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REPORT

Los Angeles County Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act

Fiscal Year 2010–2011 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 (JJCPA). 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 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 the individual's need for services.

Administration of the JJCPA program is currently the responsibility of the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA), formed in July 2005 by merging the BOC and the Commission on 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. Each county can also request that supplemental outcomes be measured for locally identified service needs.

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 (hereafter called the Probation Department or, simply, Probation), whose mission is to promote and enhance public safety, ensure victims' rights, and facilitate the positive behavior change of adult and juvenile proba-

tioners. In fiscal year (FY) 2010–2011, the state initially allocated approximately \$25.2 million to Los Angeles County for JJCPA programs and services, but, because of California’s continuing budget crisis, the actual budget was only \$22.1 million. JJCPA funding represents roughly 15 percent of juvenile field expenditures, or about 5 percent of all expenditures for programming for juveniles.

JJCPA programs are grounded in social-ecological research. 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 to BOC that used quasi-experimental methods. These designs were subsequently approved by BOC. Programs included a group of youth—either routine probationers, probationers in non-JJCPA programs, or at-risk youth receiving Probation services—with characteristics similar to those of program youth where appropriate, and a pre-post measurement 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 (for community programs) or after release into the community (for camp and juvenile hall programs). In addition to the big six, the 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, be incarcerated, or be in violation of probation and for all to complete probation and (if applicable) community service and restitution. However, because, for most JJCPA programs, the big six outcomes are measured only for six months after entry into the program,¹ and, because most youths’ terms of probation last 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-group youth, not the absolute value of any given outcome.

¹ For programs based in juvenile camps, the big six outcomes are measured for the six months after the youth returns to the community, rather than from program start.

Youth Involved in JJCPA Programs in FY 2010–2011

In FY 2010–2011, 36,749 youth received JJCPA services. Of these, 15,103 (41.1 percent) were at risk and 21,646 (58.9 percent) were on probation. Youth in one or more JJCPA programs receive services, often provided under contract by community-based organizations (CBOs), as well as supervision by a probation officer.

Los Angeles County JJCPA programs are organized into three initiatives: Enhanced Mental Health Services, Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth, and Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services. Table S.1 lists the JJCPA programs in each initiative in FY 2010–2011 and the number of participants who received services in each program. Table S.2 shows the number of youth in each program for whom big six outcomes were reported, the comparison group used for the program, and the number of youth in the comparison group.

Table S.1
Programs in the Three JJCPA FY 2010–2011 Initiatives and Number of Youth Who Received Services

Initiative or Program	Abbreviation	Participants
I. Enhanced Mental Health Services		
Mental Health Screening, Treatment, and Assessment	MH	10,720
Special Needs Court	SNC	88
Multisystemic Therapy	MST	182
II. Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth		
Youth Substance Abuse Intervention	YSA	605
Gender-Specific Community (including Young Women at Risk)	GSCOMM (including YWAR)	799
High Risk/High Need	HRHN	2,073
III. Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services		
School-Based Probation Supervision for Probationers and At-Risk Youth (HS = high school, MS = middle school)	SBHS-PROB	5,518
	SBMS-PROB	180
	SBHS-AR	1,282
	SBMS-AR	1,196
Abolish Chronic Truancy	ACT	11,240
After-School Enrichment and Supervision	PARKS	590
Housing-Based Day Supervision	HB	174
Inside-Out Writers	IOW	2,102
Total		36,749

NOTE: The number of participants in a given program is determined by who received services during the fiscal year, which goes from July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011. To allow a six-month eligibility period for recidivism, however, the number for whom outcomes are reported uses a reference period of January 1, 2010, through December 31, 2010. The people whose outcomes can be reported during the fiscal year have to enter the program in time to have six months before the end of the fiscal year, so the number of participants will not match the number for whom outcomes are reported.

Table S.2
Programs in the Three JJCPA FY 2010–2011 Initiatives and the Number of Participants for Whom Outcomes Were Reported

Initiative or Program	Participants	Comparison Group	Comparison-Group Members
I. Enhanced Mental Health Services			
MH	868	FY 2009–2010 MH participants	2,306
SNC	52	SNC-identified near misses	42
MST	165	MST-identified near misses	105
II. Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth			
YSA	352	FY 2009–2010 YSA participants	340
GSCOMM (including YWAR)	470	FY 2009–2010 GSCOMM participants	894
HRHN	2,181	FY 2009–2010 HRHN participants	950
III. Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services			
SBHS-PROB	3,636	Routine probationers	3,288
SBMS-PROB	117	Routine probationers	270
SBHS-AR	792	FY 2009–2010 SBHS-AR participants	768
SBMS-AR	735	FY 2009–2010 SBMS-AR participants	838
ACT	5,941	Pre-post comparison	5,941
PARKS	560	Pre-post comparison	560
HB	95	Pre-post comparison	95
IOW	1,400	FY 2009–2010 IOW participants	1,125

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. Outcomes for MH were reported only for youth who received treatment.

