type or match staff to clients based on risk.

Although staff members prefer to reinforce positive behavior by way of verbal rewards, no written guidelines stipulate the use of rewards or punishments. The negative effects of punishments are also not considered. Caseworkers occasionally rely on skill modeling and skill training during treatment sessions, but their use is inconsistent and is not an integral component of the treatment curricula.

Service Provider B staff members do not generate a formal discharge plan for participants on program completion. Participants are provided with referral services on an as-needed basis, but no formal aftercare is in place.

Rating: INEFFECTIVE

Quality Assurance

This domain examines the quality-assurance and evaluation processes used to monitor how well Service Provider B is functioning. This includes both internal and external quality-assurance mechanisms.

Strengths. Caseworkers reassess client progress throughout the treatment process using an assessment form developed by Probation. These assessments are completed during each home visit.

Service Provider B has been the subject of a formal evaluation conducted by the RAND Corporation in the past five years. RAND researchers continue to evaluate the JJCPA HRHN program, including Service Provider B youth. Evaluation results, which are not specific to Service Provider B, indicate that youth in HRHN programs show slightly lower arrest rates than do comparison-group youth.

Areas That Need Improvement. Caseworkers receive regular oversight from the program director; this entails monitoring service delivery through case-file review and direct observation. Feedback from program participants, however, is not formally solicited. In addition, after clients complete the program, Service Provider B does not track their recidivism rates.

Rating: EFFECTIVE

Overall Program Rating

Service Provider B received an overall score of 56 percent on the CPC, which falls into the effective category.

The overall capacity score, designed to measure whether Service Provider B has the *capability* to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders, was 69 percent, which falls into the highly effective category. The overall content score, which focuses on the *substantive* domains of offender assessment and treatment, was 48 percent. This falls into the needs improvement category. Overall, capacity, content, and domain scores for Service Provider B are shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2

CPC Scores for the Service Provider B Home-Based Program
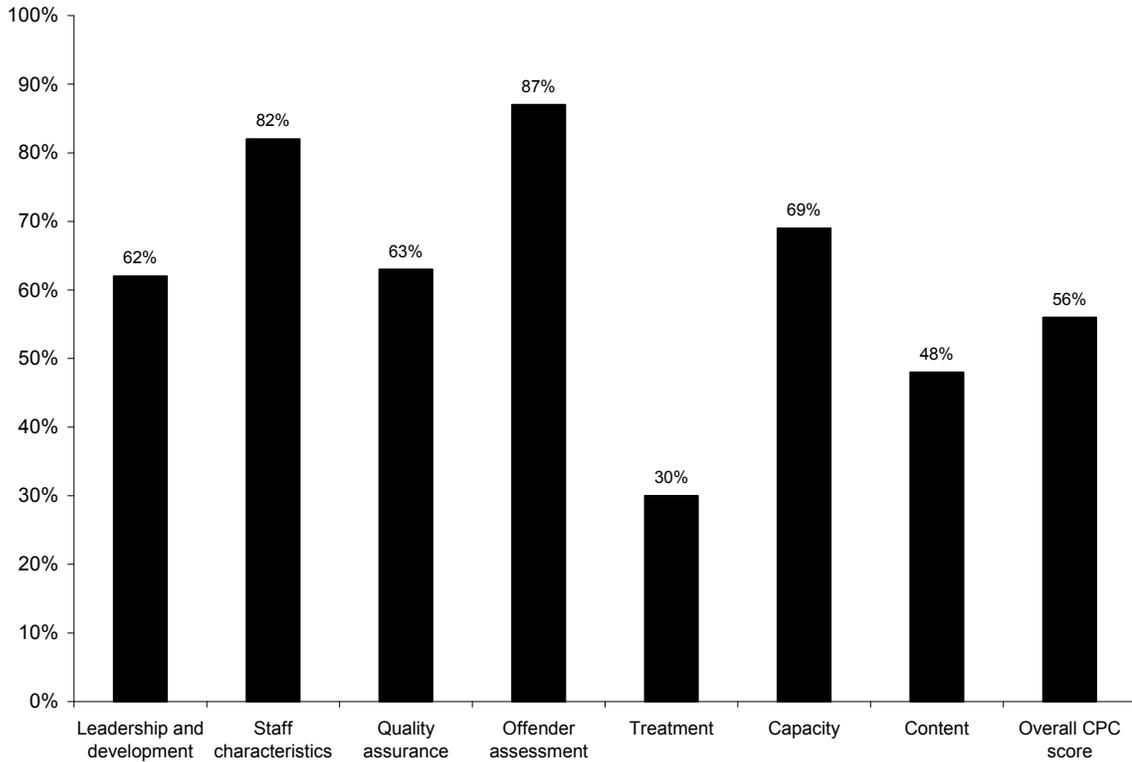
NOTE: 65–100% = highly effective, 55–64% = effective, 46–54% = needs improvement, 45% or less = ineffective

SERVICE PROVIDER C

Service Provider C, a community-based nonprofit organization with a central office in Van Nuys, California, operates a home-based program. This CPC rating was specific to the program as executed in cluster 2, area 2, and serving the Carson, Compton, and Lynwood areas. Primary services are delivered through home visits based around a social-learning curriculum targeting improved school performance, improved family relationships, and increased prosocial interactions. The Service Provider C home-based program began operating in 2005. Services are funded through the Los Angeles County Probation Department using JJCPA funds. At the time of the CPC assessment, the Service Provider C home-based program employed three full-time staff, although two of them also serviced clients through other Service Provider C programs. The client

population being served was approximately 30 male juvenile probationers, with a total capacity of 40–70 juvenile probationers annually.

Leadership and Development

The first subcomponent of this domain examines the qualifications and involvement of the program director of the Service Provider C home-based program (i.e., the individual responsible for overseeing the daily operations), his or her qualifications and experience, his or her current involvement with the staff and participants, and the development, implementation, and support (both organizational and financial) for the Service Provider C home-based program.

The second subcomponent of this domain concerns the initial design of the Service Provider C home-based program. Effective interventions are designed to be consistent with the literature on effective correctional treatments, and program components should be piloted before full implementation. Program values and goals should also be consistent with existing values in the community or institution, and the program should meet an identified need. Lastly, the Service Provider C home-based program should be perceived as both cost-effective and sustainable.

Strengths. The program director of the Service Provider C home-based program at the time of the CPC assessment has overseen Service Provider C's home-based program since the inception of the program three years ago. Service Provider C normally has a field coordinator over the home-based program in cluster 2; however, at the time of this assessment, the field coordinator was on leave and the program director was handling those responsibilities, as well as serving as the acting executive director of Service Provider C. The program director is actively involved in operating the program, selecting the staff, organizing and monitoring the training for new staff, monitoring their work, and case-conferencing with them as needed. The director is highly experienced, having worked for 15 years in offender-treatment programs.

The SLM curriculum that is the basis for program services reflects an extensive literature review, although this was done by the Los Angeles County Probation Department rather than by Service Provider C. The program also receives good support from the community at large, particularly in the form of cooperation from the schools that program participants attend. For example, the Hope Center Academy in Compton provides space for a field office for Service Provider C home-based-program caseworkers, as well as meeting space for participant sessions in cases in which the home environment is not safe for program activities.

