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REPORT

Los Angeles County Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act

Fiscal Year 2007–2008 Report

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Prepared for the Los Angeles County Probation Department



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Summary

The Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act

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

JJCPA provided funds to counties to add evidence-based programs and services for

- juvenile probationers identified with higher needs for special services than those received by routine probationers
- at-risk youth who have not yet entered the probation system but who live or attend school in areas of high crime or who have other factors that potentially predispose them to criminal activities
- youth in juvenile halls and camps.

Each juvenile is assigned to one or more JJCPA programs according to an assessment of his or her need for services.

Administration of the JJCPA program is currently the responsibility of the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA), formed in July 2005 by merging BOC and the Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training (CPOST). 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.¹ Each county can also supply supplemental outcomes to measure locally identified service needs.

¹ For at-risk youth (i.e., those not on probation), only arrests and incarcerations are reported herein, since the other four measures relate to conditions of probation.

JJCPA in the Context of Los Angeles County Probation Department Programs

JJCPA is one of the major vehicles to provide services to juveniles. JJCPA programs are administered by the Los Angeles County Probation Department, whose mission is to promote and enhance public safety, ensure victims' rights, and facilitate the positive behavior change of adult and juvenile probationers. In FY 2007–2008, the state allocated more than \$34 million to Los Angeles County for JJCPA programs and services. This represents roughly one-third of juvenile field expenditures, one-quarter of detention expenditures, and more than one-third of camp expenditures, or almost 10 percent of all juvenile expenditures.

JJCPA programs are grounded in social-ecological research and the causal model of delinquency studies. The central tenet of this approach is that behavior is multidetermined through the reciprocal interplay of the youth and his or her social ecology, including the family, peers, school, neighborhood, and other community settings. The primary goal of JJCPA programs is to optimize the probability of decreasing crime-producing risk factors and increasing protective factors, with the capacity to intervene comprehensively at the individual, family, peer, and school levels, and possibly the community level, as well. The use of JJCPA and other resources allows the deputy probation officer (DPO) to shape a plan that builds on the strengths of each youth and is uniquely responsive to service needs. In collaboration with school officials, parents, and community partners, JJCPA DPOs are able to coordinate service plans that include various school- and community-based resources.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department submitted program evaluation designs, approved by BOC, that used quasi-experimental methods. Programs included a group of youth with characteristics similar to those of program youth where appropriate, and a pre-/postmeasurement design in instances in which no appropriate comparison group could be identified. Generally, outcomes for program participants are measured for a six-month period after starting the program or after release into the community (for camp and juvenile-hall programs). In addition to the big six, the Los Angeles County Probation Department, working with BOC (and later with CSA), defined supplemental outcomes specific to each program, which are also reported to CSA annually.

Some discussion of the big six is in order. CSA does not rank the relative importance of these measures, nor is there any universally accepted relative importance of these measures of recidivism. For its planning purposes, Los Angeles County has ranked these in order, from most important to least important, in the view of Probation Department standards: successful completion of probation, arrests, probation violations, incarcerations, successful completion of restitution, and successful completion of community service. An ideal outcome would be for no program youth to be arrested, incarcerated, or in violation of probation and for all to complete probation as well as (if applicable) community service and restitution. However, since, for most JJCPA programs, the big six outcomes are measured only for six months after entry into the program² and because most youths' terms of probation last from 12 to 18 months, in practice, a 100-percent completion-of-probation rate is not a realistic expectation. For all the big six measures, the most important metric is whether program youth performed significantly better than comparison youth, not the absolute value of any given outcome. We would also note that,

² For programs based in juvenile hall, the big six outcomes are measured for the six months after the youth returns to the community, rather than from program start.

because program youth are more closely supervised than youth on routine probation, it would not be surprising to find that they have more probation violations than comparison youth.

Program Changes and Enhancements in FY 2007–2008

Using, in part, program outcome analyses from previous years, recommendations from RAND, and stakeholder input, the Los Angeles County Probation Department made several significant enhancements to JJCPA during FY 2004–2005. In the first three years of JJCPA in Los Angeles County, all JJCPA programs were organized into two initiatives (Mental Health and School Success). In FY 2004–2005, programs were realigned into three initiatives: Enhanced Mental Health Services, Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth, and Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services. This structure has been maintained since FY 2004–2005.³ Table S.1 lists the JJCPA programs in each initiative in FY 2007–2008.

