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TECHNICAL  
R E P O R T

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Los Angeles County  
Juvenile Justice  
Crime Prevention Act  
Fiscal Year 2005–2006 Report

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with

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Prepared for the Los Angeles County Probation Department



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## SUMMARY

### THE JUVENILE JUSTICE CRIME PREVENTION ACT

In 2000, the California State Legislature passed the Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act, which authorized funding for county juvenile justice programs and designated the Board of Corrections (BOC) the administrator of funding. A 2001 Senate Bill extended the funding and changed the program's name to the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act. This effort was designed to provide a stable funding source for juvenile programs that have been proven effective in curbing crime among at-risk and young offenders.

JJCPA provided funds to counties to add evidence-based programs and services for juvenile probationers identified with higher needs for special services than those received by routine probationers, at-risk youths who have not yet entered the probation system but who live or attend school in areas of high crime or who have other factors that potentially predispose them to criminal activities, and youths in juvenile halls and camps. Each juvenile is assigned to one or more JJCPA programs according to an assessment of the individual's need for services.

Administration of the JJCPA program is currently the responsibility of the Corrections Standards Authority, formed in July 2005 by merging the BOC and the Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training (CPOST). The CSA is required to submit annual reports to the California State Legislature measuring the success of JJCPA. The legislation identified six specific outcome measures (the big six) to be included in annual reports from each of the individual JJCPA programs. These outcome measures are (1) successful completion of probation, (2) arrests, (3) probation violations, (4) incarcerations, (5) successful completion of restitution, and (6) successful completion of community service.<sup>1</sup> Each county can also supply supplemental outcomes to measure locally identified service needs.

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<sup>1</sup> For at-risk youths, i.e., those not on probation, only arrests and incarcerations are reported herein, since the other four measures relate to conditions of probation.

## **JJCPA IN THE CONTEXT OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS**

JJCPA represents one of the major vehicles to provide services to juveniles. JJCPA programs are administered by the Los Angeles County Probation Department, whose mission is to promote and enhance public safety, ensure victims' rights, and facilitate the positive behavior change of adult and juvenile probationers. In FY05–06, the state allocated more than \$29 million to Los Angeles County for JJCPA programs and services. This represents roughly one-third of juvenile field expenditures, one-quarter of detention expenditures, and more than one-third of camp expenditures, or almost 10 percent of all juvenile expenditures.

JJCPA programs were designed to complement and leverage other probation resources for at-risk and delinquent youths in the juvenile justice system. The leveraging of resources allows the Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) to shape a plan that builds on the strengths of each youth and is uniquely responsive to service needs. In collaboration with school officials, parents, and community partners, JJCPA DPOs are able to coordinate service plans that include various school- and community-based resources.

JJCPA programs are targeted toward juvenile probationers identified with higher needs for special services than those received by routine probationers, as well as toward at-risk youths, defined as those who are not on probation but who live or attend school in areas of high crime or have other factors that potentially predispose them to criminal activities. Each juvenile is assigned to one or more JJCPA programs according to an assessment of the individual's needs for service.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department submitted program evaluation designs, approved by the BOC that used quasi-experimental methods. Programs included a group of youths with characteristics similar to those of program youths where appropriate, and a pre/post measurement design in instances where no appropriate comparison group could be identified. Generally, outcomes for program participants are measured for a six-month period after starting the program or after release into the community (for camp and juvenile hall programs). In addition to the big six, the Los Angeles County Probation Department, working with the BOC (and later with the CSA), defined supplemental outcomes specific to each program, which are also reported to the CSA annually.

Some discussion of the big six is in order. The CSA does not rank the relative importance of these measures, nor is there any universally accepted relative importance of these measures of recidivism. For its planning purposes, Los Angeles County has

ranked these in order, from most important to least important, in the view of Probation Department standards: successful completion of probation, arrests, probation violations, incarcerations, successful completion of restitution, and successful completion of community service. An ideal outcome would be for no program youths to be arrested, be incarcerated, or be in violation of probation and for all to complete probation as well as (if applicable) community service and restitution. However, since for most JJCPA programs the big six outcomes are measured only for six months after entry into the program,<sup>2</sup> and because most youths' terms of probation last from 12 to 18 months, in practice a 100 percent completion of probation rate is not a realistic expectation. For all the big six measures, the most important metric is whether program youths performed significantly better than comparison youths, not the absolute value of any given outcome. We would also note that because program youths are more closely supervised than youths on routine probation, it would not be surprising to find that they have more probation violations than comparison youths.

