

2007-2008 JJCPA Local Action Plan Proposed Strategies and Recommendations

The Work Group is cognizant of and concerned about the data trends that indicate an increase in more serious and violent juvenile crime. Despite these trends, they are reluctant to eliminate any one of the three JJCPA funded strategies (Truancy, Assessment/Early Intervention, and Aftercare) that have proven effective over the past eight years and have become the core programming of our Local Action Plan. These three strategies effectively distribute JJCPA resources across the continuum of responses to juvenile crime from prevention to intervention and aftercare. Rather than eroding this foundation and thereby creating additional problems in the future for any one of these populations, the Work Group recommends sustaining these three strategies, with the program improvements outlined below.

Truancy Program Recommendations

- Allocate JJCPA funding to the District Attorney's Office and community based organizations at the current FY funding level and maintain 3.0 FTE Deputy Probation Officers dedicated to the program.
- Collect more data on program participants to better assess the program's success at each step of the process and improve efficiency of each step where possible.
- Assess students attending Truancy After School Meetings in the first quarter of the school year for criminal risk factors and prioritize them for intervention.
- Continue to increase linkages to CBO services at an earlier stage of the program.
- Engage all school superintendents and program stakeholders in periodic discussions of program improvement, including the feasibility of establishing additional sanctions for chronic truants (suspension of driver's license or work permits) and/or prosecution of parents at an earlier stage.

Assessment/Early Intervention Program Recommendations

- Increase the staffing for this program to 3.0 FTE Deputy Probation Officers to ensure a dedicated Early Intervention caseload in each region of the county.
- Change the program criteria to allow minors to remain on the Early Intervention caseload until their probation terminates or a *higher* level of service becomes available, i.e. MISC, Juvenile Drug Court. (Currently, minors are removed from the program if they violate their probation or commit a new offense.)
- As funding permits, conduct a mental health screening for all program participants to ensure participants receive the highest level of mental health care for which they qualify at the earliest possible time.

Aftercare Program Recommendations

- Allocate JJCPA funding to staff this program at its current level.
- Should additional funding become available, restore staffing to the program's original design in which three full-time Juvenile Institutions Officers were budgeted, one in each region of the county.
- Actively pursue funding for program improvement, including more resources for job search or job skills development, incentives for family participation, family group resources, and increased programming/aftercare linkages for youth in juvenile hall.

For JJCC Vote: The Workgroup's JJCPA 07-08 Spending Plan recommendation is that all three components (Truancy, Intake Assessment/Early Intervention and Aftercare) funded in current fiscal year continue into our 07-08 plan with the above changes being incorporated into the plan to the extent that they are able to be based on the funding available.

The Work Group has also made the following recommendations for additional strategies to address the increase in violent crimes that could be implemented without additional funding, or further developed to respond to future funding opportunities. (These additional recommendations are unrelated to our spending plan and do not require a vote at this time.)

- Using data collected through the Santa Barbara Asset Risk Assessment tool, establish a more detailed profile of minors entering the juvenile justice system and at different levels in the continuum, especially the risk level for violence, to better impact program design.
- Target the most intensive services toward youth who are likely to be the most violent offenders.
- Increase the level of supervision and case management of probation minors that have committed a violent crime or are identified as most likely to become violent offenders.
- Increase collaboration among law enforcement agencies, probation, and DJJ parole across the county to ensure proactive enforcement.
- Develop a county wide, evidenced based gang prevention strategy.

The following strategies were identified to maximize the resources available to accomplish the above recommendations.

- Maximize the use of existing services/programming and strengthen public-private partnerships. Explore innovative strategies for linking juvenile justice clients to existing community-based services and ensuring their participation in those services.
- Establish an interagency, public/private work group that meets regularly to explore funding opportunities and develop joint funding proposals in order to be able to respond to grant opportunities in a timely and coordinated manner.