

San Mateo Probation

The Juvenile Assessment Center Annual Evaluation

Fiscal Year 2017-2018



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Program Description

The Juvenile Assessment Center provides a primary point of entry for intake and assessment of youth who have come into contact with the juvenile justice system via law enforcement, including, but not limited to, youth who participate in Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funded programs. At the Assessment Center, the process begins when youth receive a multidisciplinary team risk/needs assessment, including screening for mental health, substance abuse, and other significant risk factors. Based upon the assessment findings, a recommendation that includes a balance of accountability and support/treatment services is completed and discussed with the youth's family. Recommendations are also made to the Juvenile Court if release from custody is appropriate. Diversion-eligible youth can be referred to a range of programs and services including the Petty Theft Program, Juvenile Mediation Program, Victim Impact Awareness Program, and Traffic Court; youth may also be placed on shorter-term (3 months) or longer-term (6 months) supervised Probation Diversion contracts.

This evaluation focuses on selected youth, although the Assessment Center also provides triage services to additional youth (please see the Appendix for further details on the full complement of triage services provided by the Assessment Center). Triage services are largely intended to be brief and to link youth with appropriate community resources to avoid formal court proceedings where possible, while some immediate bridging services are available for youth in crisis in order to stabilize families and optimize chances for success. This allows the Assessment Center to focus efforts on those youth who are at higher risk to reoffend.

Programmatic Challenges in FY 2017-18

In FY 2017-18, the Assessment Center experienced strained resources due to low staffing. Several community workers have either been on leave or have relocated to other departments. As a result, probation officers have been supervising their own diversion contracts, and the impact on youth has been significant. Youth did not receive the amount of supervision or probation support in 2017-18 as they did in previous years.

Evaluation Methods

Programs funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation (Probation) monitor their programs and report client, service, and outcome data to the department and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect these data are described below:

Clients and Services: Grantee programs collect demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) and service data (e.g., type of services, hours of services, etc.) for individual clients. Program staff entered these data into their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.

Risk Factors: The Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) is a risk, strengths, and needs assessment tool designed to assist in effectively and efficiently supervising youth, both in institutional settings and in the community. The tool has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of a brief prescreen assessment known as the JAIS Boys Risk or JAIS Girls Risk, administered in addition to the full assessment and reassessment components. Probation has elected to administer the JAIS Risk assessments to provide an initial indicator of recidivism risk. The JAIS Girls Risk consists of eight items and the JAIS Boys Risk consists of ten items, which yield an overall risk level of low, moderate, or high.

Outcomes: JJCPA-funded programs collect data for a number of justice-related outcomes for program participants. Probation has elected to report these outcomes at 180 days post-entry; the reference group reflects the past year's cohort of program participants. In FY 2017-18, the Assessment Center collected the following outcome measures:

- Arrests
- Detentions
- Probation violations
- Probation completions
- Court-ordered restitution completion
- Court-ordered community service completion

The Assessment Center also reports the average daily population in the Juvenile Hall to track progress toward its goal of reducing the number and length of Juvenile Hall stays.

