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## Juvenile Delinquency Court Assessment: Probation Officer Report

This report covers information about the Juvenile Delinquency Court Assessment (JDCA) project and the 2007 CFCC Survey of Juvenile Probation Officers. Some key findings of the survey are related to collaboration and relationships with other justice partners, satisfaction with job functions, services and sanctions, and feelings about court users:

- Probation officers report having generally good working relationships with the court, the public defender's office, and the district attorney's office, although they are generally dissatisfied with how they are treated by each of those justice partners when in court.
- Probation officers report being generally satisfied with the amount of time they spend preparing reports and reviews, but they feel that paperwork and report writing take too much time away from interacting with youth.
- Probation officers agree that there is a lack of resources available to youth. Specifically, mental health and substance abuse services are lacking, as are services for girls and very young youth.
- There is a general feeling among probation officers that victims are not being treated fairly due to inadequate restitution collection and insufficient courthouse facilities.
- Probation officers and other justice partners agree that youth and parents do not understand the court process or what is said in court.
- Probation officers who work in juvenile delinquency generally enjoy working with youth, seeing positive changes in them, and providing services to them. They also enjoy working with the delinquency court and feel that the court cares about youth and treats people with respect.

In order to provide appropriate services for youth, parents, and victims, probation officers must work collaboratively with the court and other justice partners to develop resources that are available and effective. Although probation officers feel that both youth and parents should be held accountable for youth's actions and behaviors, they also recognize that youth and parents need to be able to understand what is being said in court as well as what their responsibilities are after they leave court.

Results from all assessment tools used in the JDCA are discussed in the *Juvenile Delinquency Court Assessment 2008*. A copy of the survey can be found in chapter 7 of this volume, Research Instruments.

### About the JDCA

The Judicial Council of California's Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, in conjunction with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC), conducted the JDCA. The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee convened a

working group composed of members of the advisory committee and experts drawn from state entities and the major participants in the juvenile delinquency court: judicial officers,<sup>1</sup> court staff, probation officers, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. Working group members were selected both for their subject matter expertise and to ensure representation from a cross section of the state in terms of geographic location and county size. The working group helped develop the study plan, guide the research, and interpret the findings. A list of working group members can be found at the beginning of volume 1 of the *Juvenile Delinquency Court Assessment 2008*.

The JDCA marks the first major assessment of California's delinquency courts. This assessment was designed to gather and provide information to help improve the juvenile delinquency system by making recommendations for changes in laws and rules of court; improvements in hearing management, judicial oversight, court facilities, and other aspects of court operations; caseload changes; and improvements in court services for all court users. The assessment covered the following general topics:

- Hearings and other court processes;
- Court facilities;
- Court collaboration with justice system partners;
- Service and sanction options for youth;
- Perspectives of court users, including youth, parents, victims, and community members;
- Education and training;
- Accountability; and
- Professional background and experience.

The primary mode of investigation was to communicate directly with justice partners and court users. The JDCA project conducted surveys with all juvenile judicial officers, all court administrators, a random sample of juvenile probation officers, all juvenile division prosecutors, and all court-appointed juvenile defense attorneys, including public defenders, alternate public defenders, and contract attorneys who were identified as handling cases in delinquency court.<sup>2</sup> The JDCA project chose six counties to study in depth to learn about issues facing delinquency courts: Los Angeles, Placer, Riverside, San Francisco, San Joaquin, and Siskiyou. These six counties were selected for their size and geography in order to study a range of California's local delinquency courts. Interviews were conducted in each of these study counties with the presiding judge of the juvenile court, the chief probation officer or the juvenile probation division designee, the managing or supervising juvenile deputy district attorney and public defender, and court administration staff such as the supervising juvenile court clerk, court executive officer, or manager. Focus groups were also conducted with justice partners such as probation officers, prosecutors, and defense attorneys, and with court users such as youth, parents, victims, and community members. An assessment of delinquency court facilities across the state was also conducted as part of the JDCA project. The ultimate goal of this project was to improve both the administration of justice and the lives of youth, victims, and other community members affected by the delinquency system.

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<sup>1</sup> "Judicial officers" refers to judges, commissioners, and referees.

<sup>2</sup> "Contract attorneys" refer to contract or panel conflict defenders only and does not include attorneys who contract as a public defender.

## Probation Officer Survey Method

The 2007 CFCC Survey of Juvenile Probation Officers was mailed to a random sample of 20 percent of the state's estimated 3,479 juvenile deputy probation officers (N=690) in March 2007. A detailed description of the survey method can be found in chapter 1 of the current volume, *Methodology Report*.

## Probation Officer Survey Findings

The survey of probation officers contained questions related to respondents' professional backgrounds and department information and asked about their collaboration and relationships with the courts and other justice partners, their experiences in their jobs, their satisfaction with the effectiveness of sanctions and services, and courtroom management. Respondents also answered open-ended questions about their experience working with the delinquency court. The sections that follow summarize the findings.

### **Background and Job Descriptions**

The respondents to the survey included supervision officers, investigation officers, intake officers, deputy probation officers (DPOs) at institutions or facilities, court officers, and placement officers. Close to 16 percent of probation officers reported having more than one role. Nearly 20 percent of probation officers reported that they do not supervise any cases. Of the remaining probation officers, almost half reported having a general caseload and more than half reported handling intensive or informal supervision caseloads (see tables 1 and 2).

Tables 3 through 5 show how long respondents have been working in probation, in juvenile assignments in their careers, and in their current juvenile assignment. Most probation officers have substantial experience working in probation. As of the survey date, nearly half of respondents have been doing probation work for between 5 and 10 years; the average number of years working in probation in any capacity is almost 10. The average length of time working in any juvenile assignment is about 8 years, and the average length of time in their current juvenile assignments is 3.5 years. About half of respondents have been in their current juvenile assignments for less than 2 years and about three-quarters of respondents have been in their current juvenile assignments for less than 5 years. Nearly a quarter of respondents (23 percent) have worked only in their current juvenile assignment since they began working for the probation department.

Many probation officers expressed an interest in staying in the juvenile division. Of those who have been working in probation for less than five years, nearly half (45.2 percent) reported that they would like to still be in the juvenile division in two years, and of the probation officers whose only experience in the probation department has been in the juvenile division, 52 percent reported that they would like to still be in the juvenile division in two years.

As table 6 demonstrates, nearly half of all respondents also reported that they would like to still be in the juvenile division in two years; an additional 30 percent would like to stay in the probation department but work in another division. Only 6 percent of respondents reported that they would like to be working outside of probation in two years. Table 7 shows that about a third of respondents expect to remain in the juvenile division and about 20 percent expect to request to leave the juvenile division. Only 13 percent of respondents reported that they expect to leave the probation department.

