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ROBERT F. KENNEDY NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

PROBATION AND YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM REVIEW GUIDEBOOK

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The Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, a program of RFK Community Alliance, would like to express its gratitude and acknowledge the extraordinary contributions of probation and youth justice leaders, stakeholders, and practitioners from state and local jurisdictions across the United States. Youth justice professionals from more than 45 state and local jurisdictions have demonstrated the passion and courage to undertake examinations and analysis to improve the system performance and youth outcomes in their jurisdictions over the past seventeen years. It is their efforts, challenges and successes that have informed the enhancements to the Probation and Youth Justice System Review (System Review) process to produce this resource. In the three years since the publication of the Probation System Review Guidebook, 3rd Edition, we have partnered with jurisdictional leaders in more than a dozen probation, court, and youth justice systems to provide intensive training and technical assistance that has yielded improvements to probation, court, and youth justice system practice. We have incorporated those valuable lessons learned into the Probation and Youth Justice System Review Guidebook.

Additionally, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's *Models for Change: System Reform in Juvenile Justice* initiative operated for over a decade in nearly two-thirds of the states to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice reform. *Models for Change* sought and accomplished accelerated progress toward a more effective, fair, and developmentally sound juvenile justice system that holds young people accountable for their actions, provides for their rehabilitation, protects them from harm, and manages the risk posed to themselves and to the public. It was under the generous support of this initiative that the work to develop this System Review methodology and process flourished. The Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice wishes to thank the MacArthur Foundation for its considerable contribution to this important area of probation, court, and youth justice system reform.

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OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

The genesis for this Probation and Youth Justice System Review Guidebook was the probation system review work undertaken in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana as part of the work in the four core states associated with *Models for Change: Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice* and in Los Angeles County, California under a contract with the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller's Office. In both of those jurisdictions, there was a months-long review of programs and operations to support the goals of the probation departments, culminating in respective reports of findings and recommendations. A carefully tailored work plan directed the reviews in each instance and while the order has been slightly revised, the core elements of the plan remain essentially the same and include:

- A. Administration
- B. Probation Supervision
- C. Intra- and Interagency Work Processes
- D. Quality Assurance

The principals, Janet Wiig and John A. Tuell, conducted the review in Jefferson Parish and Los Angeles County, and were asked to prepare the original Probation System Review Guidebook for that purpose. As more jurisdictions became involved in the conduct of the RFK National Resource Center Probation System Review (System Review), more experiences and lessons learned informed the use of the wide variety of examination and analytical methodologies in local and state jurisdictions.¹ This Probation and Youth Justice System Review Guidebook (*System Review Guidebook*) offers an enhanced look at the System Review process with enriched perspectives for the conduct of the review and the use of findings and recommendations that have proven successful in improving probation, court, and youth justice performance and outcomes for the youth and families they serve.

¹ The material in this Guidebook is drawn heavily from the field-based experiences of the original authors (Janet Wiig and John A. Tuell) while working for CWLA and then subsequently for the RFK Children's Action Corps during a period covering 2004-2011. These included an array of both large and small state and local jurisdictions, supporting the concept that the framework contained herein could be applicable and useful in all types of jurisdictions. In this updated version that includes multiple additional Probation and Youth Justice System Reviews conducted by John A. Tuell, and RFK National Resource Center staff and consultants, the replicable processes and methods that produced positive youth justice transformation are presented. The most recent experiences in six local jurisdictions (Dennis M. Mondoro Probation and Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project) and one state (Nebraska) are also included. See Appendix A for a complete listing of the state and local jurisdictions.

WHY UNDERTAKE A PROBATION AND YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM REVIEW?