Outcomes

Because youth in the MH program represent 80 percent of all youth in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative for whom big six outcomes were reported, the results for the initiative as a whole will necessarily be primarily influenced by those for the MH program. JJCPA youth in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative completed restitution at a significantly higher rate than comparison-group youth. Comparison-group youth were significantly more likely than program youth to be incarcerated. The two groups were not significantly different in rates of arrest, completion of probation, completion of community service, or probation violations. Supplemental outcomes for all three programs in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative that qualified for statistical testing were significantly improved in the six months after program entry compared with the six months before entering the program.

Overall, program youth in the Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative had higher rates of completion of restitution but higher rates of arrests, incarcerations, and probation violations. Differences between the two groups in rates of completion of probation and completion of community service were not statistically significant. The relevant supplemental outcomes for GSCOMM and HRHN participants were significantly improved in the six months after entering the program compared with the six months before entering.

Taken as a whole, youth in the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative had significantly better outcomes on four of the big six measures than the baseline period or comparison group. Although comparison-group youth had significantly fewer incarcerations, program youth had significantly higher rates of completion of probation, restitution, and community service. Program youth also had a significantly lower rate of probation violations than comparison-group youth. The two groups did not differ significantly in arrest rates. 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 that had enough successful outcomes to allow statistical testing showed significant improvement, except for special incident reports (SIRs) in the IOW program, in which there was no significant difference in rates between the two periods measured. HB housing-project crime rates were lower in FY 2010–2011 than in FY 2009–2010, but significance testing between the two rates is not possible.

Historical and Contemporaneous Comparison Groups and Pre-Post Comparisons

Programs with contemporaneous comparison groups showed mixed results. SBHS-PROB program youth had significantly better outcomes than comparison-group youth in all of the probation-related big six outcomes except for arrest rates, for which the two groups were not significantly different, and incarcerations, for which the comparison group had a significantly lower rate. Outcomes for SBMS-PROB youth were significantly different from those of the comparison group for successful completion of probation and probation violations, but the comparison group had a significantly lower incarceration rate. The much smaller programs MST and SNC showed no significant difference in big six outcomes from their respective comparison groups.

Programs that used historical comparison groups also showed mixed results. MH participants were significantly more likely to complete restitution than their FY 2009–2010 counterparts but had a significantly higher incarceration rate. Other MH big six outcomes did not differ significantly between the two groups. FY 2010–2011 IOW participants had significantly higher rates of completion of probation and restitution, as well as a lower rate of probation violations, than the FY 2009–2010 cohort. SBMS-AR youth had a significantly lower arrest rate than in the previous year. The two YSA cohorts differed only in completion of restitution, for which the FY 2009–2010 had a significantly higher rate. FY 2010–2011 GSCOMM (including YWAR) participants had significantly higher rates of completion of probation and restitution than the previous year's cohort.

In the three programs (ACT, HB, and PARKS) that used a pre-post design, differences between the baseline and follow-up outcomes were not significantly different, with the single exception that follow-up arrest rates were significantly lower than baseline rates for PARKS youth.

Supplemental outcomes, which varied from program to program, were almost always 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. Measures of risk, strengths, and barriers improved significantly for all four school-based programs.

Difference-in-Differences Analyses

A difference-in-differences analysis basically isolates the effect of the *change* in the current year's cohort relative to the *change* in the previous year's cohort, when comparing outcomes before and after JJCPA program entry. A simple comparison makes the implicit assumption that the two cohorts are basically comparable, whereas difference-in-differences analysis tests that assumption by looking at outcomes both before and after program entry.² If the two cohorts have different baseline risk profiles, this method will control for such differences. If the two cohorts being compared have the same baseline profile, then a simple comparison works well. However, if the baseline profiles of the two cohorts are not comparable, then a difference-in-differences analysis is more informative than a simple comparison between the two cohorts.