Many probation officers reported spending most of their time preparing court reports. Table 8 illustrates the tasks that each type of probation officer performs on a day-to-day basis, from preparing court reports to providing victim services. Investigation officers and court officers reported spending the most time preparing court reports. Not surprisingly, court officers attend court the most frequently; fewer than 20 percent of both intake and investigation officers attend court often or always, and only about 8 percent of supervision officers attend court often or always. Supervision officers (both in the field and at institutions) and intake officers reported spending more time than other types of officers coordinating services and programs. Nearly half of all responding probation officers reported that they never or rarely provide victim services; about 6 percent of both intake officers and investigation officers reported providing victim services often or nearly always.

### **Collaboration and Relationships**

Probation officers are generally satisfied with their relationships with other justice partners and recognize the importance of communication with them. As shown in table 9, probation officers reported having good relationships with justice partners such as the court, juvenile hall, camps and ranches, the public defender's office, and the district attorney's office, but poorer relationships with mental health and child welfare. Although 71 percent of probation officers reported having a good relationship with the court, 65 percent of probation officers are dissatisfied with the weight the court gives to probation's recommendations, and nearly three-quarters of probation officers are dissatisfied with how they are treated by the court when they are present in court (see table 10). Probation officers may feel dissatisfied with how they are treated by the court due to their dissatisfaction with the weight the court gives to their recommendations and to the perceived lack of collaboration and communication with the court. When asked to write in the top ways the court could help probation be more effective, 15 percent of probation officers indicated that they want the court to follow, support, and back up their recommendations and probation violations. One probation officer in a focus group felt, however, that probation shares responsibility with the court, stating,

A lot of how well the court does or does not do falls on probation. The court only knows what we tell them as far as what a kid has done. I've written reports before where the kid is violated and [I] kind of reminded the court of what they said before. It falls on probation to be sure the court is well informed with what has happened and what's going on in the kid's life.

Another probation officer noted that if the court met regularly with probation, "they [the court] would understand better how we go about our job, and if they understood better how we go about our job they might be more accepting of information that we're providing them." In a county where probation officers meet every day at a set time with other justice partners to share information about referrals, a focus group participant pointed out, "What's really valuable about that meeting is that often the children that we see may not have come to our attention, but they certainly have come to other disciplines' attention, so the police department may have a sheet that has service calls to that home that are dating back years, and we wouldn't have that information if they weren't at this meeting." Another probation officer stated that regular meetings with justice partners make probation officers feel as though "we were all on the same page and it made the whole system work smooth[ly]."

Almost three-quarters of probation officers are also dissatisfied with how they are treated by the prosecutor when in court, although almost 70 percent of probation officers reported having a good

relationship with the district attorney's office. In a focus group, probation officers discussed their relationship with the district attorney's office and the fact that their perspectives are based on different roles. One participant explained why their relationship can be contentious:

The district attorney's objectives a lot of times are totally contrary to what yours might be because they're concerned with prosecution, looking like they're tough on crime, and so they have their agenda versus what you have to do. In their hearts they may agree with us, but on the record their agenda differs.

Probation officers reported having a better relationship with prosecutors than with defense attorneys; however, they are generally dissatisfied with how they are treated in court by defense attorneys as well as by prosecutors. They are also generally dissatisfied with both prosecutors' and defense attorneys' handling of cases. One explanation for the dissatisfaction may be the relative feeling of being an outsider in the courtroom despite probation's and attorneys' mutual respect for each other. An additional explanation could be due to their having to justify their recommendations when called to court.

Probation officers may report better relationships with prosecutors because the district attorney's office is responsible for filing cases based on information submitted by probation. For example, the way a prosecutor decides to file a case may affect the probation officer's satisfaction. Probation officers seem to have more day-to-day contact with the district attorney's office than with the public defender's office, which some believe could explain why probation officers report having a better relationship with prosecutors than with public defenders.

### **Job Appraisal**

Probation officers, responding to questions related to their satisfaction with day-to-day, job-related issues, reported feeling that they need more training on how to testify and more time to write reports and meet with youth. Almost a quarter reported being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with various issues such as the time they spend preparing reviews, the number of hours they must wait for hearings, and the number of hearing continuances.<sup>3</sup> Table 11 shows that they are generally satisfied with the number of times they are required to attend court, although they are dissatisfied with how well they are trained to testify. This dissatisfaction with training could explain why probation officers are also dissatisfied with how they are treated in court by attorneys: if probation officers do not know what to expect when testifying in court, they may be surprised or upset by how attorneys question or challenge their recommendations in front of the judge. Probation officers are generally satisfied with the time they spend preparing court reports, although nearly half of probation officers who write reports indicated that the inability to interview parents is a challenge to writing reports in the time allotted and that report writing takes too much time away from other responsibilities (see table 12). Additional challenges to writing reports include the inability to obtain information from schools and mental health. As one probation officer pointed out, "Mental health services are available . . . the problem is that oftentimes we don't have access [to information] because of HIPAA constraints" (referring to the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). The challenge of obtaining information

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<sup>3</sup> The choice of "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" may have been interpreted in more than one way by survey respondents. It may have been used as a midpoint on the rating scale or it may have been selected by respondents who have no opinion on the question item.

from mental health could also explain why probation officers reported having poorer relationships with mental health than with other justice partners.

A third of probation officers specified that the court could help them be more effective by giving them more discretion and ability to detain and by creating more resources, services, and programs for youth. Nearly all of the responding probation officers (95.7 percent) reported that one of the top things they enjoy about their juvenile assignment is working and interacting with youth. Other things that probation officers reported enjoying about their juvenile assignment are seeing positive changes in youth and providing services to youth; however, they do not have enough time with youth (see tables 13 through 15). When asked to write the top things they would change about their juvenile assignments, 44 percent of probation officers indicated that they do not have enough time to spend with the youth. In focus groups, probation officers said that there is often not enough time to carefully assess youth and create case plans for them. One probation officer noted, “I sometimes am not pleased when I can’t be as thorough as I want to be given the circumstances and the time constraints.” Others agreed with one participant’s statement that “you get to a point where you’re not really doing any services; you’re just going there [to visit youth] to get your face-to-face and keep shoveling on.”

Probation officers are generally satisfied with the time it takes the prosecutor to file a petition. They are less satisfied with the general timeline of cases, however. Probation officers pointed out that it takes a long time to get a youth into court initially. According to one, “When the kid gets in 60 days or so after committing an offense, they’re arraigned and then they’re given another two months to come back for a pre-plea hearing, and then they [bench officers] usually continue the case after the initial pre-plea is received, so we’re talking six months down the line before a minor is actually dispo’d out on a case.” One probation officer talked about the need for speedier dispositions:

The time lag is just really detrimental all the way around. We have one judge who will say, “Let’s see how you do in school over the next few months, let’s see how you do on your drug testing.” And then by the time the kid starts probation he thinks he’s already completed.