Probation departments and courts, like a number of other longstanding agencies, function within a framework of statutes, policies, and practices that were built up over the course of many years. Typically, there has been little time or effort to reflect on that framework to determine how well it is working and whether it functions in a manner that is optimal and comports with the current research and best practices that result in improved system performance and youth outcomes. Probation departments and courts have also frequently taken a narrow view of their accountability for individual or cumulative outcomes for youth entering the system. If it can be said that we measure what we value, probation departments, courts, and youth justice systems have all too often measured throughputs—how many cases were filed, how fast those cases are disposed of, and what type of offenses were involved. Further, even in the face of advancing neuroscience on adolescent development and research-driven practices that yield reductions in recidivism and affiliated positive youth outcomes, a culture of doing things “the way we've always done them” often permeates daily operations and departmental approaches to probation supervision and court practices. It is plausible to proffer that most juvenile probation, court, and youth justice systems have paid insufficient attention to how system practices and individual decisions affecting case management might cumulatively impact public safety for better or worse. Correspondingly, relevant data has not been systematically collected or analyzed toward that end.

However, juvenile probation departments, courts, and youth justice systems are becoming increasingly conscious of how their policies, processes, and practices can improve outcomes for the young people with whom they come into contact. That awareness also encompasses an understanding that the probation and court “system” does not operate in a vacuum. It is equally reliant on other agencies and individuals to align their own practices in ways consistent with current research. Historically, the youth justice system includes probation officers, judges, law enforcement, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. However, to accomplish long-term and sustainable reforms, partners must necessarily include schools, substance abuse treatment providers, mental health professionals, child protective services, community based youth programs, local government leaders, and certainly youth and their families. Efforts to reform and enhance the operations and routine

functioning of the probation, court, and youth justice system must involve all of these participants.

Through our technical assistance and consultation partnerships with state and local jurisdictions over the past seventeen years, the RFK National Resource Center staff has witnessed an encouraging willingness of jurisdictions to examine their operations as the volume of research on what works has been translated into improved system performance and youth outcomes. A growing number of probation departments, courts, and youth justice systems are more engaged in the development of refined policies and practices demonstrated to improve rates of recidivism across all risk classifications and improve other measures of positive youth outcomes. It has been our experience that jurisdictions that commit to this type of regular inquiry have demonstrated their value for accountability in both theory and action. This in turn has fostered support, trust, and a collaborative investment from the community, youth, parents, staff, and the multitude of system stakeholders for sustainable achievement of improved system performance and youth outcomes.

The System Review emphasizes dynamic opportunities to identify and act on reform priorities early and throughout the review process and supports implementation of key best practices that include:

- Alternative responses to formal prosecution (diversion approaches and programs)
- Alternatives to detention
- Family engagement
- Balance of incentives and sanctions to achieve optimal behavior change and reduction of risk
- Graduated responses
- Dispositional matrix

The Probation and Youth Justice System Review is therefore an exciting opportunity for the principals involved in the management and day-to-day operation of a probation department, court administration, and youth justice system to assess how they are doing in relation to the goals, objectives, and outcomes for which they are accountable. It is an opportunity to enhance practice by making sure that policy and procedures, corresponding training and quality improvement approaches, departmental management for current practice and change leadership, and supervision of probationers are all lined up to reflect best practices. It also provides a chance to include important partners in the exploration and potential improvement of key decision processes and practices that affect the functioning of the youth justice and juvenile probation system.

Honorable Sheila Calloway, Juvenile Court Judge Davidson County Juvenile Court | Nashville, Tennessee

When I took office as Juvenile Court Judge of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee in 2014, I knew one thing which needed to change was our probation services. For years, we had operated under a system of one-size-fits-all. We were missing the opportunity to use evidence-based resources in beneficial ways. We were also using court processes for the majority of the children who were referred to the court system, whether or not they needed services.

In the midst of revamping our system, members of our staff had the opportunity to attend the RFK National Resource Center Probation System Reform Symposium. After meeting the RFK team consultants, we knew we could benefit from the Probation System Review, knowing it was the missing piece in our process of transformation.