#### **PROGRAM CHANGES AND ENHANCEMENTS IN FY05–06**

Using, in part, program outcome analyses from previous years, recommendations from RAND, and stakeholder input, the Los Angeles County Probation Department made several significant enhancements to JJCPA during FY04–05. In the first three years of JJCPA in Los Angeles County, all JJCPA programs were organized into two initiatives (Mental Health and School Success). In FY04–05, programs were realigned into three initiatives—Enhanced Mental Health Services, Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth, and Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services. Relatively few additional changes were made in FY05–06, primarily the discontinuation of the Community Treatment Facilities (CTF) program and the full implementation of the High-Risk/High-Needs (HRHN) program. These enhancements are detailed in Table S.1, which compares JJCPA programs and initiatives from FY05–06 with those from FY01–04.

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<sup>2</sup> For programs based in juvenile hall, the big six outcomes are measured for the six months after the youth returns to the community, rather than from program start.

**Table S.1  
Programs in the Three JJCPA FY05–06 Initiatives**

FY05–06 Initiative and Programs	FY01–04 Initiative
I. Enhanced Mental Health Services	
Mental Health Screening, Treatment, and Assessment (MH)	Mental Health
Multisystemic Therapy (MST)	Mental Health
II. Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth	
Special Needs Court (SNC)	Mental Health
Youth Substance Abuse Intervention (YSA)	School Success
Gender-Specific Community (GSCOMM)	School Success
High-Risk/High Needs	N/A
III. Enhanced School and Community-Based Services	
School-Based Probation Supervision (SBHS and SBMS)	School Success
Abolish Chronic Truancy (ACT)	School Success
After School Enrichment and Supervision (PARKS)	School Success
Housing-Based Day Supervision (HB)	School Success
Inside-Out Writers (IOW)	School Success

### **Training Enhancements**

Consistent with the implementation of evidence-based programs and the need to strengthen the capacity of JJCPA community service providers, the Probation Department continued training enhancements, begun in FY04–05, when it initiated several training sessions for Probation staff and community-based partners. The focus of this training was to strengthen service delivery through increased collaboration and case management interventions. The training sessions included Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checkup (LARRC), Strength-Based/Family-Focused Case Management Skills training, and Social Learning Model (SLM) training.

### **Program Implementation and Enhancements**

In response to program and contract monitoring reviews, family and participant needs, and stakeholders’ feedback, the following JJCPA enhancements were implemented, beginning in FY04–05 and continuing in FY05–06: (1) restructuring of the Gang Intervention and Intensive Transition and Gender-Specific programs into the new HRHN program; (2) implementation of family-based, rather than youth-based, interventions; (3) parental skills training designed to empower parents ; (4) implementation of School Safety Collaboratives/Safe Passages program for youths traveling to and from school in high-crime areas as part of the school-based programs; (5) increased emphasis on skill-building training and activities for JJCPA youths to provide



anti-criminal modeling, social skills development, aggression replacement training skills, problem-solving skills, and relapse prevention skills training; and (6) Correctional Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI) training of contract monitoring staff to measure how closely correctional programs meet known principles of effective intervention.

In addition, during this fiscal year, the Probation Department continued strengthening program fidelity by administering LARRC to all probationers, and using LARRC scores in program placement and offering social learning theory training for JJCPA DPOs to help them align program practices with evidence-based theory.

## **OUTCOMES**

CSA-mandated big six outcomes generally showed a similar pattern in FY05–06 as in the previous fiscal year. JJCPA participants were more likely than comparison youths to successfully complete probation, restitution, and community service. For programs that used a contemporaneous comparison group (SNC, MST, School-Based High School and Middle School Probation Supervision for Probationers [SBHS-PROB and SBMS-PROB, respectively]), as well as those evaluated using a pre/post design (ACT, YSA, PARKS, GSCOMM, HB, and IOW), JJCPA youths tended to show fewer arrests and fewer incarcerations. Because juvenile arrest rates in Los Angeles County were higher for juveniles in FY05–06 than in any year since 1996, JJCPA programs that used a historical comparison group (MH, School-Based High School and Middle School Probation Supervision for At-Risk Youths [SBHS-AR and SBMS-AR, respectively], and HRHN) did not generally show lower arrest or incarceration rates than comparison youths.