Probation officers in focus groups noted that by the time the youth get to court, they have forgotten why they are there. The time between when a youth is cited or arrested and the first hearing may be long due to delays in processing out-of-custody citations, delays in scheduling a court date, and difficulty getting youth to report for an interview. Continuances and other hearing delays could create an additional time lag.

### **Services and Sanctions**

Probation officers responding to the survey assessed the quality, availability, and effectiveness of services and sanctions in their jurisdictions. Sanctions refer to a range of graduated restrictions or consequences targeted at specific offender profiles or behaviors and used for accountability and behavior modification purposes. The advantage of having a range of services and sanctions is that they give probation departments the tools and ability to respond appropriately to a diversity of offenses and offenders.

Generally, probation officers are satisfied with the range of service and sanction options for low-risk youth but dissatisfied with the range for intermediate- and high-risk youth. Table 16 shows that the higher the risk of the youth, the more dissatisfied probation officers are with the services and sanctions

available to them. They are slightly more satisfied with sanctions than with services. Probation officers are generally satisfied with the effectiveness of sanction options, including community service, home on probation, and electronic monitoring (see table 17). One exception is their satisfaction with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Only a third of respondents reported being satisfied with the effectiveness of DJJ, and nearly a quarter of probation officers responded that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Another quarter of probation officers responded that they did not know. This could be because few youth are being sent to DJJ<sup>4</sup> in each of the last several years; the total number of youth sent has equaled approximately 1 percent of juvenile arrests for that year.<sup>5</sup> Also, if a youth does go to DJJ, the probation officer is unlikely to know how effective it was since he or she is unlikely to maintain contact with the youth.

A common theme in focus groups and open-ended questions was a need for the court to follow through with any sanction warning that is given to youth who do not follow their probation conditions. As one probation officer suggested, “Stay true to your orders. If [the judge says] next time I see you in front of me this is what’s going to happen, then make it happen.” By not following through, they pointed out, the court is damaging the credibility of the probation officers. One focus group participant stated, “When we’re out there supervising and we say, ‘Remember the judge said if you don’t go to school this is what’s going to happen’ and then [nothing happens], they’re like, ‘See, my PO don’t know what she’s talking about.’” In a focus group conducted with parents, one parent of a youth in the delinquency system noted, “According to the last recommendation of the probation officer, if the young man was to violate again he would be sent to Youth Authority, and then [he] violated a dozen times afterwards and he was never sent to Youth Authority.”<sup>6</sup>

The need for consistency is also a common theme. Probation officers noted that judges should be consistent in how they sanction youth with similar petitions. One stated that “you have two kids who basically commit the same offense and they appear before the judge and one is given a 654 [6 months of informal probation] and the other one is put on formal probation. And that is disturbing because I’ve seen this happen quite frequently with African-American kids where they get the harsher [sanction].” On the other hand, probation officers also pointed out in focus groups that court orders should be individualized for the particular youth. According to one participant, “The bench and probation and the offender would be better served by individualizing what the kid needs a lot more than it is now instead of blanket conditions.”

Probation officers are dissatisfied with the effectiveness of service options, including anger management programs, parent education, substance abuse programs, and mental health services (see table 18). Overall, there is also a lack of residential drug treatment services available to youth. One probation officer noted, “Unless you’re 18, there’s no services available to you.” Services for very young youth seem to be lacking as well. A focus group participant noted, “They’re [the programs] geared towards 15 and older normally. We have a lot of youth that we’re working for or with that are much younger than that. So there’s a lot of agencies that haven’t been or don’t address that population.” Of the services that are available in facilities, probation officers noted that the

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<sup>4</sup> Following the passage of Sen. Bill 81 (Budget Committee) (Stats. 2007, ch.175), commitments to DJJ are limited to offenders whose most recent sustained petition was for a Welf. & Inst. Code § 707(b) offense or a specified sexual offense.

<sup>5</sup> Cal. Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center, *Juvenile Justice in California*, (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> California Youth Authority was renamed the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice, in 2006, but it is still commonly referred to by its former name.

delinquency court would be best served if judges visited the facilities personally. “It goes a long way in building relationships,” one said. Another pointed out, “I don’t understand why you wouldn’t want to see . . . you’re ordering somebody to go 4,000 miles away and you have no clue what it’s about.”

Additionally, access to mental health services is lacking in many counties, and the quality of the services that are available is also a concern among some probation officers. Focus group participants agreed with one person’s statement that “often it’s very difficult to find really good counseling for the kids.” Many probation officers indicated that it is also difficult to find mental health services for those who commit sexually violent crimes. One probation officer noted that it is difficult to transport youth to services as well: “Oftentimes we’re handicapped by the availability of transportation.” The exception to the general dissatisfaction with service options is drug testing, with which probation officers were generally satisfied.

Probation officers are also dissatisfied with the availability of options for girls. A statewide probation services report confirmed that girls’ programs are the least frequently available programs in the state: less than 40 percent of all counties offered girl-specific programs.<sup>7</sup> In interviews and focus groups, probation officers noted the lack of space in camps, the juvenile hall, and other placements for girls. Without a full continuum of options available for girls, some courts are forced to order girls to placement more quickly than they would boys because there is no local camp or ranch for them.

Table 19 shows that about a third of responding probation officers are also dissatisfied with restitution collection, a point that was emphasized in the focus groups. Generally, probation officers reported in focus groups that they feel they do a poor job of dealing with victims. Table 20, in fact, shows that 30 percent of responding probation officers do not work with victims at all, and, of those who do work with victims, fewer than one-third of responding probation officers explain the process of collecting restitution to victims. One probation officer reported that “a lot of times the victims are put in the backseat to the kid” and that “we do not actively collect [restitution] for the victims.” Methods of collecting restitution vary by county: in some counties the probation department is responsible for collecting and in others the county itself is responsible for collecting through the Department of Revenue and Recovery. Courts also vary in whether they will dismiss a case before restitution is paid. Some courts will dismiss a case and direct the victim to file a civil judgment against the youth to collect restitution. Other courts will keep the youth on probation until the restitution is paid.<sup>8</sup> Twenty percent of judicial officers reported that restitution payment is a condition for dismissal.

Probation officers agreed that obtaining even a small amount of restitution is very difficult for various reasons. One probation officer noted, “These are the same kids that have parents who are on probation, have their own fines to deal with, so are they going to pay? Probably not.” Probation officers also indicated in focus groups that many of the youth with whom they work have parents on fixed incomes. In focus groups, victims stated that probation can’t or won’t enforce restitution orders. According to one victim, “Every time I deal with the probation department it’s like no one knows nothing, they can’t enforce anything, and they have no answers for you.” Probation’s involvement with victim services should be improved. Probation officers also suggested calling cases in which a victim is present first rather than forcing victims to wait, sometimes in the same hallway as the youth and their families.