Evaluation Findings

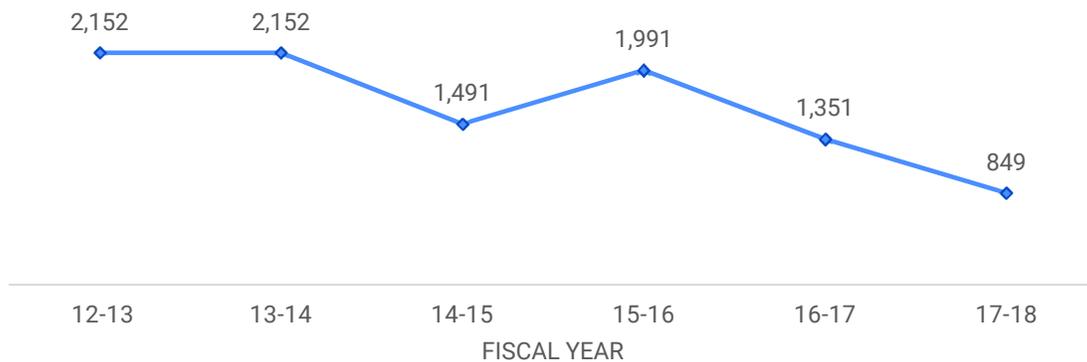
Fiscal Year 2017-18 Highlights

- The number of clients served increased by 11% from 227 to 253.
- Compared to all previous years (except FY 2014-15), there was an increase in the average time in the program (2.6 months).
- The Assessment Center served clients across the risk spectrum: 66% scored Low, 30% scored Moderate, and 3% scored High on the criminogenic risk spectrum.
- The number of clients presenting with a drug or alcohol problem at program entry doubled compared to the previous year (20% in FY 2017-18 compared to 10% in FY 2016-17).

Profile of Clients Served

In fiscal year (FY) 2017-18, the Assessment Center screened and managed approximately 849 cases, which consist of “602” youth (formal wards of the Court or those who have committed criminal law offenses) and “601” youth (those who have issues of truancy, runaway history, or out-of-control behavior at home and/or in school). The figure below shows the total number of cases screened and managed each year, showing a clear decline in numbers served over time. For further detail on how each case was processed through the system, please see the Appendix.

Figure 1. Total number of Cases Screened and Managed, FY 2012-13 to FY 2017-18



The Assessment Center fully assessed and served 253 youth during FY 2017-18, all of whom had demographic data:

- Over two-thirds (71%) of clients served were male and 29% were female.
- Sixty-two percent (62%) identified as Latino/Hispanic, 14% as White/Caucasian, 10% as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 9% as African American/Black.
- The average age of clients was 15.6 years.
- Youth spent an average of 2.6 months in the program.

Table 1. Client Services

CLIENT SERVICES	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Number of clients served	504	454	423	332	227	253
Average number of hours served	8.4	8.3	7.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average time in the program (months)	2.1	2.3	3.0	2.4	2.0	2.6

Risk Indicators

For each youth in their program, the Assessment Center evaluates the presence of three risk indicators upon entry: 1) drug or alcohol problem, 2) school attendance problem, and 3) suspension or expulsion from school in the past year.

- In FY 2017-18, 20% of clients had an alcohol or drug problem at entry, double that of FY 2016-17.
- Twenty percent (20%) had an attendance problem upon entry, a marked decrease from 36% in FY 2016-17.
- Those suspended or expelled in the past year stayed relatively steady at 41%.

Table 2. Risk Indicators at Program Entry

RISK INDICATORS	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Alcohol or drug problem	31%	10%	20%
Attendance problem	32%	36%	20%
Suspension/expulsion in past year	41%	39%	41%

n=173

In FY 2017-18, the Assessment Center mainly served youth at the low and moderate section of the risk spectrum, with 66% scoring Low risk and 30% scoring Moderate risk. These results have proven stable over the past three years of JAIS implementation, and are expected given the nature of the Assessment Center’s programs, which center on diversion programs and informal probation.

Table 3. JAIS Risk Level

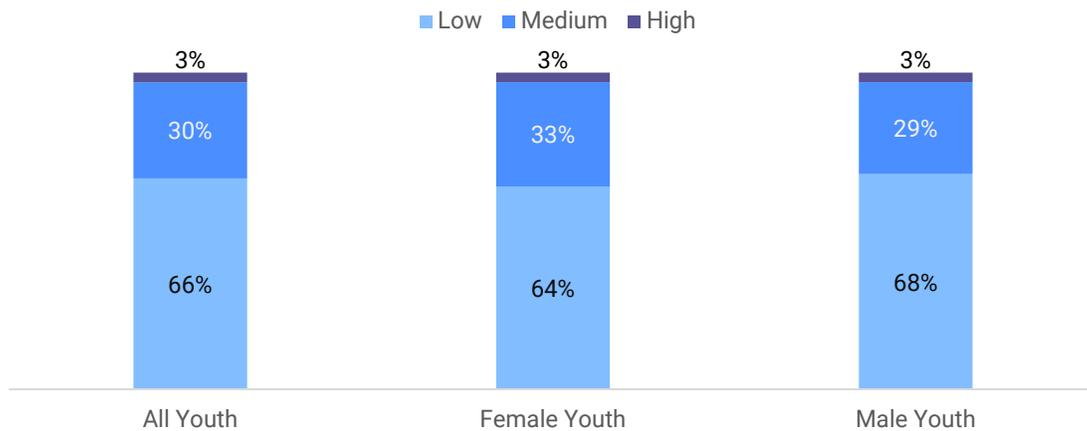
JAIS RISK LEVEL	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Low	65%	62%	66%
Moderate	29%	30%	30%
High	6%	8%	3%