Out of 34 outcomes for the seven programs that used the prior year's cohort as a comparison group (six outcomes for GSCOMM/YWAR, HRHN, IOW, MH, and YSA and two outcomes for SBHS-AR and SBMS-AR), participants met expectations in 23 outcomes, exceeded expectations in five outcomes, and failed to perform up to expectations in six outcomes. The fact that the unfavorable outcomes all occurred in arrest and incarceration rates for three programs and that baseline rates for all six outcomes differed significantly between the two years suggests the possibility that these programs may have accepted higher-risk participants in FY 2010–2011 than in FY 2009–2010, but we have no independent corroboration that this was the case.

JJCPA Per Capita Costs

A total of 36,749 youth were served in Los Angeles County JJCPA programs in FY 2010–2011, at a total cost of \$22,118,869, or \$602 per participant.³ As one might expect, some programs had lower per capita costs than others. In general, the larger programs, such as ACT, had lower per capita costs, whereas the programs that, like SNC, offered more-extensive services to a smaller population with higher risks and needs had higher per capita costs. Table S.3 shows the total budget for each program, the number of youth served in FY 2010–2011, and the cost per program participant. Overall, the cost per youth in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative in FY 2010–2011 was \$495, whereas the Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative cost \$1,646 per youth served, and the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services programs spent \$492 per youth.

² For MH and IOW, programs administered in juvenile halls, outcomes are measured in the six months prior to hall entry and six months following hall exit.

³ The number of youth served in FY 2010–2011 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 period 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.3
Estimated Per Capita Costs, by JJCPA Program, FY 2010–2011

Initiative or Program	Youth Served	Budget (\$)	Per Capita Expenditure (\$)
Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative	10,990	5,441,196	495
MH	10,720	3,886,563	363
SNC	88	1,154,052	13,114
MST	182	400,581	2,201
Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative	3,477	5,723,898	1,646
YSA	605	952,331	1,574
GSCOMM (including YWAR)	799	837,492	1,048
HRHN	2,073	3,934,075	1,898
Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative	22,282	10,953,775	492
SBHS-PROB	5,518	5,645,319	1,023
SBMS-PROB	180	189,244	1,051
SBHS-AR	1,282	1,134,250	885
SBMS-AR	1,196	1,239,790	1,037
ACT	11,240	375,371	33
PARKS	590	1,293,731	2,193
HB	174	877,107	5,041
IOW	2,102	198,964	95
All programs	36,749	22,118,869	602

NOTE: Total budget for an initiative might not equal the sum of budgets of its component parts because we have rounded to the nearest dollar.

Components of Cost

Although Table S.3 shows the costs of delivering JJCPA services in the various programs, other costs are also incurred for JJCPA participants. These include the cost of supervision for those on probation, the cost of juvenile hall for those who spend time in the halls, the cost of juvenile camp for those assigned to camp, the cost of receiving a technical violation of probation, and the various costs associated with being arrested. In our analysis of overall JJCPA costs, we have attempted to estimate each on a daily basis or unit cost 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 writing. Most involve calculations using estimates provided by Probation or from publicly available data. These analyses are intended not to provide exact costs but to give an indication of approximate trends for each program and to allow compari-

sons for program participants in the six months after entering JJCPA programs versus the prior six months.⁴

Total Cost of Programs and Initiatives

Table S.4 shows the mean total cost per participant in JJCPA programs in FY 2010–2011. 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 the most participants. Thus, MST costs have very little influence on the overall costs of the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative because 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 (\$7,428) than in the baseline period (\$5,496), 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. Most of the JJCPA programs, however, produced average cost savings in arrests and court costs, and several programs also reduced juvenile hall and camp costs, some by a substantial amount. If these cost savings were accumulated over a longer period of time, they might offset the relatively high initial 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 and court appearances.

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.

Component Cost Savings, by Initiative

For each of the three FY 2010–2011 initiatives, Table S.5 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. As we might expect, there are noticeable differences in mean component costs among the three initiatives. The Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative, which serves only probationers, showed lower arrest costs but much higher camp, juvenile hall, and court 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, camp, and court were lower in the six months after entering the program, with camp costs averaging \$3,042 less in the follow-up period than in the baseline period. The Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative, which targets a combination of probationers and at-risk youth, showed a similar pattern to the Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative, with increased program and supervision costs during the follow-up period but lower costs for arrest, juvenile hall, camp, and court than in the baseline period.