Areas That Need Improvement. The program director is certified as a chemical-dependency counselor by the California Association for Alcohol/Drug Educators (CAADE) but does not have a baccalaureate degree. The program director does not directly provide program services, although the field coordinator (when in place) does carry a caseload.

The Service Provider C home-based program does not currently have a process in place for piloting new program interventions or other modifications to the program. This is largely due to the tightly defined contract with the Los Angeles County Probation Department for delivery of home-based program services.

The Service Provider C home-based program receives support from the criminal-justice community primarily in the form of referrals to the program from Los Angeles County probation officers and cooperation between probation officers and program caseworkers in addressing individual cases. Caseworkers report that the casework cooperation relationship with individual probation officers is strong. The referral relationship, however, has been a consistent issue for the program. Some units of the Los Angeles County Probation Department have been resistant to referring to Service Provider C's home-based program, with the result that the program struggles to operate at full capacity. There was also an error in Service Provider C's initial bid to the Los Angeles County Probation Department to provide the home-based program, resulting in the hourly billing rate for the program being inadequate to deliver program services as designed. Service Provider C was not allowed to modify its contract to correct this. Furthermore, the problems with referrals and a high rate of client "no-shows" for program sessions (for which caseworkers cannot bill) has resulted in fluctuations in program finances.

Rating: NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Staff Characteristics

This domain of the CPC concerns the qualifications, experience, stability, training, supervision, and involvement of the Service Provider C home-based program. Service Provider C does not currently have a process in place for piloting new program interventions or other modifications to the program. This is due largely to the tightly defined contract with the Los Angeles County Probation Department for delivery of home-based program services. Staff members considered in this domain include all full-time and part-time internal and external providers who conduct groups or provide direct

service or treatment to the residents. Excluded from this group are security and support staff, as well as the program director (who was evaluated in the previous section).

Strengths. All caseworkers for the Service Provider C home-based program have at least an A.A. in a helping profession. The program's staff is hired based on skills and values related to effective service delivery. Staff meetings are held monthly. Training for new staff includes job shadowing, initial home visits under the supervision of an experienced caseworker, and training in the SLM curriculum provided by a staff member who has received an SLM training for trainers. The staff are also assessed annually on service delivery.

The staff evidence strong support for the treatment model and goals of the program. The agency has specific ethical guidelines for staff conduct, of which the staff are aware. These guidelines are recorded in the employee handbook.

Areas That Need Improvement. Fewer than 75 percent of the Service Provider C home-based program caseworkers have at least two years of experience working in offender-treatment programs. They do not receive clinical supervision, and annual training is based on availability and is encouraged, not required. No staff member interviewed reported 40 hours of training received in the past year (aside from new-staff training). There is also no formal process for soliciting staff input into the program or instances of such input resulting in modifications in the program structure.

Rating: EFFECTIVE

Offender Assessment

The extent to which offenders are appropriate for the service provided and the use of proven assessment methods are critical to effective treatment programs. Effective programs assess the risk, need, and responsiveness of offenders and then provide services and treatment accordingly. This domain examines two specific areas regarding assessment: (1) the selection of offenders for services (i.e., inclusion and exclusion criteria) and (2) the assessment of risk, need, and responsiveness factors.

Evaluation of risk and needs levels and determination of program eligibility are made for each program by Probation. Probation administers the LARRC to juveniles on both formal and informal probation. The LARRC generates a summary risk and needs score used to match each individual to programs based on a high-risk, high-needs designation. Although service providers do not receive the copies of the LARRC, each program has intervention requirements specified by Probation to provide the youth with services appropriate for their risk and needs designations. The summary sheet provided to

the program sites by Probation includes case plan interventions for both family and youth support services.

Strengths. Youth are referred to the Service Provider C home-based program by their probation officers. Staff report that program participants have issues with substance abuse, poor school performance, family dysfunction, mental illness, immigration status issues within the family, low family income, and gang affiliation. Inappropriate participants are rarely referred to the program.

At participant intake, caseworkers complete a risk-assessment form created by Service Provider C, as well as the Baseline Measures form. Completed versions of both forms were present in all files reviewed. Risk factors recorded include a basic criminal history. Need factors recorded include substance abuse, family issues, school issues, and gang affiliation.

Areas That Need Improvement. Responsiveness factors are not assessed in any consistent or standardized manner.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Treatment

This domain of the CPC examines whether the Service Provider C home-based program targets criminogenic behavior, the types of treatment used to target these behaviors, specific treatment procedures, the use of positive reinforcement and punishment, the methods used to train offenders in new prosocial skills, and the provision and quality of aftercare services. Other important elements of effective intervention include matching the offender's risk, needs, and personal characteristics with appropriate treatment programs, treatment intensity, and staff. Finally, the use of relapse-prevention strategies designed to assist the offender in anticipating and coping with problem situations is considered.

Strengths. Service Provider C's home-based program focuses on criminogenic factors, such as antisocial behaviors and attitudes, anger management, poor family functioning, interpersonal conflict, problem-solving skills, self-control, accepting responsibility for one's actions, and relapse prevention. The core component, SLM, is a modeling- and behavior-based approach that is designed to positively affect thinking patterns, social skills, and youth and family engagement. SLM is well established in the program, and all staff members are trained on this intervention using a structured, well-specified manual used consistently by all staff members in every juvenile offender and family intervention.

The staff administer positive reinforcement while new skills and behaviors are modeled, allowing the youth to practice alternative prosocial responses through the use of scenarios. Staff reinforce prosocial behavior by appropriately using positive encouragement.

Family members receive treatment along with the youth who participate in the Service Provider C home-based program. In addition to learning skills for better communication and family management, family members are taught how to assist youth with problem situations and encourage positive responses.

The program lasts for six months; during this period, youth are required to attend school full-time. Weekly sessions involve one-on-one interaction with the youth and his or her family. At the completion of each session, an evaluation of the parents' and youth's progress toward treatment targets is recorded. When a youth finishes the program, a final outcome assessment is administered indicating what behaviors the client achieved and what behaviors still require service.

Areas That Need Improvement. Participants are not closely monitored outside of program participation. The staff member assists parents in increasing their monitoring and maintaining a record of any deviation of their structured schedule; they may get help from probation officers in monitoring juvenile offenders.

The staff do not use any form of negative reinforcements, other than the threat of reporting delinquent behavior to the youth's probation officer. This threat of involving the probation officer appears to be a final attempt to straighten out the youth's delinquent attitude. The amount of positive reinforcement occurring per session is also unclear. The program lacks any form of assessment to determine whether there are any adverse effects from the use of negative reinforcements.

Skill training and modeling occur in weekly sessions with the youth; however, each week focuses on a new activity, and it is not apparent that these prosocial behaviors increase in difficulty throughout the six-month treatment period.

While the program has minimal criteria to determine program completion, the principal component to graduation from the program is time-based, rather than achievement-based. Also, the percentage of participants successfully completing the program is below the desired completion rate.

A formal, documented process for offenders and their families to provide input into the structure of the program while receiving services does not exist, although staff are receptive to the idea.

Once the participant has completed the Service Provider C home-based program, he or she is referred back to the Los Angeles County Probation Department. There is no direct aftercare from the program.

Rating: INEFFECTIVE

Quality Assurance

This domain examines the quality-assurance and evaluation processes used to monitor how well the Service Provider C home-based program is functioning. This includes both internal and external quality-assurance mechanisms.