Training Enhancements

Consistent with the implementation of evidence-based programs and the need to strengthen the capacity of JJCPA community service providers, the Probation Department continued training enhancements, begun in FY 2004–2005, when it initiated several training sessions for Probation staff and community-based partners. The focus of this training was to strengthen service delivery through increased collaboration and case-management interventions. The training sessions included Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checkup (LARRC), Strength-Based/Family-Focused Case Management Skills training, Parent Project Certified Training, and Social Learning Model (SLM) training.

Program Implementation and Enhancements

In response to program and contract monitoring reviews, family and participant needs, and stakeholders' feedback, the following JJCPA enhancements were implemented, beginning in FY 2004–2005 and continuing in FY 2005–2006: (1) restructuring of the Gang Intervention and Intensive Transition and Gender-Specific programs into the new HRHN program; (2) implementation of family-based, rather than youth-based, interventions; (3) parental-skill training designed to empower parents; (4) implementation of School Safety Collaboratives/Safe Passages program for youth traveling to and from school in high-crime areas as part of the school-based programs; (5) increased emphasis on skill-building training and activities for JJCPA youth to provide anticriminal modeling, social-skill development, aggression-replacement training skills, problem-solving skills, and relapse-prevention skill training; and (6) Correctional Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI) training of contract monitoring staff to measure how closely correctional programs meet known principles of effective intervention.

³ The JJCPA program operating community treatment facilities (CTFs) in FYs 2001–2005 was discontinued in FY 2005–2006.

Table S.1
Programs in the Three JJCPA FY 2007–2008 Initiatives

Initiative and Programs	Abbreviation	Participants	Comparison Group	Comparison-Group Members
I. Enhanced Mental Health Services				
Mental Health Screening, Assessment, and Treatment	MH	8,589	FY 2006–2007 MH participants	10,469
Multisystemic Therapy	MST	92	MST-identified near misses	46
II. Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth				
Special Needs Court	SNC	60	SNC-identified near misses	75
Youth Substance Abuse Intervention	YSA	227	Pre/post comparison	227
Gender-Specific Community	GSCOMM	1,075	Pre/post comparison	1,075
High-Risk/High-Needs	HRHN	1,269	FY 2006–2007 HRHN participants	1,148
III. Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services				
School-Based Probation Supervision for High School Probationers	SBHS-PROB	4,031	Routine probationers	4,200
School-Based Probation Supervision for Middle School Probationers	SBMS-PROB	240	Routine probationers	225
School-Based High School Probation Supervision for At-Risk Youth	SBHS-AR	576	FY 2006–2007 SBHS-AR participants	438
School-Based Middle School Probation Supervision for At-Risk Youth	SBMS-AR	738	FY 2006–2007 SBMS-AR participants	697
Abolish Chronic Truancy	ACT	4,125	Pre/post comparison	4,125
After-School Enrichment and Supervision	PARKS	1,138	Pre/post comparison	1,138
Housing-Based Day Supervision	HB	96	Pre/post comparison	96
Inside-Out Writers	IOW	876	Pre/post comparison	876

NOTE: “Near misses” for MST and SNC were limited to those with characteristics comparable to those of program participants. Routine probationers used as comparison groups for SBHS-PROB and SBMS-PROB were statistically matched to program participants. Participants are counted each time they enter a program, so a given individual may be counted in more than one program, or more than once within the same program.

Outcomes

The CSA-mandated big six outcomes generally showed a similar pattern in FY 2007–2008 as in previous fiscal years. JJCPA participants were more likely than comparison youth to successfully complete probation, restitution, and community service. Consistent with our findings

from previous years, participants in several JJCPA programs showed higher probation-violation rates than did comparison youth. For programs that used a pre/post design, JJCPA youth tended to show fewer arrests and fewer incarcerations after program entry than before program entry. Programs with contemporaneous comparison groups showed mixed results. Programs that used historical comparison groups also showed generally positive results, though the differences were not always statistically significant.

Supplemental outcomes, which varied from program to program, were generally more positive in the reference period after starting the program than in the comparable period before beginning the program. School attendance, in particular, improved markedly for those programs that used attendance as a supplemental outcome measure. For these programs, school suspensions and expulsions were likely to decrease as well. Programs whose supplemental outcomes were not school-related also tended to show positive results in the measures used.

