

# SAN MATEO COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

ACKNOWLEDGE ALLIANCE  
ANNUAL EVALUATION

**2020 - 2021**



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## About the Researcher

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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## Program Description

The mission of Success Centers is to empower marginalized community members through education, employment, and art, so they may develop a positive self-image and a sense of hope and purpose for their futures. San Mateo County Probation Department's (Probation) Juvenile Probation Camp Funding (JPCF) supports Success Centers' evidence-based year-round program, Helping Instill Knowledge & Empowerment in You (Hi-Key). The program provides basic, necessary life skills training and teaches how to obtain and create important documents, such as Social Security cards, driver's licenses/state IDs, and resumes. Hi-Key's JPCF services were provided at their location in South San Francisco and include:

- **Case Management:** Youth are assigned a case manager to connect them to needed supports and to develop an individual Steps to Success plan detailing the youth's goals, services needed, barriers, and concrete steps to progress toward goals. The case manager ensures the plans are realistic and meets regularly with each youth to ensure continued stability.
- **Job Readiness Training:** Success Centers Job Readiness Training (JRT) is a simple yet comprehensive curriculum that engages job seekers to become better at resume writing, interview skills, and searching for the right job using current technology. Class topics include self-awareness, career exploration, interview skills, resume writing, and a wrap-up session that allows students to discuss what they've learned and how to apply it to their lives.
- **Job Placement/Employer Spotlights:** Success Centers links participants to local job fairs and assists jobseekers by attending interviews at places of employment and by engaging potential employers to visit, conduct employer spotlights, and interview potential candidates onsite.

Additionally, Youth Offender Block Grant (YOBG) funds support Success Centers to do the following work in Juvenile Hall:

- **Academic Study Hall:** Services encompass a two-pronged approach, starting with one-on-one academic mentoring and tutoring services from highly qualified college graduate business professionals. The mentoring strategy contains a targeted matching process centered on each student's educational content, standard needs, and their tutor's skill and expertise. This strategy increases youths' personalization and academic stamina, so youths achieve higher academic success. Second, Success Centers' academic counseling strategy deepens students' understanding of college pathway options by formulating personalized learning plans centered on certificate development pathways and academic attainment.
- **Job Readiness Training and Life Skills:** Job Readiness Training prepares young people for the transition to employment by helping them develop work maturity skills, including conflict resolution; dealing with punctuality, fraternization, or authority issues; stress management; and financial literacy, including reading a pay stub, understanding banking systems, etc.
- **Visual Arts Program:** The Visual Arts Program engages youth in fine arts as a vehicle to build life skills that reduce the risk of recidivism. Each 90-minute session begins with an introduction to a life skill that explicitly builds the ability to counter the most common criminogenic factors that lead to repeat offenses (anti-social thinking, temperament, anger management, etc.) as well as building upon important noncognitive skills such as communication, decision-making, and empathy, all of which are necessary for success. The youths then engage in a corresponding fine arts project taught by community-based teaching artists who serve as strong role models and informal mentors. By introducing art materials, techniques, and the

creative process in a formal, large group setting, youth are exposed to positive methods for expression and communication and are inspired to discover their best selves.

## Programmatic Challenges

During the COVID-19 pandemic that blanketed Success Centers' entire first year of service delivery, they struggled to get youths to access their services. Distance learning for all students, the associated 'Zoom fatigue', and issues accessing technology all created the conditions for low engagement from youths in the virtual space. This also made it difficult for Success Centers' staff to administer the JAIS assessment with youths. However, Success Centers worked with partner agencies to develop strategies that would provide staff access to youths during the day so they did not have to log into Zoom meetings in the evening. Success Centers reported that youths were interested in joining the workforce but found it difficult to compete with more experienced adults when applying for entry-level employment. To alleviate the stress on youths, Success Centers reached out to specific industries (movie theaters, fast food restaurants, retail shops, etc.) to prioritize hiring their youths. Lastly, Success Centers identified a communication issue prevalent among the youths they served. For example, some young people had multiple email addresses that they either checked infrequently or forgot which email they shared with a possible employer. When coupled with youths not setting up or checking voicemails, this led to missed opportunities. Success Centers helped youths maintain one professional email, merged it with their other emails, and developed a standard for checking and responding to emails. This change helped two youths find employment.