Strengths. Participant progress is examined using behavioral observation on meeting weekly target behaviors outlined in the treatment plan along with periodic progress reports. Offenders are interviewed upon intake into the program to assess behaviors and criminogenic needs and reassessed prior to completing the program.

The RAND Corporation is the principal evaluator for the Service Provider C home-based program, as part of its ongoing evaluation of the Los Angeles County Probation Department's JJCPA activities. RAND researchers assessed the Service Provider C home-based program before as part of the HRHN program category. This evaluation, which included a comparison group, indicated that HRHN participants have slightly fewer arrests than the comparison group.

Areas That Need Improvement. The Service Provider C home-based program has two of the three required components for internal quality assurance. The staff are monitored for adherence to SLM on a regular basis through direct observation of service delivery, and there are program checks that focus on file reviews, examination of caseloads to monitor the progress of offender treatment, and annual performance reviews. However, offender feedback is not obtained after he or she completes the program.

Rating: EFFECTIVE

Overall Program Rating

The Service Provider C home-based program received an overall score of 56 percent on the CPC, which falls into the effective category.

The overall capacity score, designed to measure whether the Service Provider C home-based program has the *capability* to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders, was 59 percent, which falls into the effective category. The overall content score, which focuses on the *substantive* domains of offender assessment and

treatment, was 54 percent. This falls into the needs improvement category. Overall, capacity, content, and domain scores for Service Provider C are shown in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3

CPC Scores for the Service Provider C Home-Based Program
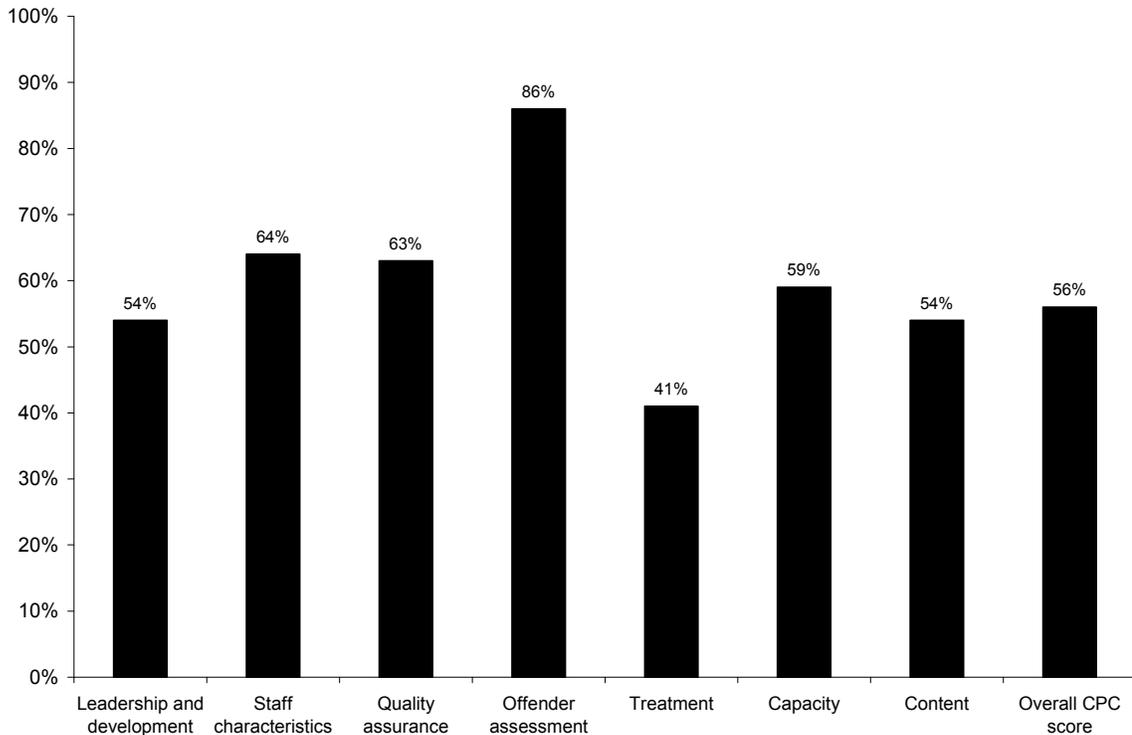
NOTE: 65–100% = highly effective, 55–64% = effective, 46–54% = needs improvement, 45% or less = ineffective.

SERVICE PROVIDER D

Service Provider D, a nonprofit organization located in Pomona, California, and serving cluster 1, area 2, operates the Service Provider D home-based program. The program is based on the SLM to positively affect thinking patterns, cognitions, social skills, violence prevention, and youth and family engagement, all within the context of cultural competency. MST and Functional Family Therapy (FFT) are the conceptual frameworks used to guide the practice parameters. Primary services are home-based with an intensive family-centered approach that focuses on high-risk, high-needs youth. The Service Provider D home-based program began operating in 2005. Services are funded

primarily through the Los Angeles County Probation Department, using JJCPA funds. The current program budget is $200,000 annually. At the time of the CPC assessment, the Service Provider D home-based program employed three full-time and no part-time staff. The client population being served was 55 youth and their families annually. At the time of the assessment, the program was serving 23 youth and their families. The program coordinator and director has been in that position for three and a half years. In addition to the director, the program employs two full-time caseworkers with primary duties that focus on working with the youth and his or her family. All services take place in the home using SLM. On average, two hours of face-to-face contact occur each week with the youth, and one to two hours of face-to-face contact occur each week with the family.

Leadership and Development

The first component of this domain examines the qualifications and involvement of the Service Provider D home-based-program director (i.e., the individual responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the Service Provider D home-based program), his or her qualifications and experience, his or her current involvement with the staff and participants, and the development, implementation, and support (both organizational and financial) for the Service Provider D home-based program.

The second component of this domain concerns the initial design of the Service Provider D home-based program. Effective interventions are designed to be consistent with the literature on effective correctional treatments, and program components should be piloted before full implementation. Program values and goals should also be consistent with existing values in the community or institution, and the program should meet an identified need. Lastly, the Service Provider D home-based program should be perceived as both cost-effective and sustainable.

Strengths. The project director of the Service Provider D home-based program has appropriate experience with youth. The project director has worked with the organization for 11 years, serving as the project director for Soledad Enrichment Action Aftercare for four of these years. The director previously served as a parenting instructor for the Los Angeles Bridges program for four years and holds certifications as a parenting instructor, gang-intervention specialist, and SLM trainer.

The project director was directly involved in developing the program curriculum and is directly involved in selecting, training, and supervising staff and providing direct service delivery to offenders. The project director met with stakeholders to develop the SLM curriculum and specifically was involved in generating youth worksheets. The

director interviews staff, evaluates their qualifications using a questionnaire provided by Human Services, and tests interviewees on how to handle scenarios that they may confront on the job. The project director emphasizes the importance of staff interest in rehabilitation and a commitment to the mission of the program. The director administers SLM training with new staff, as well as orientation, which includes walking them through an actual home visit. The project director appropriately supervises staff, discussing cases with them in weekly meetings, checking in with staff via cell phone in the field, and maintaining a board with staff schedule information. The director also monitors home visits by faxed signature sheets signed by program participants. The project director is directly involved in service delivery, conducting the initial home visit to assess participant characteristics at baseline, assessing outcome measures, and maintaining a 50-percent caseload.