Supplemental outcomes, which varied from program to program, were generally more positive in the reference period after starting the program than in the comparable period before beginning the program. School attendance, in particular, improved markedly for those programs that used attendance as a supplemental outcome measure. For these programs, school suspensions and expulsions were likely to decrease as well. Programs whose supplemental outcomes were not school-related also tended to show positive results in the measures used.

## **PROGRAMS AND OUTCOMES IN INITIATIVE I: ENHANCED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Before JJCPA, the Los Angeles County Probation Department processed juvenile referrals in a manner similar to most probation departments in California, offering crisis

intervention services only. There was no dedicated court to address youths with severe mental health issues, few if any placement options for crossover populations, and no cost-effective family-based community treatment service. These problems were addressed in FY05–06 by two programs within the mental health services initiative: MH and MST.

### **SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES FOR THE ENHANCED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES INITIATIVE**

Because youths in the MH program represent more than 99 percent of all youths in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative, the results for the initiative as a whole will necessarily be virtually identical to those for the MH program. JJCPA youths in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative showed higher completion of community service rates than youths in the comparison groups. However, program youths had higher arrest and incarceration rates than comparison youths, more probation violations, and lower completion of restitution rates and completion of probation rates. This may be due, at least in part, to the use of a historical comparison group from a time when juvenile arrest rates were lower than in FY05–06. Supplemental outcomes for both MH and MST were significantly improved in the six months after program entry compared with the six months before entering the program.

### **PROGRAMS AND OUTCOMES IN INITIATIVE II: ENHANCED SERVICES TO HIGH-RISK/HIGH-NEED YOUTH**

The High-Risk/High-Need initiative targets youth at the highest risk and those with the highest need in the JJCPA program. Programs and services in this initiative include SNC, YSA, GSCOMM,<sup>3</sup> and the new HRHN program. Many of the youths participating in this initiative are gang involved, drug and alcohol users, and low academic performers; have mental health issues and multiple risk/needs factors across multiple domains; and pose a high risk for committing new crimes. Therefore, consistent with juvenile justice research, the initiative targets higher-risk offenders and criminogenic risk/need factors, considers responsivity factors, and employs social learning approaches.

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<sup>3</sup> Gender-specific community programs include the Young Women at Risk (YWAR) program.

## **SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES FOR THE ENHANCED SERVICES TO HIGH-RISK/HIGH-NEED YOUTH INITIATIVE**

Overall, program youths in the Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative had higher rates for completion of probation and community service than comparison group youths. Program youths also had lower rates of arrests, incarcerations, and completion of restitution than comparison youths, but these differences were not statistically significant. Program youths did, however, also have significantly higher probation violation rates than comparison group youths. Higher rates of probation violation may result, at least in part, because program youths are more closely monitored than are routine probationers. The relevant supplemental outcomes for SNC, GSCOMM, and HRHN participants were significantly improved in the six months after entering the program compared with the six months before entering.

## **PROGRAMS AND OUTCOMES IN INITIATIVE III: ENHANCED SCHOOL- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES**

The school-based program is at the core of this initiative and has as its main objective the reduction of crime and delinquency in 85 high-risk neighborhoods by targeting school-based probation supervision and services for the population of probationers and at-risk youths in the schools. A secondary goal is enhanced protective factors through improved school performance. The 85 targeted neighborhoods were identified as the most crime-affected neighborhoods in Los Angeles County on the basis of number of youths on probation at the schools, rate of overall crime, rate of juvenile crime, rate of substance abuse, rate of child abuse and neglect, and number of residents below the poverty level.

Programs and services included in this initiative are SBHS-PROB, SBMS-PROB, SBHS-AR, SBMS-AR, ACT, PARKS, HB, and IOW. A total of 13,659 youths received services from programs in the school-based initiative during the JJCPA program's FY05–06.

## **SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES FOR THE ENHANCED SCHOOL- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES INITIATIVE**

Taken as a whole, youths in the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative showed improvements in the completion of restitution, as well as a lower rate of incarceration in the follow-up period, as compared to the baseline period or comparison group. Because so few youths in this initiative completed probation or community service during the baseline period, differences seen in the follow-up (overall 13.3 percent

completed probation and 13.2 percent completed community service) were not statistically testable. Although arrest rates were lower in the follow-up period than in the baseline, the differences were not statistically significant. For the programs that used educational measures as supplemental outcomes, school attendance improved significantly in the term following program entry as compared with the previous term, and there were significant reductions in school suspensions and expulsions. All other supplemental outcomes showed significant improvement except for the PARKS program, where a single arrest occurred between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. during both the baseline and follow-up periods.