Programs and Outcomes in Initiative I: Enhanced Mental Health Services

Before JJCPA, the Probation Department processed juvenile referrals in a manner similar to most probation departments in California, offering only crisis intervention services. There was no dedicated court to address youth with severe mental-health issues, few if any placement options for crossover populations, and no cost-effective family-based community treatment service. These problems were addressed in FY 2007–2008 by two programs within the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative: MH and MST. A total of 9,761 youth received services in the programs of the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative in FY 2007–2008.

Summary of Outcomes for the Enhanced Mental Health Services Initiative

Because youth in the MH program represent almost 99 percent of all youth in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative, the results for the initiative as a whole will necessarily be virtually identical to those for the MH program. JJCPA youth in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative showed higher completion of community-service rates than youth in the comparison groups. However, program youth had higher arrest and incarceration rates than comparison-group youth, more probation violations, and lower completion-of-restitution rates. The two groups were not significantly different in rates of completion of probation. Supplemental outcomes for both MH and MST were significantly improved in the six months after program entry compared with the six months before entering the program.

Programs and Outcomes in Initiative II: Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth

The High-Risk/High-Need initiative targets program youth at the highest risk as well as those with the highest need. Programs and services in this initiative include SNC, YSA, GSCOMM,⁴ and the HRHN program. Many of the youth participating in this initiative are gang involved,

⁴ Gender-Specific Community programs include the Young Women at Risk (YWAR) program.

drug and alcohol users, and low academic performers; have mental-health issues and multiple risk/need factors across multiple domains; and pose a high risk for committing new crimes. Therefore, consistent with juvenile-justice research, the initiative targets higher-risk offenders and criminogenic risk/need factors, considers responsivity factors, and employs social learning approaches. A total of 3,307 youth received services in FY 2007–2008 within the Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative.

Summary of Outcomes for the Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth Initiative

Overall, program youth in the Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative had higher rates for completion of probation, restitution, and community service than comparison-group youth. However, comparison-group youth had lower rates of arrests, incarcerations, and probation violations. All differences between the two groups were statistically significant. Higher rates of probation violation may result, at least in part, because program youth are more closely monitored than are routine probationers. The relevant supplemental outcomes for SNC, GSCOMM, and HRHN participants were significantly improved in the six months after entering the program compared with the six months before entering, as was one of the two supplemental outcomes for YSA.

Programs and Outcomes in Initiative III: Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services

The school-based program is at the core of this initiative and has as its main objective the reduction of crime and delinquency in 85 high-risk neighborhoods by targeting school-based probation supervision and services for the population of probationers and at-risk youth in the schools. A secondary goal is enhanced protective factors through improved school performance. The 85 targeted neighborhoods were identified as the most crime-affected neighborhoods in Los Angeles County on the basis of number of youth on probation at the schools, rate of overall crime, rate of juvenile crime, rate of substance abuse, rate of child abuse and neglect, and number of residents below the poverty level.

Programs and services included in this initiative are SBHS-PROB, SBMS-PROB, SBHS-AR, SBMS-AR, ACT, PARKS, HB, and IOW. A total of 18,494 youth received services from programs in the school-based initiative during the JJCPA program's FY 2007–2008.

Summary of Outcomes for the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services Initiative

Taken as a whole, youth in the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative had significantly better outcomes on all of the big six measures, as compared to the baseline period or comparison group. For the programs that used educational measures as supplemental outcomes, school attendance improved significantly in the term following program entry as compared with the previous term, and there were significant reductions in school suspensions

and expulsions. All other supplemental outcomes showed significant improvement except for the PARKS program, where a single arrest occurred between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. during both the baseline and follow-up periods, and HB housing-project crime rates, which were higher in FY 2007–2008 than in FY 2001–2002.

JJCPA Per Capita Costs

A total of 31,562 youth were served in JJCPA programs in FY 2007–2008, at a total cost of \$34,209,043, or \$1,084 per participant.⁵ As one might expect, some programs had lower per capita costs than others. In general, the larger programs, such as MH, had lower per capita costs, whereas the programs that offered more-extensive services to a smaller population, such as SNC, had higher per capita costs. Table S.2 shows the total budget for each program, the number of youth served in FY 2007–2008, and the cost per program participant. Overall, the cost per youth in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative in FY 2007–2008 was \$598, whereas the Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative cost \$3,384 per youth served, and the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services programs spent \$929 per youth.