n=197

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

When disaggregated by sex, the majority of both boys and girls had Low and Moderate criminogenic risk levels (see Figure below).

Figure 2. Criminogenic Risk Level by Sex



All Youth n=197; Female Youth n=72; Male Youth n=125

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Justice Outcomes

The table below presents justice-related outcomes for 130 youth whose six-month post-entry evaluation milestone occurred in FY 2017-18. Some key takeaways include:

- The rate of youth arrested for a new law violation stayed constant at 18% from FY 2016-17, while the number of youth detained during their time in the program dropped to a six-year low of 8%.
- One youth was on formal probation at program entry, and only fourteen cases escalated to formal probation by six months after entry.
- Those who committed probation violations increased slightly to 25%, compared to 22% in FY 2016-17.
- Thirteen percent (13%) of youth completed court-ordered Probation.¹

Table 4. Justice Outcomes

JUSTICE OUTCOMES	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Arrests (for a new law violation)	10%	14%	24%	21%	18%	18%
Detentions	9%	13%	21%	20%	22%	8%
Probation violations	14%	18%	29%	33%	22%	27%
Completed court-ordered probation	1%	4%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Completed court-ordered restitution	5%	16%	33%	0%	--	--
Completed court-ordered community service	2%	9%	N/A	0%	--	0%

FY 17-18: Arrests for a new law violation n=130; Detentions n=130; Probation violations n=15; Completed court-ordered probation n=16; Completed court-ordered restitution n=0; Completed court-ordered community service n=1

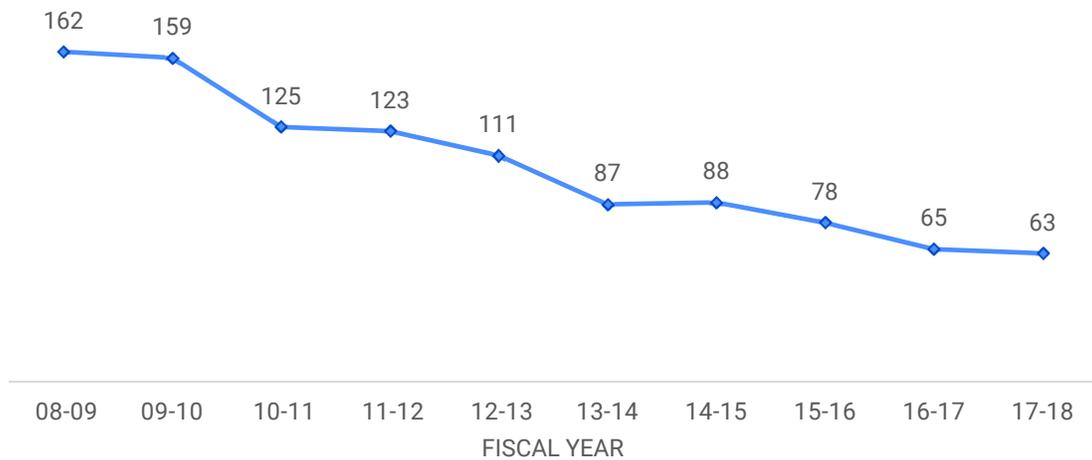
¹ Small sample sizes can lead to unstable and variable results.

Program Specific Outcomes

One of the goals of the Assessment Center is to reduce the number of Juvenile Hall stays by diverting youth away from detention. Between FY 2016-17 and FY 2017-18, the average number of youth in Juvenile Hall declined by 3% from 65 to 63 total youth. Between FY 2008-09 and FY 2017-18, the average daily population decreased 61%.