A comprehensive literature search was conducted to identify relevant program materials. Concepts from the moral-reasoning model, MST, and FFT were incorporated into SLM. Several stakeholders, such as probation officers, supervisors, bureau chiefs, community-based-organization staff, and a clinical professional, convened to design the curriculum. The Service Provider D home-based program appears to be supported by both the criminal-justice community and the community at large. The project director notes a high level of support from monitors, supervisors, the central processing team, and most probation officers, and Service Provider D director and staff are involved in training sessions administered by Probation. Local churches are interested in the work carried out by the Service Provider D home-based program, and the program has received some donations, such as soccer-game tickets from a local television station. The funding level appears adequate to deliver the program as intended; funding was increased by 10 percent last year but was returned to the original level this year. The program has been in operation for three and a half years and serves boys only.

Areas That Need Improvement. The project director has not obtained an educational degree. Although the project director referred to appropriate literature incorporated into the curriculum, he was unable to articulate SLM off-hand. The program has not piloted new interventions. The project director noted that, if the contract allowed it, Service Provider D would like to incorporate a parenting class. Although there is generally good support from probation officers, the project director notes that it is very important that caseworkers and probation officers have a face-to-face interview, and this usually does not occur, perhaps due to heavy probation-officer workloads. The director noted that, while church officials are very interested in Service Provider D's work, they

feel that the program should help even more Pomona youth. The director stated that, while funding is adequate to deliver the program at the current caseloads, it would be difficult to maintain quality if caseloads increased substantially or funding decreased substantially.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Staff Characteristics

This domain of the CPC concerns the qualifications, experience, stability, training, supervision, and involvement of the Service Provider D home-based program's staff. Staff members considered in this domain include all full-time and part-time internal and external providers who conduct groups or provide direct service or treatment to the residents. Excluded from this group are security and support staff, as well as the program director (who was evaluated in the previous section).

Strengths. Background checks, including fingerprinting, are conducted for all staff before hiring by the Los Angeles County Probation Department. The project director selects staff based on their ability to manage difficult family situations and on personal characteristics relevant to the job. The director tests interviewees on how to handle scenarios that may confront them, asks each interviewee to articulate his or her mission as a caseworker, and emphasizes kindness and an interest in rehabilitation in staff selection. In addition, the project director looks for employees with a positive, respectful, and professional demeanor; he stated that it is very important that a caseworker be respectful and inspire respect in youth. Weekly staff meetings are held in which program logistics and clinical issues are discussed; a similar agenda is followed each week. Staff discuss cases and review email updates; discuss events, meetings, and new referrals; and ensure that cases have been assigned to the appropriate caseworker.

Staff are assessed on service delivery, including six-month and annual evaluations; employee raises are considered during the annual evaluation. Clinical supervision consists of quarterly meetings with two Service Provider D executive directors. These directors administer various training sessions, such as anger management and mentoring; discussion of interactional issues and scenarios are also used to further train staff. One executive director also meets with staff monthly for three hours to administer training. Initial staff training is administered by the program director and consists of SLM training and an actual home visit. This training involves teaching staff what SLM is, informing them of expectations and schedules, and explaining the process from intake and referral to follow-up with probation, including how to take progress notes and enter information

into the Web-based database. Staff receive ongoing training approximately every three months, or about 45 hours a year, from the executive directors and probation. Staff undergo training on such topics as SLM, parenting, communication skills, and active listening.

Staff input is solicited during weekly meetings and through surveys administered by the program director. Staff discuss issues regarding their cases and are able to switch cases if necessary. The program director was able to modify curriculum worksheets to allow staff comments about participant progress. The program director indicates that staff support treatment goals; he stated that he trusts his staff and chooses them based on their commitment to the mission and rehabilitation. Ethical guidelines are indicated in an integrity checklist, including courtesy calls for home visits, guidelines for rescheduling and keeping a consistent schedule, distributing business cards, maintaining a courteous and professional demeanor, and keeping accurate, up-to-date paperwork.

Areas That Need Improvement. Both caseworkers have received some college education, but neither has obtained a degree. Although one caseworker and the program director have more than two years of experience working in aftercare, fewer than 75 percent of staff have this experience. Clinical supervision consists of regular meetings with the program's executive directors. One director has a B.A. in social work, and the other has obtained an M.A., but the field of the degree is unknown. Although staff input is solicited during weekly meetings and through surveys, staff have not modified the program structure, partly due to contract specifications and limitations, and there is no formal process for them to do so.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Offender Assessment

The extent to which offenders are appropriate for the service provided and the use of proven assessment methods are critical to effective treatment programs. Effective programs assess the risk, need, and responsiveness of offenders and then provide services and treatment accordingly. This domain examines two specific areas regarding assessment: (1) the selection of offenders for services (i.e., inclusion and exclusion criteria) and (2) the assessment of risk, need, and responsiveness factors.

Evaluation of risk and needs levels and determination of program eligibility are made for each program by Probation. Probation administers the LARRC to juveniles on both formal and informal probation. The LARRC generates a summary risk and needs score used to match each individual to programs based on a high-risk, high-needs

designation. Although service providers do not receive the copies of the LARRC, each program has intervention requirements specified by Probation to provide the youth with services appropriate for their risk and needs designations. The summary sheet provided to the program sites by Probation includes case plan interventions for both family and youth support services.

Strengths. Very few inappropriate offenders are admitted to the program. The program director administers a risk and need assessment during the initial visit and determines a baseline assessment. The director notes the offender's background, including childhood experiences, education, substance abuse, gang involvement, and work history, as well as the parents' background educational, substance abuse, and employment history. The program director also notes any medical conditions and whether the youth has medical insurance, has a safe place to sleep, gets adequate nutrition, and is able to get to school on time. Personal characteristics, attributes, and styles of interaction are assessed during the initial visit when a baseline assessment is determined. Staff follow up with individual case plans specific to the offender's responsiveness factors, using the most appropriate resources for the offender. Offender progress sheets are regularly sent to probation to indicate improvement.

Areas That Need Improvement. Although inappropriate offenders are not routinely admitted to the program and the program serves both high-needs and high-risk offenders, staff members feel that there are many high-needs youth admitted to the program but too few high-risk youth. However, on rare occasions, staff determined offenders with serious mental-health needs as inappropriate for the program and asked Probation to refer them to a more appropriate service.

Although responsiveness factors are assessed, assessment is not obtained using standardized and objective measures, nor is a summary score produced. Staff indicated that approximately 50 percent of participants are high-risk and feel that the program should target more high-risk youth.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Treatment

This domain of the CPC examines whether the Service Provider D home-based program targets criminogenic behavior, the types of treatment used to target these behaviors, specific treatment procedures, the use of positive reinforcement and punishment, the methods used to train offenders in new prosocial skills, and the provision and quality of aftercare services. Other important elements of effective intervention

include matching the offender's risk, needs, and personal characteristics with appropriate treatment programs, treatment intensity, and staff. Finally, the use of relapse-prevention strategies designed to assist the offender in anticipating and coping with problem situations is considered.