The Academic Study Hall program, as an in-person tutoring program at the Youth Services Center – Juvenile Hall (YSC-JH), was difficult to pivot to an online format. The Success Centers' Study Hall manager hosts this program and assists students in GED, HiSET (High School Equivalency Test), Credit Recovery, or online college course tutoring. This program helps youths leaving the juvenile facility attain positive academic outcomes. Each student was equipped with Chrome book laptops by the San Mateo County Office of Education for their use when attending school during the day. This limited laptop use caused some difficulty for youth since they were only able to meet with their tutors via Zoom in order to facilitate the creation of documents such as resumes and cover letters, which they could only accomplish during school hours. Connecting youths to employment when they leave the YSC-JH was also challenging due to non-essential work stoppages as a result of COVID-19. The pandemic also impacted the hiring strategies for many companies due to the associated shutdowns that caused work stoppages. Additionally, due to the extensive restrictions put into place as a result of the COVID-19 SIP orders of March 2020 and December 2020, the arts-based programs were unable to schedule a time to facilitate the Art Programs at the YSC-JH in the second and third quarters.

## Evaluation Methods

Programs provided by Success Centers are funded by San Mateo County Probation's (Probation) JPCF and YOBG funding. Success Centers monitors programs and reports client, service, and outcome data to Probation and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect this data are:

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

**Risk Factors:** Grantee programs used the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) to provide a standard measure of risk for youths. This individualized assessment is a widely used criminogenic risk, strengths, and needs assessment tool that assists in the effective and efficient supervision of youths, both in institutional settings and in the community. It has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of a brief initial assessment followed by full assessment and reassessment components (JAIS Full Assessment and JAIS Reassessment). The JAIS assessment has two unique form options based on the youth's gender. Probation has elected to administer the JAIS to all youths receiving services in community programs for at-risk and juvenile justice involved youth. The JAIS Girls Risk consists of eight items, and the JAIS Boys Risk consists of ten items. Each assessment yields an overall risk level of 'low,' 'moderate,' or 'high.'

**Outcomes:** Success Centers collected six additional program-specific outcome measures to track progress toward improving their clients' quality of life:

- percent of youth with improved soft/hard skills following participation
- percent of youth who apply for employment and are hired
- monthly employer spotlights
- youth reported better engagement with academics
- youth reported enhanced knowledge about job readiness and life skills
- youth reported enhanced appreciation for the arts

**Evidence-Based Practices:** JPCF and YOBG-funded programs are encouraged to follow evidence-based practices. To augment Probation's knowledge of which programs are being implemented by funded partners, each funded program has provided a catalog of its practices since the FY 2017-18 evaluation period. After receiving this information, ASR runs any new cataloged practices reported through several clearinghouses to determine whether each practice is an<sup>1</sup>:

- evidence-based theory or premise

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<sup>1</sup> For the full list of evidence-based practice clearinghouses used to evaluate programs, please see the JJCPA/JPCF Comprehensive Report for FY 2020-21.

- evidence-based model, shown by multiple experimental or quasi-experimental studies to be effective
- evidence-based practices or modalities shown to promote positive outcomes
- evidence-based tools or instruments that have been validated (concurrent and predictive)

## Evaluation Findings

### Fiscal Year 2020-21 Highlights

- During their first year of funding, Success Centers served a total of 90 youths (61 JPCF and 29 YOBG), averaging 13.2 hours of service over 2.6 months. COVID-19 restrictions impacted their ability to perform in-person services at the YSC and complete JAIS assessments with JPCF youth this year.
- Success Centers primarily served youths who scored as ‘moderate’ risk (53%) on the JAIS risk assessment, with 27% scoring ‘high’ risk and 20% scoring ‘low’ risk.
- Success Centers achieved one JPCF performance goal (number of Employer Spotlights) and one YOBG performance goal (percentage of youth reporting enhanced knowledge about job readiness and life skills).

### Profile of Youths Served

During FY 2020-21, Success Centers served a total of 90 youths: 61 youths funded by JPCF, and 29 youths funded by YOBG (Table 1). Race/ethnicity data were available for all youths (Table 2).