### **JJCPA PER CAPITA COSTS**

A total of 29,116 youths were served in JJCPA in FY05–06, at a total cost of \$29,334,436, or \$1,008 per participant.<sup>4</sup> As one might expect, some programs had lower per capita costs than others. In general, the larger programs, such as MH, had the lowest per capita costs, whereas the programs that offered more extensive services to a smaller population, such as SNC, had higher per capita costs. Table S.2 shows the total budget for each program, the number of youths served in FY05–06, and the cost per program participant. Overall, the cost per youth in the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative in FY05–06 was \$490, whereas the Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative cost \$4,147 per youth served, and the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services programs spent \$1,070 per youth.

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<sup>4</sup> The number of youths served in FY05–06 is greater than the number of youths for whom outcome measures were reported to the CSA, because the time frames are different. Because our cost estimates include arrests during the six-month eligibility mandated for big six outcomes, the number of program youths will match the number used to report outcomes to the CSA, not the total number served during the fiscal year.

**Table S.2**  
**Per Capita Costs, by JJCPA Program: FY05–06**

Initiative/Program	Youths Served	Budget	Per Capita
MH	13,412	\$6,134,459	\$457
MST	91	\$478,297	\$5,256
Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative	13,503	\$6,612,756	\$490
SNC	98	\$1,162,702	\$11,864
YSA	139	\$1,162,702	\$8,365
YWAR/GSCOMM	604	\$1,684,967	\$2,790
HRHN	1,113	\$4,093,378	\$3,678
Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative	1,954	\$8,103,749	\$4,147
SBHS	6,585	\$8,746,799	\$1,328
SBMS	1,246	\$1,543,554	\$1,239
ACT	3,530	\$303,204	\$86
PARKS	975	\$1,700,144	\$1,744
HB	288	\$1,933,106	\$6,712
IOW	1,035	\$391,124	\$378
Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative	13,659	\$14,617,931	\$1,070
All programs	29,116	\$29,334,436	\$1,008

### Components of Cost

In addition to the costs of delivering JJCPA services in the various programs, other costs are also incurred by JJCPA participants. These include the costs of supervision for those on probation, of juvenile hall for those who spend time in the halls, of juvenile camp for those assigned to camp, of receiving a technical violation of probation, and the various costs associated with being arrested and going to court. We have also included, as a “negative” cost, the benefits of increased school attendance for youths in the school-based programs. In our analysis of overall JJCPA costs, we have attempted to estimate each on a daily basis to calculate the actual cost of each individual participant.

It should be emphasized that these are *estimated* costs, based on the best information available at the time of this report. Most involve calculations involving estimates provided by the Probation Department or from publicly available data. These analyses are not intended to provide exact costs but to give an indication of approximate trends for each program and to allow comparisons between program participants in the six months after entering JJCPA programs versus the six months before entering.

### Total Cost of Programs and Initiatives

Table S.3 shows the mean total cost per participant in JJCPA programs in FY05–06. Weighted averages are also shown for each initiative. It should be noted that the costs for each initiative are largely driven by the costs of the program or programs in that initiative that serve the most participants. Thus MST costs have very little influence on the overall costs of the Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative, since the vast majority of youths served within that initiative are in the MH program.

**Table S.3**  
**Mean Total Cost per Participant by JJCPA Program: FY05–06**

Initiative/Program	Baseline	Follow-Up	Participants
MH	\$8,194	\$13,859	10,474
MST	\$4,622	\$11,258	63
Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative	\$8,173	\$13,843	10,537
SNC	\$19,161	\$24,141	60
YSA	\$3,926	\$10,981	197
YWAR and GSCOMM	\$1,054	\$4,262	409
HRHN	\$11,596	\$10,116	496
Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative	\$6,976	\$8,926	1,162
SBHS-PROB	\$5,148	\$4,619	3,897
SBHS-AR	\$64	\$1,550	326
SBMS-PROB	\$4,473	\$4,576	239
SBMS-AR	\$34	\$753	481
ACT	\$3	\$75	2,273
PARKS	\$85	\$1,661	843
HB	\$1,741	\$6,056	168
IOW	\$11,564	\$14,015	520
Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative	\$3,150	\$3,411	8,747
All programs	\$5,956	\$9,101	20,446

