



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**
Celebrating 30 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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April 10, 2015

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TO: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
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FROM: Carol Biondi, Vice Chair *Carol O. Biondi*
Sydney Kamlager, Vice Chair *Sydney Kamlager*
Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families

RE: LOS ANGELES COUNTY JUVENILE PROBATION
OUTCOMES STUDY

Advancement Project, supported by the W.M. Keck Foundation and The California Wellness Foundation, has recently released an important piece of research, developed through an unprecedented partnership of researchers, County Departments and advocates which examines pathways taken by a representative cohort of youth through our County's juvenile justice system. Having reviewed ***The Los Angeles County Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study*** report (enclosed) and discussed findings and recommendations with the study team, we urge your Board to accept the report and instruct the appropriate County Departments to implement its recommendations.

The research team led by Dr. Denise Herz, Professor and Director of the California State University Los Angeles School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics, worked closely with the Probation Department, including a number of Deputy Probation Officers who worked side by side with university-based researchers to collect detailed data from multiple data systems. The Departments of Children and Family Services, Mental Health and the Los Angeles County Office of Education were collaborative partners in this study, contributing data from their information systems to enhance understanding of multi-system service delivery. Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey, *John Milner Professor of Child Welfare in the School of Social Work at the University of Southern California*, convened a roundtable of research experts from Southern California universities, along with Research Directors from participating County Departments, to review study methods, identify relevant research, and provide guidance during the research process. Advancement Project and the Children's Defense Fund provided expertise and input on current systems, conditions and challenges. This partnership and the study design provide an important framework for continuing research to track the pathways of youth and families who may touch a number of County Departments before, during and after their encounters with Probation.

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The findings, which track a cohort of 500 youth before, during, and after involvement with Probation, provide a wealth of information on how County systems worked with youth who exited their study placement (suitable placement or camp) in 2011. In addition to tracking case flow and services provided from the system's perspective, the study also includes in-depth case studies that represent the perspectives of individual youth; these eight detailed case studies highlight patterns of trauma, risk and resiliency that should also help to guide preparation, training, and professional development of staff working in Probation, as well as their partners who work with these youth and families in aligned departments and in community-based agencies.

Because the study so clearly reveals gaps and shortcomings in the way that County Departments use and share data, we support the report's recommendation to establish a cross-departmental Juvenile Justice Data Systems Task Force to improve integration of youth data systems. In addition, we urge your Board to consider how to link efforts to improve system integration for delinquent youth with those that are moving forward through the Office of Child Protection to improve cross-departmental collaboration for dependent children and youth. In addition to coordinating and integrating the work of County Departments, additional attention to community-based systems of support for youth and their families are also essential to an effective multi-system approach to preventing delinquency and assuring effective transition and reentry. We believe that the collaborative nature of this unique University-County-Community research study provides a model for on-going work in this arena and respectfully urge your Board to build on the findings of the study to assure regular tracking of systems processes and youth outcomes, continuous quality improvement and cross-systems efforts to improve our County's Juvenile Justice System.

CB SK:jo

Enclosure

c: Acting Executive Officer
Interim Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Board of Supervisors' Children's Deputies