- **JPCF:** Youths funded under JPCF received an average of 15.5 hours of service over a period of 2.7 months. One-half (52%) of youths identified as Hispanic/Latino, followed by 18% identifying as White/Caucasian. Nearly two of every three youths identified as male (69%), and the average age was 17.8 years.
- **YOBG:** Youths funded under YOBG received an average of 8.3 hours of service over a period of 2.5 months. Just over one-half (55%) of youths identified as Hispanic/Latino, followed by 21% as Black/African American. All youths identified as male, with an average age of 17.5 years.

Table 1. Success Centers Services Overall and by Funding Source

YOUTH SERVICES	FY 20-21
<b>All Probation-Funded Youths Served</b>	
Number of Youths Served	90
Average Number of Hours Served	13.2
Average Time in the Program (Months)	2.6
<b>JPCF</b>	
Number of Youths Served	61
Average Number of Hours Served	15.5
Average Time in the Program (Months)	2.7

YOBG	
Number of Youths Served	29
Average Number of Hours Served	8.3
Average Time in the Program (Months)	2.5

Table 2. Success Centers Race/Ethnicity Profile, by Funding Source

PROGRAMS	Hispanic/Latino	White/Caucasian	Black/African American	Asian/Pacific Islander	Multi-Racial/Ethnic	Other
JPCF	52%	18%	7%	7%	11%	5%
YOBG	55%	3%	21%	7%	3%	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>

All youths n= 90, JPCF n=61, YOBG n= 29.

### Risk Indicators

Table 3 shows that Success Centers served youths across the risk spectrum in FY 2020-21. Of the 60 youths assessed with the JAIS, 20% scored as 'low' risk, 53% scored as 'moderate' risk, and 27% scored as 'high' risk.

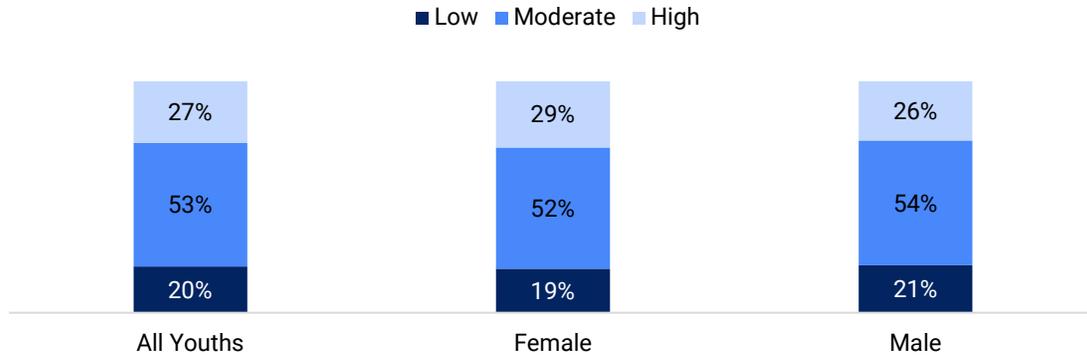
Table 3. JAIS Risk Levels

J AIS RISK LEVELS	FY 20-21
Low	20%
Moderate	53%
High	27%

FY 2020-21 n=60.

When disaggregated by gender, a similar proportion of youths scored as 'low' and 'moderate' risk (Figure 1).

### Criminogenic Risk Level by Gender



All Youths n=60, Female n=21, Male n=39.

### Program-Specific Outcomes

Success Centers and Probation developed six additional measures specific to Success Centers activities (three each for JPCF and YOBG funded activities) to further understand outcomes of youths receiving services (Tables 4 and 5). Success Centers provided evidence of meeting the first performance measure of improved soft/hard skills for two of the four quarters in FY 2020-21. Success Centers achieved the second JPCF performance measure, monthly employer spotlights, by hosting 44 spotlights over the year. The third JPCF performance measure of successful job placement was achieved for 13% of youths who sought employment. For the YOBG performance measures, two of the three were not able to be measured due to difficulty implementing the Study Hall and Arts programs. For the remaining measure, 88% of youths reported enhanced job readiness and life skills, exceeding the goal of 80% of youths.