⁴ These are baseline and follow-up costs for program participants only and do not include any comparison-group costs.

Table S.4
Mean of the Total Estimated Cost per Participant, by JJCPA Program, FY 2010–2011 (\$)

Initiative or Program	Baseline			Follow-Up			Participants	Difference
	Mean	95% CI		Mean	95% CI			
Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative	7,440	7,269	7,610	13,789	13,566	14,013	9,675	-6,349
MH	7,455	7,283	7,626	13,882	13,654	14,109	9,458	-6,427
SNC	12,737	8,917	16,558	17,757	14,612	20,903	52	-5,020
MST	4,897	4,035	5,759	7,216	6,242	8,191	165	-2,319
Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative	10,464	10,083	10,845	8,295	7,986	8,604	3,003	2,169
YSA	8,057	7,155	8,959	7,719	6,891	8,547	352	338
YWAR and GSCOMM	1,164	859	1,470	2,212	1,890	2,535	470	-1,048
HRHN	12,857	12,357	13,357	9,699	9,300	10,097	2,181	3,158
Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative	2,956	2,874	3,039	2,595	2,516	2,675	13,276	361
SBHS-PROB	7,086	6,864	7,308	4,869	4,670	5,068	3,636	2,217
SBMS-PROB	5,047	4,366	5,728	4,234	3,570	4,898	117	813
SBHS-AR	158	97	218	493	342	644	792	-335
SBMS-AR	47	13	81	322	223	421	735	-275
ACT	15	7	22	64	47	82	5,941	-49
PARKS	939	628	1,251	2,144	1,837	2,451	560	-1,205
HB	773	286	1,261	4,224	3,890	4,559	95	-3,451
IOW	8,605	8,102	9,108	9,748	9,236	10,260	1,400	-1,143
All programs	5,496	5,408	5,584	7,428	7,328	7,527	25,954	-1,931

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. Means and CIs at the initiative level are weighted averages of the individual programs within each initiative.

Table S.5
Mean Net Costs for Initiatives, FY 2010–2011 (\$)

Component	Enhanced Mental Health Services	Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth	Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services
Program	-409	-1,522	-425
Supervision	-330	-60	-245
Arrest	213	20	99
Juvenile hall	-1,025	134	24
Camp	-3,460	3,042	287
Court	-1,339	545	351
Total	-6,349	2,169	361

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 mean costs were higher after entering the program than before entering. Total costs for the four school-based programs in the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative also include savings resulting from improved school attendance. Because of missing data for some components, total cost might not equal the sum of the component costs.

Conclusions

As with any evaluation, there are inherent limitations in our assessment of the JJCPA program in Los Angeles County. Quasi-experimental comparison groups are always vulnerable to the criticism that they are somehow not comparable to the program group such that observed differences are not due to the program but rather to differences between the groups. For some programs, and for particular outcomes, our difference-in-differences analyses for JJCPA programs that used the previous year's cohort as a comparison group brought into question the assumption that the two cohorts were comparable.

Data used to compute outcome measures were extracted from databases maintained by Probation. Probation has worked with RAND in an attempt to maximize the quality and amount of data available. Data for the big six come from official records and are relatively easy to maintain and access. Data for supplemental outcomes are sometimes more problematic because Probation's data are only as good as the information obtained from CBO service providers, schools, and other county government departments.

Data for some programs were relatively complete, and, for some programs, more data for supplemental outcomes were available in FY 2010–2011 than in previous years. In other programs, only a small fraction of program youth had data available for supplementary measures, calling into question the appropriateness of any findings based on such a small subsample. RAND will continue to work with Probation to increase the amount of data available for supplemental outcomes for all JJCPA programs.

The severe recession that began in late 2007 continued to affect JJCPA funding in Los Angeles County in FY 2010–2011. Total JJCPA funding for FY 2010–2011 remained approximately 30 percent lower than in years before the recession began. Funding in FY 2009–2010 was also about 30 percent lower than in previous years. Over the past two years, Probation has

adjusted the criteria for participation in some JJCPA programs and made other changes that have allowed approximately as many youth to receive JJCPA services as during the years of higher funding. With the state's budget woes continuing, the level of JJCPA funding for future years remains uncertain.

FY 2010–2011 was the tenth consecutive year for which outcomes were reported to CSA and to the county. 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 differences in outcomes between program participants and comparison-group youth 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.