As we might expect, overall juvenile justice costs for JJCPA participants were generally higher in the follow-up period (\$9,101) than in the baseline period (\$5,956), primarily because six months is not a long enough time to evaluate the long-term benefits of changes brought about by participating in JJCPA programs. The majority of the

JJCPA programs, however, produced substantial average costs savings in arrests, hall, court, and camp costs. If these costs savings were accumulated over a longer period of time they may offset the substantial investment made in program costs. We are not able to extend the time frame to measure changes, however, because not enough time has elapsed to allow us to obtain data beyond a six-month period. With a longer follow-up period, the initial program costs may be offset by reductions in subsequent arrests, court appearances, and days spent in halls and camps.

We note also that savings in juvenile justice costs for arrests, camps, and juvenile halls do not take into account potential savings associated with improved family and community relations. Because we have no data on the value of such improvements, we are not able to include these factors in our estimates of cost differences between the baseline and follow-up periods.

It is actually somewhat surprising to note that participants in the Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative had only slightly higher total juvenile justice costs in the follow-up period than in the baseline period. This finding is driven primarily by cost savings among school-based high school probationers and the low costs of programs targeting at-risk youths.

### **Component Cost Savings by Initiative**

For each of the three FY05–06 initiatives, Table S.4 shows the mean net cost for each cost component, i.e., the mean difference between the cost in the six months before entering the program and the six months after entering. As we might expect, there are noticeable differences in mean component costs among the three initiatives. The Enhanced Mental Health Services initiative, which serves only probationers, showed fewer arrest costs, but much higher camp costs after entering the program than before entering. The Enhanced Services to High-Risk/High-Need Youth initiative, which targets a large number of at-risk youths, saw the bulk of its expenses in program costs, whereas costs for arrests, juvenile hall, camp, and court were lower in the six months after entering the program. The Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services initiative, which targets a combination of probationers and at-risk youths, saw increased program and supervision costs but savings in arrest and court costs after entering the program.

**Table S.4**  
**Mean Cost Savings for Initiatives: FY05–06**

Component	Enhanced Mental Health Services	Enhanced Services to High-Risk/ High-Need Youth	Enhanced School- and Community-Based Services
Program	-\$429	-\$4,362	-\$870
Supervision	-\$308	-\$35	-\$323
Arrest	\$889	\$79	\$236
Juvenile hall	-\$952	\$383	-\$59
Camp	-\$4,418	\$2,038	-\$20
Court	-\$453	\$190	\$541
Total	-\$5,671	-\$1,703	-\$261

NOTES: A positive number in this table indicates that mean costs were lower in the six months after beginning the program than in the six months before beginning. A negative number indicates that costs were higher after entering the program than before entering. Total costs may include “negative costs” of improved school attendance. Because of missing data for some components, total cost may not equal the sum of the component costs.

In general, higher rates of recidivism seem to occur in the more expensive JJCPA programs. This may be because these programs target higher-risk youths than do the less-expensive programs.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THIS EVALUATION**

As with any evaluation, there are inherent limitations in our assessment of the JJCPA program in Los Angeles County. As we have noted, no randomized designs were used and we were unable to verify the comparability of comparison groups for some of the programs, so that observed differences between treatment and comparison groups may reflect pretreatment differences between the groups rather than treatment effects of the programs. Another limitation is the ability to follow program participants for only six months.

This is the fifth year of RAND’s JJCPA evaluation findings. Over the years, the strength and breadth of the evaluation has improved. More-rigorous comparison groups have been identified for some programs, and the overall quality of outcome data has continued to improve. This is the second year we have added cost comparisons to our report. Work by the Probation Department to enhance and improve the quality of program delivery continues through continued concentration on social learning, family



orientation, and auditing the implementation of programs using the principles of the CPAI.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This is the fifth consecutive year that outcomes were reported to CSA and to the county. Results reflect the continuing collaboration between the evaluators and Probation to modify programs based on evaluation findings. We still see that the effects sizes are relatively small, although county-developed supplemental outcomes tend to be more favorable than state-mandated big six outcomes. Los Angeles County will continue to receive JJCPA funding on an annual basis and will continue to report outcomes to CSA annually.