Strengths. The Service Provider D home-based program focuses on criminogenic factors, such as antisocial behaviors and attitudes, anger management, poor family functioning, interpersonal conflict, problem-solving skills, self-control, accepting responsibility for one's actions, and relapse prevention. The core component, SLM, a modeling- and behavior-based approach that is designed to positively affect thinking patterns, social skills, and youth and family engagement, is well established in the program, and all staff members are trained on this intervention using a structured, well-specified manual used consistently by all staff members in every juvenile offender and family intervention.

The staff administers positive reinforcement while new skills and behaviors are modeled, allowing the youth to practice alternative prosocial responses through role-playing and the use of scenarios. Participants are taught to plan and rehearse alternatives to problem situations. Generalization is supported through offender practice in new and realistic situations. Staff reinforce prosocial behavior by appropriately and consistently using rewards. Participants are monitored outside of program sessions through caseworker consultation with parents and other family members, and the schools that participants attend.

Family members receive treatment along with the offender in the Service Provider D home-based program. In addition to learning skills for better communication and family management, family members are taught how to assist the youth with problem situations and encourage positive responses.

The program lasts for six months; during this period, youth are required to attend school full-time. Weekly sessions involve one-on-one interaction with the offender and his or her family. At the completion of each session, an evaluation of the parents' and youth's progress toward treatment targets is recorded.

Areas That Need Improvement. Offenders are not closely monitored outside of program participation. The staff member assists parents in increasing their monitoring and maintaining a record of any deviation of their structured schedule; they may get help from probation officers in monitoring juvenile offenders.

The program director pairs up each case with the most appropriate caseworker based on initial assessment of the youth and the family. As mentioned, this responsiveness assessment is not a validated, quantifiable instrument.

The staff do not use any form of negative reinforcements; they may report delinquent behavior to the client's probation officer.

Skill training and modeling occur in weekly sessions with the youth; however, each week focuses on a new activity, and it is not apparent that these prosocial behaviors increase in difficulty throughout the six-month treatment period.

While the program has criteria to determine program completion, the core component to graduation from the program is time-based, rather than achievement-based. Also, the percentage of participants successfully completing the program is below the desired completion rate.

A formal, documented process for offenders and their families to provide input into the structure of the program while receiving services does not exist, although staff are receptive to the idea.

Once the offender has completed the Service Provider D home-based program, he or she is referred back to Los Angeles County Probation Department. There is no direct aftercare from the program.

Rating: EFFECTIVE

Quality Assurance

This domain examines the quality-assurance and evaluation processes used to monitor how well the Service Provider D home-based program is functioning. This includes both internal and external quality-assurance mechanisms.

Strengths. The Service Provider D home-based program has several quality-assurance mechanisms in place. The staff are monitored for adherence to SLM on a regular basis through direct observation of service delivery, file review, examination of caseloads to monitor the progress of offender treatment, and annual performance reviews. In addition, after an offender completes the program, his or her feedback is obtained through a post-release interview with the program director. Offender progress is examined weekly, using behavioral observation on meeting target behaviors outlined in the treatment plan. Offenders are interviewed upon intake into the program to assess behaviors and attitudes and reassessed prior to the completion of program.

The RAND Corporation is the principal evaluator for the Service Provider D home-based program, as part of its ongoing evaluation of the Los Angeles County Probation

Department's JJCPA activities. RAND researchers previously assessed the Service Provider D home-based program in the HRHN program category. This evaluation, which included a comparison group but was not limited to Service Provider D, indicated that HRHN participants have slightly fewer arrests than do comparison-group youth.

      Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Overall Program Rating

      The Service Provider D home-based program received an overall score of 73 percent on the CPC, which falls into the highly effective category.

      The overall capacity score, designed to measure whether the Service Provider D home-based program has the *capability* to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders, was 84 percent, which falls into the highly effective category. The overall content score, which focuses on the *substantive* domains of offender assessment and treatment, was 66 percent. This falls into the highly effective. Overall, capacity, content, and domain scores for Service Provider D are shown in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4

CPC Scores for the Service Provider D Home-Based Program
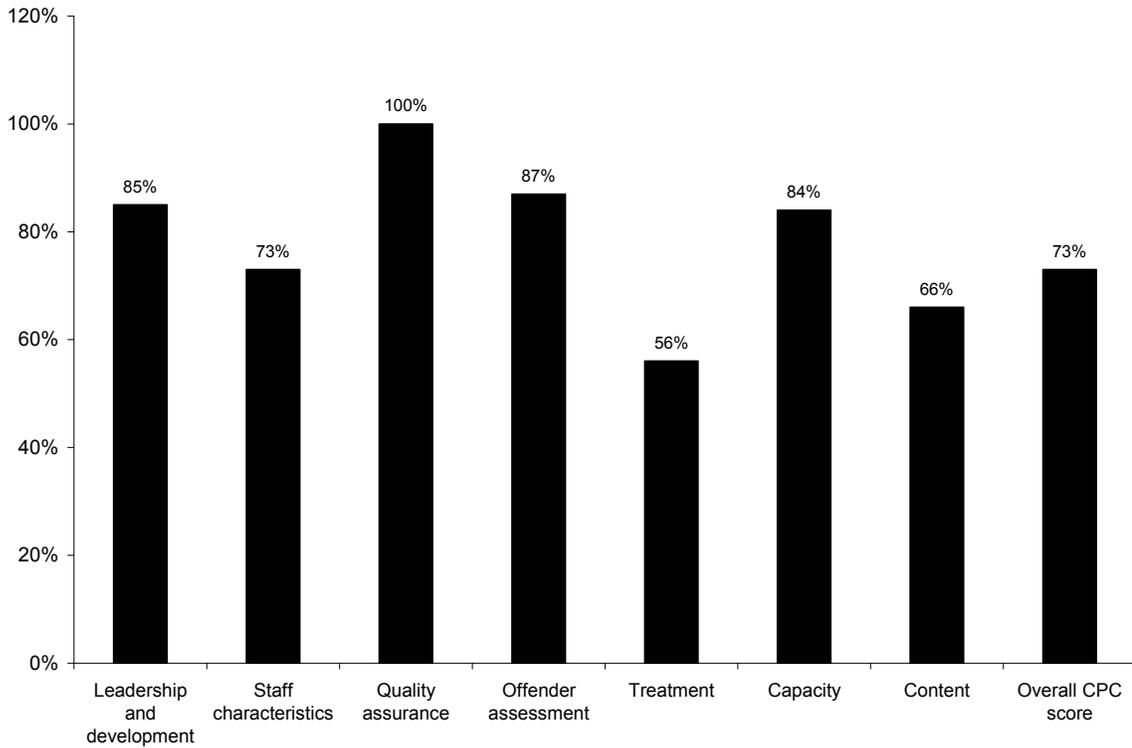
NOTE: 65–100% = highly effective, 55–64% = effective, 46–54% = needs improvement, 45% or less = ineffective.