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<sup>7</sup> Admin. Office of the Courts, Center for Families, Children & the Courts, *California Probation Services Survey* (2006); available at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdf/files/PSTFSurvey2006.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdf/files/PSTFSurvey2006.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Welf. & Inst. Code § 656.2 gives victims the right to an action for civil damages against the minor and his or her parents.

More than 35 counties have a juvenile drug court, and the majority of probation officers are satisfied with the effectiveness of these drug courts (see table 21).<sup>9</sup> One concern expressed in focus groups and interviews, however, was that the wrong youth may be referred to drug court. Probation officers indicated that drug court should be used only for those youth who will be best served by the court based on evaluations of drug courts. One probation officer pointed out, “Just because he said they smoked marijuana doesn’t necessarily mean you got to do drug education or drug prevention or put him in a drug program. What you want to focus on is the behavior that keeps bringing them back to you.”

Probation officers also identified some of the specific reentry or aftercare services that they provide to youth. Substance abuse referrals are the most common service provided, followed by anger management, family counseling, and mental health referrals. Tables 22 and 23 illustrate that the majority of responding probation officers, regardless of job type, refer youth to these four services, with substance abuse referrals being the most common. Half of the intake officers reported providing anger management referrals, and more than half reported providing referrals to family counseling, mental health services, and substance abuse services. Two-thirds of placement officers provide anger management and family counseling referrals, and about three-quarters of placement officers provide mental health services and substance abuse referrals. Almost all placement officers provide independent living skills referrals, and nearly three-quarters of supervision officers provide anger management, family counseling, and mental health services referrals. Even with all of these referrals, there are still gaps in service needs. There are few transition programs for placement youth or youth who have been in foster care. According to one probation officer,

When they [youth] transition over to juvenile wardship, there’s no real transition program for these kids when they come back [wardship is dismissed], especially if they’re almost 18 or are 18. Some I have are mental health cases and they were just not offered any kind of services. And you have kids who’ve been totally dependent, they don’t have families, and I see that there’s nothing in the current system that really addresses that problem. And it’s really sad because they turn 18, we cut them loose, DHS says that they’re not entitled to our services anymore because they’re 18, and they don’t have anybody to fall back on.

A concern among probation officers is the issue of youth “aging out” of the system without receiving adequate services. As one probation officer noted, “Even those of us who came from intact families—at 18 you’re still not ready to take care of yourself.”

Probation officers in approximately a third of the counties in the state use assessments to determine youth’s risk to the community.<sup>10</sup> Of those probation officers who do use assessments, satisfaction levels with those assessments are almost evenly distributed across satisfied, neutral, and dissatisfied

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<sup>9</sup> In addition to drug courts, probation officers rated their satisfaction levels with mental health courts; truancy courts; and peer, teen, or youth courts. There were too few respondents to analyze satisfaction with courts other than drug court, however.

<sup>10</sup> K. Hennigan, K. Kolnick, J. Poplawski, A. Andrews, N. Ball, C. Cheng, and J. Payne, *Juvenile Justice Data Project, Phase I: Survey of Interventions and Programs* (2007); available at [http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports\\_Research/docs/JJDPsurveyFinalReport.pdf](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/docs/JJDPsurveyFinalReport.pdf).

(see table 24). Although many probation officers agreed that it is good practice to use standardized assessments, counties vary in whether and how they use assessments.

### **Court Assessment**

Probation officers responded to questions concerning how they feel about working with the delinquency court. They were split in their feelings about continuances and other hearing delays. Forty-five percent indicated that continuances and other hearing delays are not a problem or a minor problem and almost 40 percent reported that they are a moderate or major problem. Respondents reported that the absence of youth and parents are top causes of delays in uncontested matters (see tables 25 and 26). What the researchers cannot determine is whether hearing delays are a problem for some because they believe that they happen too often or because they do not happen often enough to complete reports; table 26 shows that 40 percent of probation officers feel that the top cause of hearing delays in uncontested matters is reports, people, or other information not being available. Additional causes of hearing delays in uncontested matters, according to probation officers, are hearings needing more than the allocated time and the defense attorney not being ready.

When asked about communication with youth and parents, probation officers indicated that some information is conveyed well (see tables 27 and 28). Almost three-quarters of probation officers reported that details about youth's responsibilities while on probation are conveyed well to youth, and two-thirds of probation officers feel that the possible outcomes are conveyed well to youth. Almost two-thirds reported that the same information that is conveyed well to youth is also conveyed well to parents, and more than half of probation officers indicated that parents' responsibilities are also conveyed well to the parents. Despite this, nearly everyone in interviews and focus groups agreed that neither youth nor parents understand what happens in court. One probation officer empathized:

I imagine under similar circumstances I would have difficulty understanding because my adrenaline level would be high. I'd be all freaked out about what my future was going to be and if I was going to go to DJJ or all these horror stories you hear. I think it's just a difficult situation for a kid to expect them to understand what's totally alien to their normal life.

Probation officers feel that some types of information are not communicated well to youth or parents. Fewer than 20 percent of probation officers reported that information on record sealing is conveyed well to youth or parents. Fewer than half of probation officers indicated that financial obligations are conveyed well to youth or parents, which may contribute to the overall dissatisfaction with restitution collection services among probation officers, attorneys, and victims. Youth and parents also disagreed that information is conveyed to them well. Youth noted that they had signed papers and agreed to things without understanding, and said that people used confusing words and referenced codes that they did not understand, which sounded like a foreign language. One parent said that "there seemed to be a real lack of any information at all, and no one coming out and saying this is where he is, this is what's going to happen next." Both youth and parents also pointed out that they are not comfortable asking questions, even if questions are solicited. They and probation officers agreed with one participant's suggestion that the court should "educate parents to navigate through the court system, making the language simpler, allowing more communication between the two." In a focus group, one probation officer suggested "having some type of orientation for parents whose kids are involved with our system when they first come here . . . it could be like a liaison for parents, and [that person] meets

with them and explains to them about the court process.” Other probation officers and victims agreed that it would be nice to have one go-to person. A recommendation is to have a single point of contact available to parents and victims who would be able to access information about cases and answer questions about hearings and the court process.