Components of Cost

In addition to the costs of delivering JJCPA services in the various programs, other costs are also incurred by JJCPA participants. These include the costs of supervision for those on probation, of juvenile hall for those who spend time in the halls, of juvenile camp for those assigned to camp, and of receiving a technical violation of probation, and the various costs associated with being arrested and going to court. We have also included, as a saving, the benefits of increased school attendance for youth in the school-based programs. In our analysis of overall JJCPA costs, we have attempted to estimate each on a daily basis to calculate the actual cost of each individual participant.

It should be emphasized that these are *estimated* costs, based on the best information available at the time of this research. Most involve calculations using estimates provided by the Probation Department or from publicly available data. These analyses are not intended to provide exact costs but to give an indication of approximate trends for each program and to allow comparisons between program participants in the six months after entering JJCPA programs versus the six months before entering.

Total Cost of Programs and Initiatives

Table S.3 shows the mean total cost per participant in JJCPA programs in FY 2007–2008. Weighted averages are also shown for each initiative. It should be noted that the costs for each initiative are largely driven by the costs of the program or programs in that initiative that serve

⁵ The number of youth served in FY 2007–2008 is greater than the number of youth for whom outcome measures were reported to CSA, because the time frames are different. Because the cost estimates in this chapter include arrests during the six-month eligibility mandated for big six outcomes, the number of program youth will match the number used to report outcomes to CSA, not the total number served during the fiscal year.

Table S.2
Per Capita Costs, by JJCPA Program, FY 2007–2008

Program/Initiative	Youth Served	Budget (\$)	Per Capita Expenditure (\$)
Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative	9,761	5,834,219	598
MH	9,630	5,207,128	541
MST	131	627,091	4,787
Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Needs Youth initiative	3,307	11,190,963	3,384
SNC	97	1,546,173	15,940
YSA	275	1,275,913	4,640
YWAR/GSCOMM	1,144	2,279,660	1,993
HRHN	1,791	6,089,217	3,400
Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative	18,494	17,183,861	929
SBHS-PROB, SBHS-AR	6,955	10,239,509	1,472
SBMS-PROB, SBMS-AR	1,587	2,126,476	1,340
ACT	7,526	502,915	67
PARKS	1,184	2,335,727	1,973
HB	166	1,717,780	10,348
IOW	1,076	261,454	243
All programs	31,562	34,209,043	1,084

NOTE: YWAR = Young Women at Risk.

the most participants. Thus, MST costs have very little influence on the overall costs of the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative, since the vast majority of youth served within that initiative are in the MH program.

As we might expect, overall juvenile-justice costs for JJCPA participants were generally higher in the follow-up period (\$8,110) than in the baseline period (\$6,127), primarily because six months is not a long enough time to evaluate the long-term benefits of changes brought about by participating in JJCPA programs. The majority of the JJCPA programs, however, produced substantial average cost savings in arrests, hall, court, and camp costs. If these cost savings were accumulated over a longer period of time, they might offset the substantial investment made in program costs. We are not able to extend the time frame to measure changes, however, because not enough time has elapsed to allow us to obtain data beyond a six-month period. With a longer follow-up period, the initial program costs may be offset by reductions in subsequent arrests, court appearances, and days spent in halls and camps.

We note also that savings in juvenile-justice costs for arrests, camps, and juvenile halls do not take into account potential savings associated with improved family and community relations. Because we have no data on the value of such improvements, we are not able to include these factors in our estimates of cost differences between the baseline and follow-up periods.