When we had the opportunity to participate in the review process, we were thoroughly impressed by the work of the RFK National Resource Center Team. From the beginning of the process, the team pushed us to think more globally about our system, encouraging us to include different people and agencies in the review process. The RFK team spent countless hours meeting with staff in order to gain a complete understanding of our processes including what was working well and things which could be improved. The RFK team was thought-provoking and open-minded in their approach, making each person at the table feel valued in the process.

The final report and recommendations were well thought out. The RFK team met with various different groups, including the entire juvenile court staff to field questions about the recommendations. Even as we are endeavoring to implement the recommendations, the RFK team continues to provide us with support to make the changes. As a court, we have been inspired to do more and better work for our youth because of the work of the Davidson County PSR Team.

Undertaking such an inquiry requires the leadership of a champion for change as much as it requires the collaborative support of multiple stakeholders. System self-assessments do not just happen; they must be called for, supported, and integrated into the workflow of several agencies and stakeholders in order to be most effective. Advancing a culture of accountability among multiple system partners requires intentionality, planning, persuasion, and perseverance.

The auspices for undertaking a review can be internal or external. In the case of the Los Angeles County work, the

Benefits of Undertaking a Probation and Youth Justice System Review:

- ✿ Improve recidivism rates, successful completion of probation terms, measureable behavior change in priority domains, and other youth outcomes
- ✿ Increase in the percentage of diversion/alternative responses to formal processing and a corresponding reduction in recidivism rates, particularly among school-based arrests and for low-risk-to-reoffend youth
- ✿ Increase in the percentage of youth under community supervision who receive targeted and appropriate trauma and behavioral health service interventions with a corresponding reduction in these criminogenic risks during probation terms
- ✿ Improve the fidelity and efficacy of evidence-based practices at the key points of intake, diversion, disposition and community supervision
- ✿ Incorporate adolescent development, family engagement, and positive youth development into routine practice among all key stakeholders
- ✿ Identify opportunities for routinizing practices through the development of new policies or protocols
- ✿ Improve collaborative strategies that refine current policy and practice and support effective and sustainable implementation strategies
- ✿ Meaningfully solicit and incorporate managerial and line staff ideas and concepts for practice improvements
- ✿ Create an impetus and methods for developing effective data collection, reporting, and analysis
- ✿ Identify opportunities to create workforce and fiscal efficiencies
- ✿ Potential to re-allocate funds where they will be most effectively utilized
- ✿ Enhance quality improvement/assurance methods for probation, court, and program and service interventions
- ✿ Define your probation department and youth justice system as a best-practice leader in the field

local governing body, the Board of Supervisors, ordered a program audit of the probation department. Additionally, in work conducted in the state of New Hampshire, a local foundation allocated funding for a review at the request of state legislators. In Guam, a structure of subcommittees focusing on various aspects of juvenile justice reform had been constructed under the leadership of the Chief Justice of the Judiciary of Guam. Upon learning of the System Review process, their leadership assessed that it could

accelerate their efforts for practice reform. In Fairfax County, Virginia the Court Service Unit Director and presiding judge jointly requested and supported the review. Finally, in one Washington state jurisdiction, the trio of Court Services Managers viewed the review as an opportunity to provide support or “cover” for practice reforms they sought to implement in an environment of resistance from practitioner staff and significant social forces challenging probation operations. The RFK National Resource Center believes that the value of the review and the commitment to the resulting recommendations is enhanced when it is the department itself that initiates the review. Where there is resistance or opposition, many approaches have been used to secure support and buy-in from leadership ahead of the launch of the process. In the end this is not to say that there is no value in undertaking a review that has an external impetus; however, the departmental participation in and the management of the review is potentially richer when the review is internally generated.

ALIGNMENT WITH BEST PRACTICES

The goals, practices, policies, outcomes, and operations of the juvenile justice system and its affiliated youth-serving partners should be informed by the growing body of research and knowledge about adolescent development. The research was effectively synthesized by the National Research Council (2013) and recognized that adolescents differ from adults in three important ways:

- ✿ Adolescents are less able to regulate their own behavior in emotionally charged contexts.
- ✿ Adolescents are more sensitive to external influences such as the presence of peers and the immediacy of rewards.
- ✿ Adolescents are less able to make informed decisions that require consideration of the long term.