The survey also asked probation officers to write in the top strengths of the delinquency court and the court’s top needs for improvement (see tables 29 and 30). These open-ended questions revealed that, according to probation officers, the court’s strengths include holding youth accountable, focusing on rehabilitation, and treating people with respect. Interestingly, more than half of the probation officers wrote that one of the court’s top strengths is that it listens to probation and follows its recommendations. Alternatively, almost half of probation officers indicated that, to improve, the court needs to follow probation’s recommendations more often than it currently does. One probation officer noted,

Some courts are very pro-probation and have a lot of faith in probation recommendations. Other courts, it appears, tend to supervise a little more from the bench and rely a little bit more on what they see and what they hear than what probation is recommending.

When indicating ways the court could improve, nearly 90 percent of probation officers also wrote that the court needs to have more respect for and understanding of probation officers, and 60 percent of probation officers wrote that the court needs to hold parents more accountable.

The idea of holding parents accountable was mirrored in focus groups, in which probation officers agreed with one statement that “we do a lot of work with the kids and the parent is just left untouched.” Another participant noted, “Most kids on juvenile probation probably have got some parents with some issues” and “Their parents are enabling them.”

Many focus group participants also talked about the delinquency system’s goal as being to serve the best interest of the child, stating that the current process is not meeting that goal. One probation officer pointed out that in an ideal world the system would not be adversarial:

It wouldn’t be a matter of whether the DA or the public defender gets a win or whatever. There would be no point, no tracking, just focused on what’s best for this kid and where does he make the most progress.

Other probation officers agreed. According to one, “We’re all just fighting against each other sometimes.” Victims also noted that the purpose of the delinquency system seems to be merely to process cases. One victim pointed out that he didn’t think the system serves the delinquency court the way it was meant to. Parents of youth in the delinquency system agreed, with one stating,

I think the juvenile system should be to protect the child, should be a system where the DAs and the public defenders are willing to sit down together and figure out what is best for the particular child, how can this child succeed in the future . . . And right now the way it is it’s all a money-making business, it’s all numbers, it’s all a game, and they’re playing with the lives of our children, and that is our most precious thing in life.

## Conclusion

The 2007 CFCC Survey of Juvenile Probation Officers revealed information related to juvenile probation officers' job descriptions, collaboration with the court and other justice partners, and job appraisal. Also relayed were probation officers' opinions about services and sanctions and experiences working with the delinquency court, its justice partners, and youth and their parents.

Approximately 80 percent of probation officers have some type of supervision caseload, and about 11 percent often or always attend court. Many reported being interested in staying in the juvenile division. Since it is important for youth, families, and victims to have a consistent person to contact who is knowledgeable about their case, probation departments should encourage, retain, and promote staff who are committed to working in the juvenile division. By encouraging probation officers who do want to stay in the juvenile division, probation departments can reinforce the message that delinquency is an important and meaningful assignment.

Probation officers reported having generally good working relationships with the court, the public defender's office, and the district attorney's office, although they noted a lack of collaboration and communication with the court. Findings from the surveys of probation officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judicial officers suggest that when justice partners operate in silos with little communication among each other, they do not benefit their county's youth as much as when communication and collaboration are considered important in the county. The courts, probation officers, and other justice partners should collaborate to develop methods for improving the delivery of services to youth. In addition, probation officers should receive adequate training in how to testify in court.

Report writing seems to be a large part of probation officers' responsibilities. Probation officers reported being generally satisfied with the amount of time they spend preparing reports and reviews, but they feel that paperwork and report writing take too much time away from interacting with youth. They also feel that there is not enough time to gather the necessary information for reports in the time allotted. Probation officers reported that interviewing parents and obtaining information from schools, court-ordered evaluations, and mental health are also challenges to writing reports in the time allotted. Without an adequate amount of time to spend with youth and gather information for reports, the benefit of probation officers to youth could be reduced.

Probation officers agreed that there is a need for more resources available to youth. Specifically, mental health services are lacking, as are substance abuse services and services for girls and very young youth. These service gaps can hinder rehabilitation and increase the chances of recidivism. By not adequately addressing the root causes of delinquent behavior, the delinquency court system gives youth few opportunities to change. Probation departments should seek out accessible and effective services, paying close attention to any service gaps. In addition, the courts and probation should engage schools, mental health, and other community systems to facilitate rehabilitation.

Probation officers, as well as attorneys and court users, feel that both youth and parents should be held accountable for youth's actions and behaviors, and that restitution collection should be better enforced than it is presently. There is a general feeling in juvenile probation that victims are not being treated fairly due to inadequate restitution collection, insufficient courthouse facilities, and a lack of a knowledgeable point person from whom to obtain information. When victims perceive the system as not working effectively, they give up on it and the youth it serves. The courts should support victims

by ordering restitution in a specific amount, making restitution payment a priority, and encouraging other methods of victim restoration when appropriate. In addition, for their safety, victims should have a separate waiting room in courthouses.

Probation officers and other justice partners agreed that youth and parents do not understand the court process or what is said in court. Youth and parents reported not understanding all of the numbers used (such as Welfare and Institutions Code sections), and youth reported signing documents without understanding them. The result of this confusion among court users is noncompliance with court orders, including restitution orders. Probation officers do feel that some information is conveyed well to youth and parents, such as youth's responsibilities while on probation and possible outcomes, but that other information, such as information on financial obligations and record sealing, is not conveyed well. When youth fail to have their records sealed, they often are not eligible for certain jobs or military service when they are older. Judicial officers, attorneys, and probation officers should take the time necessary to help youth, parents, and victims understand the court process, the outcomes of hearings, and the court's orders.

Probation officers who work in juvenile delinquency generally enjoy working with youth, seeing positive changes in them, and providing services to them. They also enjoy working with the delinquency court and feel that the court cares about youth and treats people with respect. For the court to improve, probation officers feel that it needs to have a better understanding of probation's job and a greater respect for probation's recommendations than it currently has. Judicial officers, attorneys, and probation should be adequately trained in the delinquency court and the importance of all of its players.

## Tables

<b>Table 1</b> <b>Respondents to Probation Survey by Current Role (N=351)</b>		
	Count	Percent
Supervision field officer	198	56.4
Investigation officer	56	16.0
Intake officer	54	15.4
Deputy probation officer at institution	47	13.4
Court officer	42	12.0
Placement officer	37	10.5
Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents were asked to check all that applied.		

<b>Table 2</b> <b>Types of Caseloads Handled</b> <b>as Reported by Probation Officers (N=287)</b>		
	Count	Percent
General caseload	133	46.3
Intensive supervision	84	29.3
Informal supervision	78	27.2
Gangs	63	22.0
Other caseload type	61	21.3
Placement	50	17.4
Sex offenders	44	15.3
Family preservation	26	9.1
Drug court	17	5.9
Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents were asked to check all that applied.		