SERVICE PROVIDER E

A nonprofit organization located in Torrance, California, serving cluster 4, area 2, operates the Service Provider E home-based program. The program uses SLM to address criminogenic needs in order to positively affect cognitions, social skills, and family dynamics while diminishing criminogenic peer associations and criminal activity. Primary services include home-based treatment with an intensive, family-centered approach that focuses on high-risk, high-needs youth. The Service Provider E home-based program has been in operation since 2005. Services are funded wholly through the Los Angeles County Probation Department using JJCPA funds. The current program budget is $200,000 annually for the boys-only contract and $110,000 for the gender-specific contract that provides treatment to girls in both areas 1 and 2. An additional $60,000 in funding was provided to Service Provider E last year, as a result of which the

program was able to provide services to additional youth. At the time of the CPC assessment, the Service Provider E home-based program employed six full-time and no part-time staff. Clientele currently consists of 54 youth and their families, although the program capacity is approximately 60 youth. The ratio of boys to girls in the program is roughly 2:1. The program supervisor has been in the position for three and a half years. In addition to the supervisor, the program employs five full-time caseworkers, whose duties focus primarily on working with youth and their families. All services take place in the home and are based on SLM. On average, two to four hours of face-to-face contact occur each week with the youth or their families or both.

Leadership and Development

The first subcomponent of this domain examines the qualifications and involvement of the Service Provider E home-based-program supervisor (i.e., the individual responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the Service Provider E home-based program, his or her qualifications and experience, his or her current involvement with the staff and participants) and the development, implementation, and support (both organizational and financial) for the Service Provider E home-based program.

The second subcomponent of this domain concerns the initial design of the Service Provider E home-based program. Effective interventions are designed to be consistent with the literature on effective correctional treatments, and program components should be piloted before full implementation. Program values and goals should also be consistent with existing values in the community or institution, and the program should meet an identified need. Lastly, the Service Provider E home-based program should be perceived as both cost-effective and sustainable.

Strengths. The project supervisor of the Service Provider E home-based program has extensive experience with at-risk and delinquent youth. The supervisor has worked with the Service Provider E home-based program for three and a half years and for Star View Community Services for nine years. The project supervisor previously served as supervising director of Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services for 10 years and has worked for a variety of other agencies, providing home-based services for juvenile offenders and developing an anger-management program for juvenile offenders in concert with the National Hockey League. The project supervisor has been working with juvenile offenders for 31 years, since receiving a master's in behavioral science and sociology.

The project supervisor was not involved in developing the program curriculum but is intimately involved in the selection, training, and supervision of all Service Provider E home-based-program staff. The staff unanimously report that ongoing training surpasses the 40 hours per year mandated by Star View Community Services, due in large part to the project supervisor, who has provided training directly or arranged for training through Probation and other agencies in the areas of SLM techniques, gang issues, safety, school problems and truancy, adolescent development, and other topics. The project supervisor is well versed in SLM methods and emphasizes the importance of staff interest in rehabilitation and a commitment to the mission of the program through firm and supportive interactions with clients. The supervisor encourages camaraderie amongst staff members and includes initial training and weekly evaluation methods that foster cooperation; when new staff are hired, they accompany each of the more established staff members on home visits, which serve not only to train them and expose them to various styles of using the SLM curriculum in dealing with clients, but also to establish healthy working relationships with their colleagues early on. The project supervisor directly supervises the staff, discussing cases in weekly staff meetings to open up channels for dialogue about challenging situations, and meets weekly with each caseworker one-on-one to discuss cases in depth. The project supervisor also checks in with staff via cell phone while they are in the field and established an informal network of communication for safety risks and concerns in dangerous neighborhoods to ensure their safety.

Areas That Need Improvement. Only two aspects of this category are in need of improvement: the direct-service capacity of the program supervisor and the use of pilot tests to implement new treatments or interventions. Currently, the project supervisor does not directly interact with clients or carry a caseload. Barring an occasional intervention with a caseworker's clients, the project supervisor does not provide any direct service to youth or their families. In terms of new interventions, in the three-and-a-half-year duration of the program, no substantial programmatic changes have been implemented, let alone piloted. This is perhaps due to the fixed nature of the contract between the program and Probation.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Staff Characteristics

This domain of the CPC concerns the qualifications, experience, stability, training, supervision, and involvement of the Service Provider E home-based program's staff. Staff members considered in this section include all full-time and part-time internal and

external providers who conduct groups or provide direct service or treatment to the residents. Excluded from this group are security and support staff, as well as the program director (who was evaluated in the previous section).

Strengths. All program staff interviewed have at least an associate's degree in a helping profession, and most have a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university. Each also has at least three years of relevant experience working with young offenders. The project director selects staff based on personal characteristics relevant to the job, such as their expressed interest in helping youth and their families, and their ability to deal with clients in a manner that is both supportive and firm. Double background checks, life scans, and fingerprinting are conducted for all staff before hiring by the Los Angeles County Probation Department.

Initial staff training is divided into two parts, one administered by the program supervisor and the other administered by Probation. The training involves teaching staff about SLM, training on ethical guidelines, and explaining the expectations and responsibilities of the job. Staff are also provided with ongoing training, often 50 to 60 hours per calendar year. As mentioned, topics include SLM techniques, gang issues, safety, school problems and truancy, and adolescent development.

Weekly staff meetings are held for program staff to discuss issues in a group setting, and each caseworker meets with the program supervisor one-on-one each week to discuss individual cases in depth. Staff are assessed on service delivery annually, including a peer-review process by which each staff member audits another staff member's cases, in order to better hone their skills at keeping organized and complete case notes. Staff input is solicited during weekly meetings and through the use of a suggestion box. The program supervisor has an open-door policy and encourages constant feedback amongst the staff. The program supervisor indicates that staff support treatment goals, and the staff concur.

Areas That Need Improvement. No clinical supervision is provided to direct-service employees by a certified therapist or social worker. Although all staff members interviewed reported that clinical supervision was provided by the program supervisor, the supervisor is not a licensed clinician and, in fact, reported that caseworkers receive no clinical supervision, as they provide no clinical services. The program supervisor was very clear that any mental-health concerns were relayed to a client's probation officer, who was then encouraged to refer the client to a mental-health service provider.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Offender Assessment

The extent to which offenders are appropriate for the service provided and the use of proven assessment methods are critical to effective treatment programs. Effective programs assess the risk, need, and responsiveness of offenders and then provide services and treatment accordingly. This domain examines two specific areas regarding assessment: (1) the selection of offenders for services (i.e., inclusion and exclusion criteria) and (2) the assessment of risk, need, and responsiveness factors.

Evaluation of risk and needs levels and determination of program eligibility are made for each program by Probation. Probation administers the LARRC to juveniles on both formal and informal probation. The LARRC generates a summary risk and needs score used to match each individual to programs based on a high-risk, high-needs designation. Although service providers do not receive the copies of the LARRC, each program has intervention requirements specified by Probation to provide the youth with services appropriate for their risk and needs designations. The summary sheet provided to the program sites by Probation includes case plan interventions for both family and youth support services.

Strengths. Very few inappropriate offenders are admitted to the program. Although the program does not assess criminogenic risk, all program staff contend that the clients referred to the program by Probation are appropriately high-risk, high-needs youth. At intake, the program supervisor administers a baseline assessment of criminogenic needs, and weekly assessments are subsequently conducted by caseworkers in order to ascertain the client's progress. Staff focus on the two most pressing criminogenic needs when determining how treatment will progress, in order to address thinking errors in those aspects of a client's life. Upon program completion, outcome measures, as well as criminogenic needs, are assessed to determine the client's progress in the program and to suggest areas of future focus for the youth on his or her own.

Areas That Need Improvement. Although responsiveness factors are assessed, assessment is not obtained using standardized and objective measures, nor is a summary score produced.

Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Treatment

This domain of the CPC examines whether the Service Provider E home-based program targets criminogenic behavior, the types of treatment used to target these behaviors, specific treatment procedures, the use of positive reinforcement and

punishment, the methods used to train offenders in new prosocial skills, and the provision and quality of aftercare services. Other important elements of effective intervention include matching the offender's risk, needs, and personal characteristics with appropriate treatment programs, treatment intensity, and staff. Finally, the use of relapse-prevention strategies designed to assist the offender in anticipating and coping with problem situations is considered.

Strengths. The Service Provider E home-based program focuses on criminogenic factors, such as antisocial behaviors and attitudes, anger management, poor family functioning, problem-solving skills, and thinking errors. The core component, SLM, a modeling- and behavior-based approach that is designed to positively affect thinking patterns, social skills, and youth and family engagement, is well established in the program, and all staff members are trained on this intervention. Although SLM worksheets are rarely used, SLM techniques are consistently applied by caseworkers through role-playing, the use of hypothetical situations, and modeling of appropriate ways of dealing with situations.

The staff administer positive reinforcement mainly through the use of appropriate and consistent oral praise. In fact, spoken praise is one of the touchstones of the program, which does not have any formal policy regarding tangible reinforcers. When youth exhibit new skills and behaviors and appear to be making strides in their treatment, caseworkers will occasionally provide tangible rewards on a case-by-case basis. Real-world application of behaviors exhibited during treatment is encouraged by caseworkers, who follow up on clients' progress throughout the duration of treatment. Staff reinforce prosocial behavior by appropriately and consistently using rewards.

Family members receive treatment along with the offender in the Service Provider E home-based program. In addition to learning skills for better communication and family management, family members are taught how to assist the youth with problem situations and encourage positive responses.

The average program duration is six months. When a youth is in need of additional treatment, caseworkers may request an extension, which is granted at the discretion of the probation officer. Although this is rare, each staff member was aware of the possibility of requesting such an extension for youth most in need of ongoing services. During treatment, youth are required to attend school full-time, even in the summer months. Weekly program sessions involve one-on-one interaction with the youth, group sessions with the youth and his or her family, and occasional partial sessions with the parents without the youth. At the completion of each session, an assessment of the parents' and

youth's progress toward treatment goals is recorded and a written record of treatment activities written in the case notes.

Areas That Need Improvement. Although the program supervisor matches each case with the most appropriate caseworker based on such factors as language and cultural sensitivity and familiarity, this responsiveness assessment does not use a validated, quantifiable instrument.

While the program has criteria to determine program completion, the core component of program completion is the successful completion of probation. Clients who violate probation or reoffend do not complete the program, but any client who either completes his or her probation term during the course of the program or spends six months in the program without violation is said to be a program completer. Even so, the percentage of participants successfully completing the program is below the desired completion rate.

Once a youth has completed the Service Provider E home-based program, he or she is referred back to the Los Angeles County Probation Department. There is no direct aftercare from the program.

Rating: NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Quality Assurance

This domain examines the quality-assurance and evaluation processes used to monitor how well the Service Provider E home-based program is functioning. This includes both internal and external quality-assurance mechanisms.

Strengths. The Service Provider E home-based program has several quality-assurance mechanisms in place, though not enough to meet scoring criteria. Staff are monitored through annual performance evaluations in which case notes are examined and overall job performance is assessed and through occasional monitoring of site visits by the program supervisor. Additionally, caseworkers engage in peer review of their colleagues' case files, which serves a dual purpose: It acts as a double-check on the accuracy and completion of case files and hones caseworkers' skills in keeping their own case files. Offender progress is assessed on a weekly basis using the criminogenic need measures on the Parent/Youth Contact sheet. Offenders are interviewed upon intake into the program to assess behaviors and attitudes and reassessed prior to the completion of program.

The RAND Corporation is the principal evaluator for the Service Provider E home-based program, as part of its ongoing evaluation of the Los Angeles County Probation

Department's JJCPA activities. The most recent RAND report on home-based outcomes, which was not specific to the Service Provider E home-based program, had a comparison group and found that home-based-program participants experienced slightly fewer arrests than the comparison group.

Areas That Need Improvement. No formal feedback is solicited from clients regarding service delivery, and therefore clients are not in a position to affect the manner in which services are provided.

Although Probation has a structure for tracking the recidivism rate, no recidivism measures are being reported to the program.
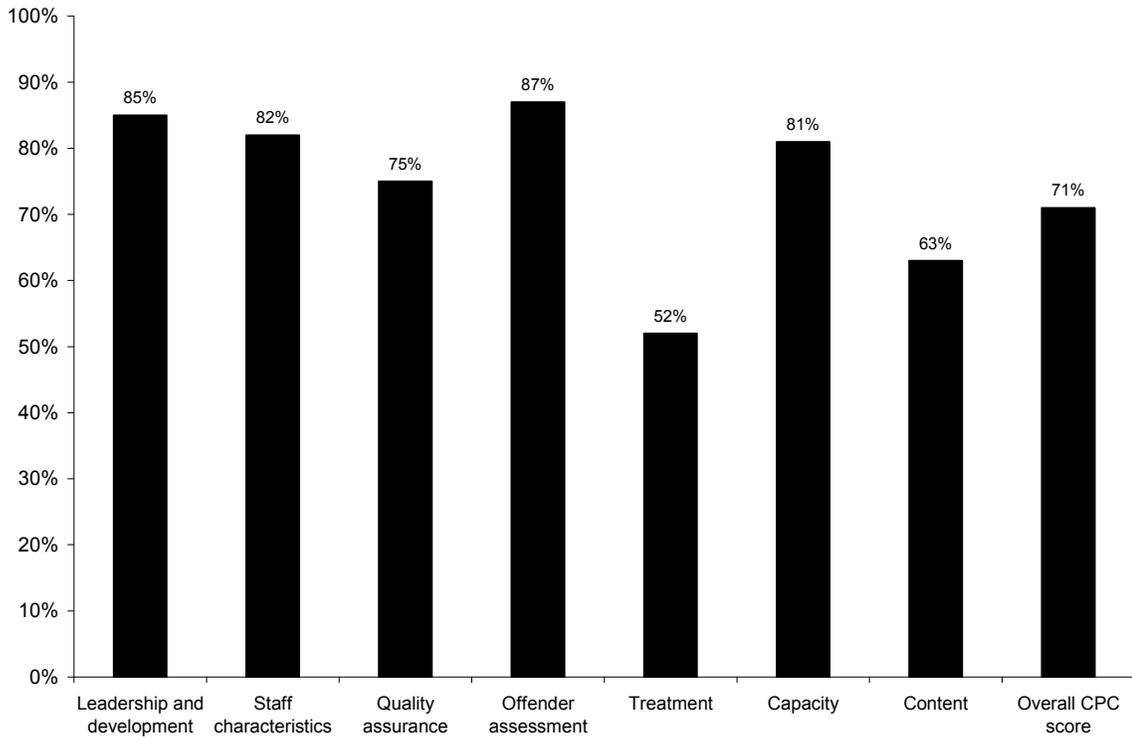
Rating: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Overall Program Rating

The Service Provider E home-based program received an overall score of 71 percent on the CPC, which falls into the highly effective category.