These adolescent characteristics provide the foundation for the adoption and implementation of developmentally informed practices, policies and procedures that have proven effective in achieving the primary responsibilities of the youth justice system, which include accountability, prevention of reoffending, and fairness and equitable treatment.

Unfortunately, and too frequently in current practice, the goals, design, and operation of the youth justice system are not informed by this growing body of knowledge. As a result, the outcomes are more likely to be negative interactions between youth and justice system officials,

increased disrespect for the law and legal authority, and the reinforcement of a deviant identity and social disaffection (National Research Council, 2013). The challenge going forward for probation and youth justice system improvement includes:

1. increasing the numbers and array of system practitioners who understand and embrace the research findings and implications,
2. adopting systemic youth and family intervention practices across the spectrum of key decision points directly impacting the primary goals of the juvenile justice system, and
3. creating and maintaining quality assurance methodologies that ensure fidelity to these principles and practices.

Upon closer examination of the origins of the research over the past decade, there is evidence of significant changes in brain structure and function during the period of adolescence.² Much of this work has resulted from advances in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) techniques that provide the opportunity to safely track the development of brain structure, brain function, and brain connectivity in humans (Steinberg, 2009). The evidence suggests that the three previously highlighted cognitive tendencies are linked to the biological immaturity of the brain and an imbalance among developing brain systems. Simply stated, the brain system that influences pleasure-seeking and emotional reactivity develops more rapidly than the brain system that supports self-control. This fact leaves adolescents less capable of self-regulation than adults (National Research Council, 2012). Additionally, both the seriousness and likelihood of offending are also strongly affected by influences in youths' environment – peers, parents, schools, and communities.

Another key aspect of the research findings from *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach* (2013) has significant implications for initial youth justice system responses and the consideration of alternatives to formal processing and diversion opportunities. Specifically, the research shows that for most youth the period of risky experimentation does not extend beyond adolescence, ceasing as identity settles with maturity. The vast majority of youth who are arrested or referred to juvenile court have not committed serious offenses, and more than half of them appear in the system only once.

² Scientifically, adolescence has no precise chronological onset or endpoint. It refers to a phase in development between childhood and adulthood beginning at puberty, typically about 12 or 13, and ending in the late teens or early twenties. Generally speaking, when referring to an adolescent the focus is on those persons under age 18.

**Robert A. Bermingham, Jr., Court Service Unit Director
(retired November 2021)
Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court |
Fairfax County, Virginia**

In 2019, Fairfax County, Virginia was selected to participate in the first cohort of jurisdictions to partner with the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice to conduct the activities of the Dennis M. Mondoro Probation and Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Project.

A critical achievement key to our system transformation process was creating a transformation team comprised of system stakeholders and facilitated by the Chief Judge. While each of our system stakeholders has a different role in administering justice, we learned that our goals are not mutually exclusive and that we could achieve more working together.

The CSU adopted validated assessment instruments at key decision-making points throughout our system. Although the YASI was used before the RFK National Resource Center's Probation System Review process, it was not administered with fidelity or consistently applied to inform decision-making. A notable achievement was the creation of an assessment unit and movement away from adjudicating and disposing of cases in a single hearing.

By combining the increased use of diversion and assessment instruments to inform disposition recommendations in Court, the CSU has reduced the number of low-risk youth entering the justice system and ordered on probation. The CSU has enhanced efforts to engage critical stakeholders by offering training on juvenile justice transformation.

Data collection, quality assurance reviews, ongoing CQI, and coaching are now embedded in training when rolling out new initiatives. Building off lessons learned from past implementation efforts we embedded data collection, QA/CQI activities, booster trainings, and coaching and feedback from the beginning.