<b>Table 3</b> <b>Time Spent Working in Probation in Any Capacity (N=351)</b>		
	Count	Percent
Less than 1 year	15	4.3
1 to 2.9 years	31	8.8
3 to 5.9 years	63	17.9
6 to 10.9 years	129	36.8
11 to 15.9 years	46	13.1
16 to 20.9 years	40	11.4
More than 20 years	27	7.7
Total	351	100%
Mean = 9.7 years; median = 8 years; standard deviation = 6.9 years		

**Table 4**  
**Time Spent Working in Juvenile Assignments Throughout Career in Probation**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=328)**

	Count	Percent
Less than 1 year	19	5.8
1 to 2.9 years	40	12.2
3 to 5.9 years	73	22.3
6 to 10.9 years	116	35.4
11 to 15.9 years	41	12.5
16 to 20.9 years	26	7.9
More than 20 years	13	4.0
Total	328	100%

Mean = 8.3 years; median = 6.8 years; standard deviation = 6.5 years

**Table 5**  
**Time Spent Working in Current Juvenile Assignment**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=341)**

	Count	Percent
Less than 1 year	79	23.2
1 to 2.9 years	124	36.4
3 to 5.9 years	73	21.4
6 to 10.9 years	47	13.8
11 to 15.9 years	9	2.6
16 to 20.9 years	7	2.1
More than 20 years	2	0.6
Total	341	100%

Mean = 3.6 years; median = 2.0 years; standard deviation = 4.0 years

**Table 6**  
**Where Juvenile Probation Officers Would Like to Be Working in Two**  
**Years (N=352)**

	Count	Percent
In the juvenile division	166	47.2
In another division of probation	102	29.0
Outside of probation	20	5.7
Out of the workforce (retired)	11	3.1
Other	32	9.1
Do not know	21	6.0
Total	352	100%

**Table 7**  
**Circumstances Under Which Probation Officers Expect to Leave the**  
**Juvenile Division (N=352)**

	Count	Percent
Remain in juvenile	122	34.7
Reassigned	86	24.4
Request to leave juvenile	67	19.0
Will leave probation	45	12.8
Do not know	32	9.1
Total	352	100%

**Table 8**  
**Time Spent Performing Tasks by Job Type**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=81–345)**

		Intake Officer	Investigation Officer	Placement Officer	Court Officer	Supervision / Field Officer	DPO at Institution
Preparing court reports (N=345)	<i>Never, rarely</i>	13.0	3.6	8.6	26.8	8.6	13.0
	<i>Occasionally</i>	24.1	16.4	20.0	14.6	25.4	32.6
	<i>Sometimes</i>	18.5	18.2	34.3	12.2	25.9	23.9
	<i>Often</i>	31.5	29.1	34.3	24.4	34.0	23.9
	<i>Nearly always</i>	13.0	32.7	2.9	22.0	6.1	6.5
Preparing review reports (N=330)	<i>Never, rarely</i>	52.9	29.4	8.3	42.1	18.0	38.6
	<i>Occasionally</i>	15.7	25.5	22.2	13.2	29.6	27.3
	<i>Sometimes</i>	13.7	17.6	30.6	10.5	23.3	15.9
	<i>Often</i>	17.6	25.5	36.1	31.6	22.8	13.6
	<i>Nearly always</i>	0.0	2.0	2.8	2.6	6.3	4.5
Supervising in community (N=330)	<i>Never, rarely</i>	44.9	52.9	22.9	69.4	6.7	67.4
	<i>Occasionally</i>	22.4	17.6	22.9	8.3	17.4	11.6
	<i>Sometimes</i>	14.3	9.8	22.9	2.8	16.4	2.3
	<i>Often</i>	4.1	11.8	14.3	5.6	29.7	14.0
	<i>Nearly always</i>	14.3	7.8	17.1	13.9	29.7	4.7
Supervising in camps and ranches (N=319)	<i>Never, rarely</i>	87.2	87.5	71.4	94.4	87.8	30.4
	<i>Occasionally</i>	8.5	10.4	20.0	5.6	6.6	4.3
	<i>Sometimes</i>	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	1.1	4.3
	<i>Often</i>	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	15.2
	<i>Nearly always</i>	2.1	2.1	5.7	0.0	2.2	45.7
Supervising in placement (N=314)	<i>Never, rarely</i>	80.4	80.9	5.6	83.3	82.2	90.7
	<i>Occasionally</i>	15.2	12.8	19.4	11.1	11.7	2.3
	<i>Sometimes</i>	2.2	2.1	5.6	2.8	2.2	0.0
	<i>Often</i>	2.2	2.1	36.1	2.8	1.1	0.0
	<i>Nearly always</i>	0.0	2.1	33.3	0.0	2.8	7.0
Attending court (N=333)	<i>Never, rarely</i>	35.4	31.4	33.3	10.3	41.5	53.3
	<i>Occasionally</i>	41.7	33.3	47.2	17.9	40.4	35.6
	<i>Sometimes</i>	6.3	17.6	11.1	15.4	10.4	8.9
	<i>Often</i>	12.5	13.7	8.3	23.1	5.7	2.2
	<i>Nearly always</i>	4.2	3.9	0.0	33.3	2.1	0.0
Coordinating services and programs (N=326)	<i>Never, rarely</i>	40.4	43.8	13.5	47.2	20.9	22.7
	<i>Occasionally</i>	25.5	25.0	35.1	22.2	28.9	25.0
	<i>Sometimes</i>	6.4	12.5	27.0	11.1	20.3	22.7
	<i>Often</i>	12.8	12.5	16.2	11.1	19.8	13.6
	<i>Nearly always</i>	14.9	6.3	8.1	8.3	10.2	15.9
Providing victim services (N=324)	<i>Never, rarely</i>	47.1	30.6	54.3	41.7	50.3	76.7
	<i>Occasionally</i>	39.2	44.9	37.1	38.9	33.7	16.3
	<i>Sometimes</i>	7.8	18.4	8.6	16.7	11.2	7.0
	<i>Often</i>	3.9	6.1	0.0	2.8	3.2	0.0
	<i>Nearly always</i>	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0
Other (N=81)	<i>Never, rarely</i>	10.5	22.2	20.0	40.0	14.3	41.7
	<i>Occasionally</i>	26.3	33.3	20.0	20.0	31.0	0.0
	<i>Sometimes</i>	21.1	0.0	20.0	30.0	23.8	16.7
	<i>Often</i>	26.3	22.2	0.0	10.0	16.7	0.0
	<i>Nearly always</i>	15.8	22.2	40.0	0.0	14.3	41.7

**Table 9**  
**Quality of Working Relationship With Justice Partners**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=343–351)**