Table S.3
Mean Total Cost per Participant by JJCPA Program, FY 2007–2008

Program	Baseline (\$)			Follow-Up (\$)			Participants	Difference (\$)
	Mean	95% CI		Mean	95% CI			
Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative	9,582	9,403	9,761	14,810	14,575	15,045	8,681	-5,228
MH	9,625	9,445	9,806	14,863	14,626	15,101	8,589	-5,238
MST	5,595	4,443	6,747	9,851	8,837	10,866	92	-4,256
Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative	8,130	7,806	8,453	7,372	7,142	7,602	2,631	758
SNC	14,108	10,181	18,035	20,054	16,435	23,673	60	-5,946
YSA	6,441	5,503	7,378	9,338	8,509	10,166	227	-2,897
YWAR and GSCOMM	1,019	844	1,195	2,662	844	1,195	1,075	-1,642
HRHN	14,172	13,564	14,779	10,411	9,985	10,836	1,269	3,761
Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative	3,148	3,064	3,233	3,373	3,287	3,458	11,839	-224
SBHS-PROB	5,957	5,784	6,130	5,144	4,980	5,308	4,031	813
SBHS-AR	111	62	161	1,109	979	1,238	589	-998
SBMS-PROB	5,233	4,722	5,743	4,937	4,312	5,561	240	296
SBMS-AR	19	4	34	805	743	866	744	-786
ACT	1	0	1	53	50	56	4,125	-52
PARKS	130	64	195	1,997	1,857	2,137	1,138	-1,867
HB	1,238	456	2,021	7,193	6,893	7,494	96	-5,955
IOW	13,306	12,511	14,100	15,498	14,666	16,329	876	-2,192
All programs	6,127	6,039	6,215	8,116	8,014	8,218	23,151	-1,989

NOTE: CI = confidence interval. A positive number in the Difference column indicates the estimated amount of program savings, while a negative number indicates that overall costs exceeded savings for the program.

It is actually somewhat surprising to note that participants in the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative had only slightly higher total juvenile-justice costs in the follow-up period than in the baseline period. This finding is driven primarily by cost savings among school-based high-school probationers and the low costs of programs targeting at-risk youth.

Component Cost Savings by Initiative

For each of the three FY 2007–2008 initiatives, Table S.4 shows the mean net cost for each cost component, i.e., the mean difference between the cost in the six months before entering the program and the six months after entering. The Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative, which serves only probationers, showed lower arrest costs but much higher camp costs after entering the program than before entering. The Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative, which targets a large number of at-risk youth, saw the bulk of its expenses in program costs, whereas costs for arrests, juvenile hall, court, and especially camp were lower in the six months after entering the program. The Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative, which targets a combination of probationers and at-risk youth, saw increased program and supervision costs but savings in arrest, juvenile-hall, and court costs after entering the program.

In general, higher rates of recidivism seem to occur in the JJCPA programs with the higher cost per participant. This may be because these programs target higher-risk youth than do the less expensive programs.

Limitations of This Evaluation

As with any evaluation, there are inherent limitations in our assessment of the JJCPA program in Los Angeles County. As we have noted, no randomized designs were used, and we were unable to verify the comparability of comparison groups for some of the programs, so observed

Table S.4
Mean Cost Savings for Initiatives, FY 2007–2008 (\$)

Component	Enhanced Mental Health Services	Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth	Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services
Program	-546	-2,890	-804
Supervision	-221	-50	-267
Arrest	786	28	172
Juvenile hall	-916	362	51
Camp	-4,116	3,132	-57
Court	-213	166	546
Total	-5,228	757	-224

NOTE: A positive number in this table indicates that mean costs were lower in the six months after beginning the program than in the six months before beginning. A negative number indicates that costs were higher after entering the program than before entering. Total costs may include savings from improved school attendance. Because of missing data for some components, total cost may not equal the sum of the component costs.

differences between treatment and comparison groups may reflect pretreatment differences between the groups rather than treatment effects of the programs. Another limitation is the ability to follow program participants for only six months.

Conclusions

This is the seventh year of RAND's JJCPA evaluation findings. Over the years, the strength and breadth of the evaluation has improved, as has the overall quality of the outcome data analyzed. More-rigorous comparison groups have been identified for some programs, enhanced in some instances by statistical techniques to equalize program and comparison groups on several factors, such as demographics, location, severity of the instant offense, and the presence of a gang order (a court order not to associate with known gang members). Through the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC), the Probation Department will work to coordinate and integrate JJCPA strategies, initiatives, programs, and resources into system reforms, gang intervention, and violence-reduction efforts.

Results reflect the continuing collaboration between the evaluators and Probation to modify programs based on the integration of evaluation findings and effective juvenile-justice practices. We still see that the effect sizes are relatively small, although county-developed supplemental outcomes tend to be more favorable than state-mandated big six outcomes. Los Angeles County will continue to receive JJCPA funding on an annual basis and will continue to report outcomes to CSA annually.