The overall capacity score, designed to measure whether the Service Provider E home-based program has the *capability* to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders, was 81 percent, which falls into the highly effective category. The overall content score, which focuses on the *substantive* domains of offender assessment and treatment, was 63 percent. This falls into the effective category. Overall, capacity, content, and domain scores for Service Provider E are shown in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5

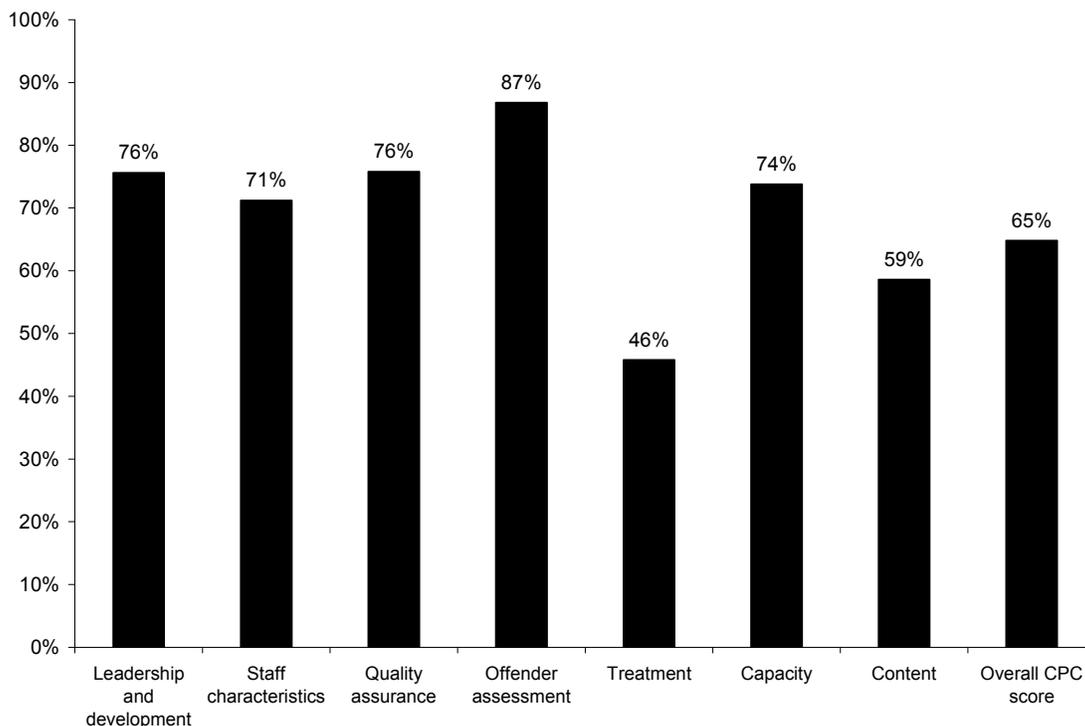**CPC Scores for the Service Provider E Home-Based Program**

NOTE: 65–100% = highly effective, 55–64% = effective, 46–54% = needs improvement, 45% or less = ineffective.

SUMMARY OF SITE-VISIT FINDINGS

Figure 1.6 shows the average evaluations in each of the five domains, as well as totals for each area (capacity and content) and overall CPC score.

Figure 1.6

Summary of Site Visit Findings For Five Sites Combined

NOTES: CPC ratings are grouped into highly effective (65–100 percent), effective (55–64 percent), needs improvement (46–54 percent), or ineffective (45 percent or less).

Overall, three of the five visited CBO sites were rated highly effective, while two were rated effective. Four sites were rated highly effective in their capacity total, while only one was rated highly effective in content. All five sites were rated effective or highly effective in staff characteristics, and four were rated effective or highly effective in program leadership and development.

Quality assurance was rated highly effective at three sites and effective at two, due to their inclusion in the JJCPA evaluation. Treatment characteristics were rated ineffective at two sites, needs improvement at two sites, and effective at one site.

Three sites scored highest in the domain of offender assessment—all five were rated highly effective—due to the Probation-administered LARRC, which is used to determine risk and needs scores for program participants.

None of the sites had a method for piloting new program components, with all sites citing the restricted nature of their contracts with Probation as a barrier to piloting new program components.

Recommendations

Our recommendations below target the areas where the service providers need to make improvements based on the CPC:

- CBO directors should have an educational and experiential background related to the services that the CBO provides and should be conversant with the principles on which the JJCPA program is based.
- All staff should have prior experience in providing services to probationers and at-risk youth.
- Staff should be given regular training that includes the theoretical basis for the program, as well as techniques to be employed in providing program services that are tailored to youth needs.
- Programs that incorporate social learning need to ensure that they follow standard model components.
- Staff should be given clear guidelines on any positive or negative sanctions utilized in the program as well as program completion criteria.
- Staff should have regularly scheduled clinical supervision.
- Probation needs to work with CBOs to develop a protocol for piloting program modifications as part of the CBOs' contract to provide JJCPA program services to Probation.
- Probation should share recidivism data with the providers to allow them to assess their effectiveness in reducing the number repeat offenders.
- At all five sites, treatment characteristics were rated lowest of the five domains. The processes that Probation is using—assessment and quality assurance—have a positive effect on CPC scores, but the treatment characteristics of the sites themselves are still falling short.

PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER

The probation department has not yet selected programs to be evaluated during the next quarter, but RAND staff expect to evaluate one provider in each cluster and provide a quarterly report on those evaluations.

CHAPTER TWO

PROGRESS ON ANNUAL TASKS

DESCRIPTION OF TASK

Each California county that receives JJCPA funding is required to report mandated outcome measures to the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA) annually by October 15. JJCPA legislation identified six specific outcome measures ("the big six") to be included in annual reports from each of the individual JJCPA programs. These outcome measures are (1) successful completion of probation, (2) arrests, (3) probation violations, (4) incarcerations, (5) successful completion of restitution, and (6) successful completion of community service. Each county can also provide supplemental outcomes to measure locally identified service needs.

The RAND Corporation was funded by the Los Angeles County Probation Department in February 2008 to conduct the evaluation of the county's JJCPA programs, including analyzing and reporting findings to the CSA for fiscal year 2007–2008.

PROGRESS REPORT

Probation department staff and RAND staff have been working together to plan for the extraction, transfer, and analysis of data to be used to report the big six and supplemental outcome measures for Los Angeles County during fiscal year 2007–2008. Weekly phone conferences between RAND and Probation staff include discussion of plans and schedules for each step of the process. A schedule of specific tasks has been agreed on, and, at this point, all tasks appear to be on schedule.

On June 17, 2008, Probation staff visited RAND Corporation headquarters in Santa Monica and were given an explanation of the processes used to analyze data for the CSA reports. Probation department staff were encouraged to ask questions about any parts of the process that were not clear. This visit was part of an ongoing effort on the part of both RAND and Probation to make each other's processes transparent.

Probation department staff have obtained school calendars for the major school districts in Los Angeles County and have forwarded those calendars to RAND staff.

School calendars are used to evaluate school-related supplemental outcomes for several of the Los Angeles County JJCPA programs.

RAND staff expect to receive JJCPA data from Probation on or around September 11, 2008. Data will then be analyzed and results posted on the CSA Web site with a target date of October 5, 2008. Once Probation staff have reviewed the outcome measures, the researchers will submit the findings to CSA on or before October 15, 2008.

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