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know or N/A	Total
The court	27.0	44.0	20.1	4.9	1.7	2.3	100%
Juvenile hall	40.9	43.7	11.1	2.9	0.6	0.9	100%
Camps and ranches	24.6	34.3	12.3	1.7	0.3	26.9	100%
Public defender's office	13.2	36.2	30.5	6.0	4.9	9.2	100%
Alternate public defender's office	7.0	23.5	27.8	6.4	4.3	31.0	100%
Contract or panel attorneys	8.2	25.9	24.5	5.2	2.6	33.5	100%
District attorney's office	25.2	44.4	16.3	4.3	1.7	8.0	100%
Mental health	13.4	36.5	29.1	6.0	4.0	11.1	100%
Child welfare	8.9	29.1	31.7	8.0	4.6	17.7	100%

**Table 10**  
**Satisfaction With Various Issues When in Court**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=280)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know or N/A	Total
Weight given by court to probation's recommendations	3.9	10.4	19.6	47.9	17.1	1.1	100%
Prosecutors' handling of cases	2.5	7.5	28.6	46.8	10.4	4.3	100%
Defense attorneys' handling of cases	2.9	14.3	37.5	35.0	5.7	4.6	100%
How you are treated by court	2.9	5.4	18.6	46.1	25.4	1.8	100%
How you are treated by prosecutor	1.1	3.9	20.7	49.3	22.1	2.9	100%
How you are treated by defense attorneys	3.6	7.5	30.0	40.0	15.4	3.6	100%

**Table 11**  
**Satisfaction With Various Job-Related Issues**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=343–351)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Available	Total
Time spent preparing court reports	8.0	34.0	26.3	16.0	5.7	10.0	100%
Time spent preparing parte reviews	6.9	24.6	23.8	12.3	4.6	27.8	100%
Time spent preparing mandated reviews	4.0	19.9	21.4	12.8	4.8	37.0	100%
Number of times required to attend court	14.6	34.4	26.2	4.1	2.9	17.8	100%
How well trained to testify	7.4	24.9	21.4	21.4	16.3	8.6	100%
Time it takes DA to file petition	9.4	32.5	23.9	17.7	4.6	12.0	100%
Number of hours waiting for court hearings	6.3	16.2	26.2	16.2	8.5	26.5	100%
Number of continuances	3.1	19.1	33.0	16.5	9.1	19.1	100%

**Table 12**  
**Work-Related Challenges to Writing Reports or Reviews in the Time Allotted**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=295)**

	Count	Percent
Cannot interview parents	151	51.2
Report writing takes too much time from other responsibilities	149	50.5
Cannot obtain information from school	142	48.1
Cannot obtain court-ordered evaluations	95	32.2
Cannot obtain information from mental health	94	31.9
Cannot interview youth in time	85	28.8
Not notified by court in time	69	23.4
Cannot obtain information from placements	49	16.6
Other challenge	49	16.6
Cannot obtain risk or needs assessment	22	7.5

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents were asked to check all that applied.

**Table 13****Top Things the Court Could Do to Help Probation Officers Be More Effective (N=230)**

	Percent
Give probation officers more discretion/ability to detain	33.4
Create more resources/programs/services for youth	24.5
Hold youth accountable (i.e., enforce things)	21.1
Be clear with youth and parents regarding terms and conditions of probation	21.1
Better communication between the court and POs	20.7
Hold parents accountable	18.8
Follow, support, trust, back up probation officers' recommendations and violations	15.1
Allow more time for reports	14.3
Fewer review hearings	10.9
Only order reports that are necessary (less paperwork)	10.0
Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents wrote in responses.	

**Table 14****Top Things Probation Officers Enjoy About Their Juvenile Assignment (N=286)**

	Percent
Working/Interacting with youth	95.7
Seeing positive changes in youth	56.7
Working with other court stakeholders	52.1
Facilitating rehabilitation/Providing services	44.8
Flexibility with schedule	28.3
Friendly coworkers	16.1
Working on prevention	14.0
Working in the field	13.9
Flexibility/Discretion with work-related choices	9.6
Gathering information for court/Preparing reports	9.4
Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents wrote in responses.	

**Table 15****Top Things Probation Officers Would Change About Their Juvenile Assignment (N=286)**

	Percent
Amount of paperwork/Report writing	63.5
Not enough time with youth	44.0
Caseload size/not enough probation officers	42.9
Training available	24.6
Availability of sanctions and services	20.8
Lack of resources for probation officers	18.9
Inability to violate/Need backing of court for violation of probation	18.5
Lack of administrative support/micro or mismanagement	15.7
Need a specific person to do specific things	14.9
Relationships/collaboration with other stakeholders	14.2
Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents wrote in responses.	

**Table 16**  
**Satisfaction With Sanction and Service Options**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=349–351)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know or N/A	Total
Sanctions for low-risk youth	10.5	36.8	20.8	16.8	8.3	6.8	100%
Sanctions for intermediate-risk youth	5.7	33.7	23.7	22.3	10.0	4.6	100%
Sanctions for high-risk youth	6.3	26.3	15.4	30.6	18.0	3.4	100%
Services for low-risk youth	7.4	33.2	20.1	22.1	10.0	7.2	100%
Services for intermediate-risk youth	4.6	28.9	20.9	30.7	8.9	6.0	100%
Services for high-risk youth	4.0	28.7	16.6	30.9	14.9	4.9	100%

**Table 17**  
**Satisfaction With the Effectiveness of Sanction Options**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=345–351)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know or N/A	Total
Counsel and dismiss	8.4	36.2	27.2	13.0	7.0	8.1	100%
Informal supervision	8.0	35.3	23.6	15.4	7.7	10.0	100%
Community service	9.8	39.4	27.6	15.5	4.0	3.7	100%
Home on probation	9.1	42.0	29.7	10.3	3.4	5.4	100%
Electronic monitoring	14.1	38.8	18.4	8.6	5.5	14.7	100%
Placement	9.8	36.2	21.6	14.9	6.0	11.5	100%
Camps/ranches	11.4	35.3	19.7	14.0	2.3	17.4	100%
DJJ	7.5	24.8	24.2	13.8	5.5	24.2	100%

**Table 18**  
**Satisfaction With the Effectiveness of Services**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=346–350)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know or N/A	Total
Outpatient substance abuse programs	3.4	28.2	21.6	23.3	15.2	8.3	100%
Drug testing	18.1	47.0	18.6	9.2	2.6	4.6	100%
Mental health services	5.5	29.6	25.6	24.7	10.3	4.3	100%
Independent living programs	4.0	21.3	24.7	21.0	7.2	21.8	100%
Anger management programs	3.7	28.9	27.1	27.4	7.7	5.1	100%
After-school programs	3.7	13.4	21.4	32.9	15.7	12.9	100%
Parent education	4.6	17.2	27.3	31.9	12.1	6.9	100%
Wraparound	9.4	26.6	27.1	12.9	4.0	20.0	100%
Community service centers	3.5	20.2	27.2	24.9	9.2	15.0	100%

**Table 19**  
**Satisfaction With the Effectiveness of Restitution Collection**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=352)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know or N/A	Total
	3.7	19.0	26.7	24.1	9.7	16.8	100%

**Table 20**  
**Capacity in Which Probation Officers Work With Victims (N=340)**

	Count	Percent
I recommend restitution to the court	188	55.3
I explain the process of collecting restitution	168	49.4
I explain the court process to victims	155	45.6
I notice victims of hearings	136	40.0
I refer victims to services	131	38.5
Not applicable—I do not work with victims	102	30.0
Other	21	6.2
I organize offender work repayment programs	20	5.9

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents were asked to check all that applied.

