

First Contact and Re-contact: A Study of Juvenile Justice Involvement

Study Rationale

The overall goal of San Mateo County's 2010 Local Action Plan is to fund interventions that will reduce involvement with the juvenile justice system, whether this is reduction in first contacts (primary prevention) or reduction in repeat contacts (secondary prevention) with the system. The 2010 Plan shifted emphasis of funding toward *early intervention*, using primary prevention-type strategies to keep youth from the doors of the juvenile justice system, while a smaller amount of funding was directed toward services for youth already in the system, with the aim of preventing new violations and re-entry into the system.

Recent analyses of juvenile justice outcomes in San Mateo County have yielded a range of outcome data. For instance, the current JJCPA recidivism analysis looks at summative outcomes such as arrests, violations of probationary terms and new violations within 6 months (180 days) after start dates of service. The JPCF analysis done in 2008-2011 looked at 3 month and 6 months rates of repeat justice contact, of any type. Probation programs such as Assessment Center and Family Preservation Program would like to dig more deeply into outcome data to determine if the youth they serve have subsequent violations for the same issues for which they received programming (e.g., theft, vandalism, fighting).

In sum, these JJCPA and JPCF analyses have not yet been sensitive or detailed enough to understand the juvenile justice outcomes across different types of programs and different types of youth. This challenge of consistent definitions and consistent measurement is not unique to San Mateo County but is widespread (see Harris et al).¹ As a result, **we simply don't know where and when we are having the desired impact with youth and the programs that serve them**, and thus a more thorough analysis of justice outcomes is needed.

Study Goals

- To estimate the rate of re-entries into the juvenile justice system, using more granular indicators of recidivism, program dosage and youth demographics (hereafter called Study "A")
- To estimate the rate of first entries into the juvenile justice system (Study "B")
- Use these data to agree on common definitions of recidivism for the county
- Use these data to more fairly evaluate the effectiveness of the variety of programs funded (rather than a one-size fits all approach)
- Use these data to establish benchmarks for county juvenile services and track trends

Key Outcome Variables for Examination

For youth currently or recently on Probation (Study "A"):

- Percent of youth with an arrest while on probation
- **Percent of youth with a new, sustained violation while on probation**
- Percent of youth who fail to complete the terms of probation
- Percent of youth with an arrest *after termination of probation*¹
- Percent of youth who have new sustained violations *after termination of probation*²

For youth who have never been on Probation (Study "B"):

- Percent of youth with an arrest while in the program
- **Percent of youth with a new, sustained violation while in the program**
- Percent of youth with a referral to Probation while in the program
- Percent of youth with an arrest *after the end of the program*
- Percent of youth who have new sustained violations *after the end of the program*

^{1,2} To the extent data about juvenile probationers exist, a limited discussion of longitudinal recidivism can be conducted.

Research Questions

The following research plan presents the guiding evaluation questions and variables or metrics needed to answer these questions. The variables in red font are of particular importance to the Probation department.

STUDY GROUP	QUESTIONS	Variables
Study A: “Re- contact” population	What percent of youth served by probation-funded programs who are <u>currently</u> justice involved have contact with the juvenile justice system after their program start date?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percent of youth with an arrest while on probation - Percent of youth with a new, sustained violation while on formal probation - Percent of youth who fail to complete the terms of probation - Percent of youth with an arrest <i>after termination</i> of probation - Percent of youth who have new sustained violations after termination of probation
	What percent of Assessment Center and FPP participants have violations for the same issue in which they received services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % with a new law violation, by ‘code’, while on probation - % with a new <i>sustained</i> law violation, by ‘code’, while on formal probation - % with a new law violation, by ‘code’, after probation ends - % with a new <i>sustained</i> law violation, by ‘code’, after probation ends
	What are the characteristics of youth who recidivated compared to those who didn’t?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk profile of youth based on available data (e.g., number of priors)
	Does the program dosage and content vary between those who recidivated and those who didn’t?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Probation or program start and ends dates - Hours of service received, per type of service
	What are the statistical predictors of recidivism, based on the available data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (regression analyses linking client, program and outcome data)
Study B: “First contact” population	What percent of youth served by probation-funded programs have contact with the juvenile justice system after their program start date?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percent of youth with an arrest while in the program - Percent of youth with a new, sustained violation while in the program - Percent of youth with a referral to Probation while in the program - Percent of youth with an arrest <i>after the end</i> of the program - Percent of youth who have new sustained violations after the end of the program
	What are the characteristics of youth who had contact with justice system compared to those who didn’t?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk profile of youth based on available data
	Does the program dosage and content vary between those who had contact with justice system and those who didn’t?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Probation or program start and ends dates - Hours of service received, per type of service
	What are the statistical predictors of having contact with justice system, based on the available data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (regression analyses linking client, program and outcome data)