As indicated above, the primary responsibilities or aims of the probation and youth justice systems are to hold youth accountable for wrongdoing, prevent further offending, and treat all youth with fairness and equity. Within that framework, the research strongly supports that focusing on the positive social development of youth can enhance and assure the protection of public safety. An examination of these responsibilities reflects their compatibility with the developmental approach to juvenile justice.

Accountability – It is imperative that our juvenile justice systems provide an opportunity for youth to accept

responsibility for their actions and make amends to individual victims and the community. This focus ensures that offenders are answerable for wrongdoing, particularly in cases in which there is harm to person and/or property. Among the research-supported best practices in this area are restorative justice, peer/youth courts, community service, and cognitive skill building.

Preventing Reoffending - The best practice approach to reduce reoffending includes the commitment to the use of structured decision-making instruments that informs professional judgement at key decision points (e.g., risk-needs-responsivity [RNR] tools). In the case process, this includes referral/intake, diversion or alternative responses, adjudication, disposition, and case planning (Tuell & Harp, 2019). These scientifically validated tools and instruments can identify whether a youth is at low, moderate or high risk to reoffend. At the referral and intake processing decision point, this may provide a critical opportunity to divert youth from formal involvement in the juvenile justice system. Given the fact that most low risk offenders are not likely to reoffend and formal involvement in the system may actually increase their likelihood to reoffend, the systematic use of these risk-screening tools provides a positive opportunity to prevent reoffending through diversion or alternative responses to formal involvement in the youth justice system. Further, RNR assessment tools (e.g., SAVRY, YASI, YLS-CMI) may be used to assess for the specific needs of the youth in identified domains (family, peers, behavioral health, education, etc.) and permit a more effective matching of treatment and programmatic interventions that will ameliorate the risk to reoffend. If implemented well, the use of RNR tools effectively targets evidence-based interventions (e.g., specific therapeutic interventions such as aggression replacement therapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy) that reduce reoffending and produce fiscal returns relative to their costs per youth. For an overview of risk screens, behavioral health screens and risk-needs assessments, please see Appendix B.

Fairness and Equitable Treatment - The third aim requires that youth are treated fairly through the assurance that due process laws and procedures are protected for every youth and family involved in the juvenile court process. Fundamentally, this includes equal certainty that all youth have access to properly trained defense counsel and that all youth have an opportunity to participate in the youth justice proceedings. The fairness standard also applies to the practice of swift justice. An adherence to standards and timelines for case processing is critical in that the design of the youth justice process seeks to teach offenders that illegal behavior has consequences and that anyone who violates the law will be held accountable.

There has been much learned over the past thirty years about how individual offender rehabilitation relates to reducing recidivism (Andrews et al., 1990; Gendreau, French, and Taylor, 2002; Andrews and Bonta, 2010). The lessons focus specifically on service and program interventions that reduce reoffending and increase pro-social behavior. As a result, among the most important policy reforms of recent years are the drive for evidence-based practice, which focuses on effective treatments, services, and supports for children and families, and the effort to establish systems of care to address the infrastructure of funding and linkages between services and programs. These themes have been embraced in educational, mental health, and child welfare policy reforms, as well as in juvenile justice systems (Lipsey & Howell, 2010).

The Probation and Youth Justice System Review assesses the system for alignment with the following best practice approaches:

.....

1. **Consistent and effective departmental management** aligned with mission, goals, policies, procedures and outcomes.
2. Adoption of a **Risk-Needs-Responsivity assessment** protocol.
3. Integration of **trauma-informed practices** throughout the delinquency continuum.
4. Implementation of **effective family engagement strategies** throughout the entire juvenile delinquency process.
5. Implementation of **evidence-based and promising programs and services** that are proven to reduce recidivism and improve a variety of other youth outcomes, and evaluation of results of these services.