**Table 21**  
**Satisfaction With the Effectiveness of Drug Court**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=350)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know or N/A	Total
	12.9	26.9	17.1	10.3	4.0	28.9	100%

**Table 22**  
**Types of Reentry or Aftercare Services Provided to Juveniles**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=350)**

	Count	Percent
Substance abuse referral	237	67.7
Anger management referral	219	62.6
Family counseling referral	218	62.3
Mental health services referral	213	60.9
School enrollment assistance	179	51.1
Parent education referral	176	50.3
Independent living skills referral	126	36.0
Record sealing assistance	125	35.7
Job training referral	120	34.3
Mentoring referral	99	28.3
Housing referral	50	14.3
Other service	16	4.6
Aftercare not applicable to my job	88	25.1
Do not provide reentry or aftercare services	4	1.1
Did not check any	4	1.1

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents were asked to check all that applied.

**Table 23**  
**Types of Reentry or Aftercare Service Provided by Job Type**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=345)**

	Intake Officer	Investigation Officer	Placement Officer	Court Officer	Supervision Field Officer	DPO at Institution	Total
Aftercare not applicable to my job	38.9	37.5	8.1	35.7	18.0	22.2	25.5
None	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.2
Anger management referral	50.0	55.4	64.9	61.9	72.2	64.4	63.2
Family counseling referral	53.7	53.6	67.6	61.9	73.2	53.3	63.2
Housing referral	3.7	3.6	32.4	7.1	14.4	24.4	14.5
Independent living skills referral	31.5	30.4	86.5	35.7	32.0	55.6	36.2
Job training referral	20.4	25.0	37.8	19.0	42.3	35.6	34.8
Mental health services referral	53.7	58.9	70.3	57.1	71.1	60.0	61.4
Substance abuse referral	55.6	58.9	78.4	61.9	78.4	68.9	68.4
Mentoring referral	16.7	23.2	27.0	21.4	32.5	28.9	28.7
Parent education referral	42.6	42.9	54.1	50.0	56.7	48.9	50.7
Record sealing assistance	40.7	37.5	32.4	42.9	41.2	20.0	36.2
School enrollment assistance	37.0	39.3	62.2	26.2	59.3	55.6	51.6
Other service	5.6	1.8	0.0	0.0	5.7	2.2	4.6
Total	15.7	16.2	10.7	12.2	56.2	13.0	100%

**Table 24**  
**Satisfaction With Assessments**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=274–289)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know or N/A	Total
Youth's risk to the community	4.9	23.9	27.9	19.8	11.5	12.1	100%
Youth's risk to themselves	4.6	25.3	26.4	17.2	9.8	16.7	100%
Youth's service needs	4.0	26.2	30.5	18.2	8.1	13.0	100%

**Table 25**  
**Severity of Continuances and Other Hearing Delays**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=348)**

	Count	Percent
Not a problem	63	18.1
A minor problem	95	27.3
A moderate problem	100	28.7
A major problem	38	10.9
Do not know	52	14.9
Total	348	100%

**Table 26**  
**Top Causes of Hearing Delays in Uncontested Matters**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=352)**

	Count	Percent
Other reports, persons, or information not available	142	40.3
Youth not present	131	37.2
Parent not present	121	34.4
Hearings need more than allocated time	119	33.8
Defense attorney not ready	117	33.2
Evaluation reports not available	72	20.5
Lack of or improper notice	60	17.0
Prosecutor not ready	40	11.4
Defense attorney not present	32	9.1
Probation report not available	28	8.0
Prosecutor not present	10	2.8
Probation not present	6	1.7
Did not check any	52	14.8

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents were asked to check all that applied.

**Table 27**  
**Information That Is Conveyed Well to Youth**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=350)**

	Count	Percent
Youth's responsibilities while on probation	260	74.3
Possible outcomes	236	67.4
The general court process	138	39.4
What to expect at court hearings	128	36.6
Financial obligations	103	29.4
Ramifications of plea	91	26.0
Process for paying restitution	81	23.1
Record sealing	58	16.6
Other information	13	3.7
Did not check any	18	5.1

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents were asked to check all that applied.

**Table 28**  
**Information That Is Conveyed Well to Parents**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=352)**

	Count	Percent
Youth's responsibilities while on probation	232	65.9
Possible outcomes	218	61.9
Parent's or guardian's responsibilities while on probation	188	53.4
Financial obligations	144	40.9
The general court process	136	38.6
What to expect at court hearings	130	36.9
Process for paying restitution	110	31.3
Ramifications of plea	79	22.4
Record sealing	51	14.5
Other information	11	3.1
Did not check any	28	8.0

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents were asked to check all that applied.

**Table 29**  
**Top Strengths of the Delinquency Court**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=229)**

	Percent
Holds youth accountable	76.0
Focus on rehabilitation/Good balance of rehabilitation, accountability, and treatment	72.0
Court treats people with respect/Cares about youth	64.0
Timeliness of hearings/Efficient and organized	58.0
Good use of graduated sanctions, resources, and services	56.0
Court listens to probation and follows probation recommendations	53.0
Good relationships/Collaboration among court and stakeholders	51.0
Interpreters provided	45.0
Understanding of juvenile court process/knowledgeable judges	43.0
Gives opportunity for second chance	35.0
Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents wrote in responses.	

**Table 30**  
**Delinquency Court's Top Needs for Improvement**  
**as Reported by Probation Officers (N=228)**

	Percent
Need more respect for/understanding of probation officers	89.0
Hold parents more accountable	60.0
More judges or more juvenile calendar days/lower caseloads	44.0
More consistency	43.0
Follow POs' recommendations more often and read reports	43.0
More efficient use of time	42.0
Explain the process better/Talk to youth and families in simple language	40.0
Hold youth more accountable	36.0
More appropriate sanctions and services (lenient for low risk; harsh for high risk)	36.0
Better scheduling so people aren't waiting in hallway	32.0
Note: Percentages may not total 100 because respondents wrote in responses.	

## **Judicial Council of California**

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