Study Population

1. **Study A with Justice-involved Youth:** Includes two groups:
 - a. “Cohort 1” youth served by Assessment Center and Family Preservation Program in FY 10-11
 - b. “Cohort 2” youth being served in the FY 11-12 year by programs funded by Probation that are *currently justice involved*, as indicated by program records
 - c. Comparison cohort: For consideration, data could be gathered on youth served in the similar period to provides comparison group data

2. **Study B with Youth not Justice-involved:** Youth being served by programs funded in FY 11-12 by Probation, that are *not* currently justice involved, as indicated by program records.

Methods

STUDY A: Two options are possible:

- Probation staff creates report query on the specified variables, enters in youth names and runs a “batch” report, creating a data file with only the needed youth, and only the needed variables; OR
- Probation provides ASR with an extract (raw data export) including all youth, all necessary fields and ASR “finds” our participants in that data

STUDY B:

- ASR will meet with programs to discuss who would like to participate in this study. Participation includes ASR cross referencing their participants’ data with the data in the juvenile justice system databases. If needed, additional MOUs or assurances can be put into place with the participating programs.
- For the consenting programs, ASR will “find” our participants in the master data files provide by Probation.

Study Cohorts, Outcome “windows”, and Timing of Data Pulls

				Spring 2013 data pull ↓	Spring 2014 data pull ↓
		2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014
Study A, Cohort 1	FPP	Youth served	6 to 12 month outcomes	12–24 month outcomes	
	Assessment Ctr	Youth served	6 to 12 month outcomes	12–24 month outcomes	
Study A, Cohort 2	FLY, StarVista & Cleo		Youth served	6 to 12 month outcomes	12–24 month outcomes
Study B			Youth served	6 to 12 month outcomes	12–24 month outcomes

Analysis and Reporting

- ASR will analyze the data to answer the research questions using the variables listed in the table above.
- Research report and executive summary of findings in Spring 2013, and an update report in Spring 2014

Scope of Work

Scope of Work	FY-12 -13	FY 13-14
	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
Further planning on definitions, literature review, consent, data extraction	32	8
Identification of justice involved "JJCPA" youth for Study A and compilation into Excel list	16	0
Identification on non-justice involved youth in JPCF programs for Study B compilation into Excel list	16	0
Coordinating with Probation to export data file	16	16
Identify/ match the study population youth with their matching records in the probation export	16	16
Reviewing extracted data for errors/ anomalies	8	24
Analysis of research question 1: any recidivism, by program and across JJCPA programs	40	40
Analysis for research question 2: recidivism for similar violations	16	16
Analysis of research question 3: new contacts for JPCF population	32	32
Draft data brief	12	12
Meet with probation to review results	4	4
Finalize report	32	32
Present results to JJCC or special session to discuss implications for common definitions, setting benchmarks or goals, etc. 8 hours	8	8
	248	208
	\$ 18,600	\$ 16,640

*Note although the recidivism scope of work proposal is defined with budget, the budget is already included in the ASR FY 2011-2014 contract.

ⁱ See *Measuring Recidivism in Juvenile Justice Corrections*. <http://www.journalofjuvjustice.org/JOJJ0101/article01.htm>