A number of factors may be influencing this trend, such as a decrease in crime overall or fewer bookings for less serious offenders. However, the Assessment Center is unable to say with certainty which factor is most influential. Though fewer youth are being served, staff report that the needs of youth entering Juvenile Hall are complex and require a significant amount of resources and supervision.

Figure 3. Average Daily Population, FY 2008-09 through 2017-18



Client Success Story

Each year, staff at funded JJCPA programs provide a client story to help illustrate the effect of services on their clients. The following is the client story provided by the Assessment Center for FY 2017-18.

Name of client	John (pseudonym)
Age and gender	17, male
Reason for referral	John was arrested for possession of tobacco product, possession of marijuana, and resisting arrest. He was contacted after police smelled a strong odor of marijuana coming from his person. The Minor refused to be searched and pulled away from officer.
Client's behavior, affect, and appearance when they first started in the program	John participated in an assessment with both of his parents. He was using marijuana on a daily basis. Attending a continuation high school, was behind on credits and was truant.
Activity engagement and consistency	<p>John and his parents were cooperative throughout the interview. John was out-going and took full responsibility for his actions that led to the police contact. He expressed remorse for his actions. He said he was willing to participate in whatever programs that were to be recommended by probation as a diversion.</p> <p>In the assessment with John and his parents it was discovered that John was previously diagnosed with ADHD. John was prescribed medication by a doctor but only tried the medication for a very brief period of time because he did not like a side effect. John had never been tested for Special Education services.</p>
Client's behavior, affect, and appearance toward the end of the program	John performed well on the informal contract. His initial two chemical tests returned positive for marijuana. He continued to attend his out-patient drug and alcohol counseling and his Narcotics Anonymous meetings. John eventually began submitted chemical tests that returned negative for illicit substances, and he graduated from El Centro.
What the client learned as a result of the program	John was given a 504 plan at school. John received services that helped him in the classroom, his behavior remained good, and he made up the credits he previously missed towards earning his high school diploma.
What the client is doing differently in their life now as a result of the program	John saw a psychiatrist and was placed on a different ADHD medication than what he was previously prescribed. He felt that the medication helped his behavior and attention span at school.
The value of the program in the client's words	John was happy to be afforded the opportunity to participate in a diversion program. He reported he noticed a

difference when he did not have marijuana in his system. He is doing well in school and is hoping to earn his high school diploma.

Appendix: Case Triage Dispositions

	FY 12-13		FY 13-14		FY 14-15		FY 15-16		FY 16-17		FY 17-18	
Mandatory court cases	455	21%	307	14%	325	22%	348	17%	13	21%	353	42%
Booked into secure custody	322	15%	217	10%	235	16%	213	11%	247	18%	176	21%
Placed in Petty Theft Program	110	5%	97	5%	143	10%	73	4%	51	4%	19	2%
Placed in Juvenile Mediation/Victim Impact Awareness Program	239	11%	89	4%	116	8%	102	5%	130	10%	38	4%
Screened and referred to Traffic Court	234	11%	137	6%	60	4%	75	4%	86	6%	61	7%
Referred to youth's county of residence	41	2%	52	2%	85	6%	52	3%	53	4%	72	8%
Youth Outreach Pilot Program families served	129	6%	180	8%	240	16%	225	11%	10	0%	N/A	
Criminal background checks	321	15%	221	10%	221	15%	225	11%	236	17%	243	29%
Alcohol and Drug assessment	93	4%	37	2%	8	1%	25	1%	30	2%	23	3%
Brief intervention services to increase engagement in treatment	12	1%	3	0%	13	1%	2	0%	3	0%	0	0%
Received letter of reprimand	32	1%	71	3%	41	3%	32	2%	57	4%	15	2%
Juvenile record sealing application evaluated for submission to the Court	138	6%	131	6%	113	8%	86	4%	88	7%	88	10%
Assessed and placed on diversion contracts	91	4%	68	3%	115	8%	40	2%	38	3%	35	4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intervention (90 day contract) 	Data not collected in prior fiscal years										23	3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informal diversion (6 month contract) 											12	1%
Total Cases Screened and Managed	2,152		2,152		1,491		1,991		1,351		849	