Table 4. Performance Measures - JPCF

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY 20-21 TARGET	FY 20-21 RESULTS
1. <b>Job Readiness Training:</b> Percent of youth with improved soft/hard skills following participation	80%	Goal met for 2 of the 3 quarters from which data were available
2. <b>Job Placement:</b> Employer Spotlights to be held monthly	100%	100%*
3. <b>Job Placement:</b> Percent of youth hired who apply for employment	50%	13%; 2 youths hired out of 15 youth who met with a program manager to access employment services

\*Success Centers held 44 employer spotlights

**Table 5. Performance Measures - YOBG**

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY 20-21 TARGET	FY 20-21 RESULTS
1. Participants will report better engagement with academics	80%	N/A*
2. Participants will report enhanced knowledge about job readiness and life skills	80%	88%
3. Participants will report enhanced appreciation for the arts	80%	N/A**

\*The Study Hall Program is a face-to-face model that was placed on hold due to the Covid-19 restrictions

\*\*The Arts Program was postponed due to the extensive restrictions put into place as a result of the COVID-19 SIP orders of March and December 2020

## Evidence-Based Practices

In FY 2020-21, JPCF- and YOBG-funded programs were asked to provide the curricula or practices employed in their programs. ASR then evaluated the given programs to determine whether they were evidence-based or promising practices through a comprehensive search of evidence-based practice clearinghouses. Table 6 details the practices that Success Centers reported for their JPCF and YOBG-funded programs and the evidence base for each practice.

**Table 6. Evidence-Based Practices**

PRACTICE	CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION	RATING
<b>Growth Mindset</b>	Individual meetings with clients; Group meetings as part of Job Readiness and Life Skills training	Research-based practice based upon empirical evidence. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Job Readiness Training</b>	Group meetings	Not rated. Informed by employment and training-related programs that are research-based or promising.

<sup>2</sup> Mueller, C. M., & Dweck, C. S. (1998). Praise for intelligence can undermine children's motivation and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75(1), 33-52. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.75.1.33>.  
<http://psycnet.apa.org/record/1998-04530-003>.

PRACTICE	CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION	RATING
Life Skills Training	Group meetings	Not rated. Informed by skill-building training and curricula that are research-based or promising.
Case Management	Individual meetings with clients; Face-to-face meetings, phone calls, text messages. The curriculum is only implemented under the JPCF programming.	Not rated. Informed by tools that are research-based or promising.
Motivational Interviewing	Individual meetings with clients	An evidence-based practice, according to the Center for Evidence-Based Practices <sup>3</sup>

## Client Story

Staff at YOBG-funded programs provided a client story to help illustrate the effect of services on their clients. The following is the client stories shared by Success Centers for FY 2020-21 (Table 7).

Table 7. Client Story – YOBG-Funded

<b>Name of Client</b>	John Doe II
<b>Age and Gender</b>	18, male
<b>Reason for Referral</b>	John II was referred to Success Centers via the YSC.
<b>Client's Behavior, Affect, and Appearance When They First Started in the Program</b>	Upon meeting John II when he was released, the program manager assessed him to learn what employment skills he possessed as well as his employment goals. John II quickly stated that he wanted to work for an online retail company.
<b>Activity Engagement and Consistency</b>	During John II's motivational interviewing (MI) session, he agreed that the Job Readiness trainings helped him understand about job searches. He admitted that he would still need help with his resume, cover letter, and applying to the company via the online system.
<b>Client's Behavior, Affect, and Appearance Toward</b>	After applying for the job, John II missed his first interview because he did not check his email. He was given another interview date, and the program manager refreshed his interview skills during another MI session.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Evidence-Based Practices (2018). *Motivational Interviewing*. Case Western Reserve University. Retrieved from <https://www.centerforebp.case.edu/practices/mi>

<p><b>the End of the Program</b></p>	
<p><b>What the Client Learned as a Result of the Program</b></p>	<p>John II learned interview techniques, stating that his interview went well with the company. The following week, the company hired him.</p>
<p><b>What the Client is Doing Differently Now as a Result of the Program</b></p>	<p>John II mentioned that after his employment offer, he planned to return to school to enhance his resume.</p>
<p><b>The Value of the Program in the Client's Words</b></p>	<p>---</p>