More recently, additional research reveals very important findings that should further inform future practice reform in alignment with best practices. First, deterrence-oriented programs that focus on discipline, surveillance, or threat of punitive consequences (e.g., Scared Straight-type programs, boot camps, and intensive probation supervision) on average have no effect on recidivism and may actually increase it (Lipsey, 2009). Second, many “therapeutic” programs and services oriented toward facilitating constructive behavior change have shown very positive effects - even for serious offenders (Lipsey, 2009; Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). In light of the fact that society holds juvenile probation and justice systems accountable for reductions in reoffending rates and improvements in public safety, the implications of the current research findings are:

1. “juvenile offenders with low risk for reoffending should be diverted from the juvenile justice system;

2. juvenile offenders with moderate or high risk for reoffending should be subject to the minimal level of supervision and control consistent with public safety and be provided with appropriate, effective therapeutic services; and
3. subjecting juvenile offenders to punishment beyond that which is inherent in the level of control necessary for public safety is likely to be counter-productive to reducing recidivism.” (Lipsey & Howell, 2010)

In the current practice environment for juvenile probation, the research therefore helps to identify the primary desired functions of probation officers. These include short-term risk management for probation clients supervised in the community and long-term behavioral reform that affects recidivism reduction (Paparozzi & Hinzman, 2005).

Additionally, we have learned that these public safety outcomes are best accomplished through attention to case management strategies involving a balanced combination of monitoring and oversight with targeted social work/casework activities that include focusing on the quality of interpersonal relationships – often specifically involving the positive relationship between the probation officer and the probation client.

The best practice approach also includes the commitment to a continuum of graduated levels of supervision and responses to behavioral transgressions; monitoring that is balanced with services, interventions, and programs that support positive behavior change; and an effective system of departmental management and supervision practices.

We also know that youth show up in the youth justice system with high rates of trauma exposure and active trauma symptoms. The research reflects that more than 80% of youth in juvenile justice settings have been exposed to more than one traumatic experience in their past (Greeson et. al., 2014). Those events can have significant impact on the mental health, physical health, behavior, and responsiveness of youth with whom probation practitioners work. The RFK National Resource Center (2016) developed a comprehensive three-system graphic and narrative resource depicting the potential role trauma plays in bringing youth into the systems and moving them deeper into system involvement. The publication identifies the fact that education, child welfare and juvenile justice each have a unique opportunity to interrupt this negative trajectory and create the best opportunities for successful outcomes. Given this prevalence, the use of validated screening instruments for active trauma symptoms and subsequently providing the appropriate care and interventions is yet another best practice that contributes to the desired pathway to success.

Paul Daniels, Director of Juvenile Court Services King County Superior Court | Seattle, Washington

In late 2019, King County, Washington was incredibly fortunate to be awarded the opportunity to participate as one of three jurisdictions in a cohort of the Dennis M. Mondoro Probation and Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Project. Going into this engagement, we were familiar with the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, and were both anxious and excited about the opportunity to take a “long look in the mirror” with regard to our practices and our commitment to system reform. To call our local environment “complicated,” would be a significant understatement, but the RFK National Resource Center team has been steadfast, deeply engaged, and committed to supporting us with unique and highly qualified insights, relevant research, and the willingness to engage in the difficult conversations necessary to push real reform. The RFK team also brings to bear an incredible roster of technical assistance experts that provide keen insight and expertise that are essential in a reform environment. Taking on this initiative has been both daunting and rewarding, but absolutely necessary. While the work continues, we are already seeing the benefits and progress offered by such a focused effort to align our needs and priorities and, ultimately, create better outcomes for youth in King County. As they say, “Trust the process.”

During the Dennis M. Mondoro Probation and Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Project³ (2018-2022), the RFK National Resource Center also teamed with Dr. Keith Cruise, Ph.D., Director of Clinical Training, Department of Psychiatry, Fordham University / Director, Behavioral Health Screening Services, National Youth Screening and Assessment Partners, LLC, to support improved behavioral health screening and assessment methods within the six participating jurisdictions. Dr. Cruise trained, coached, and mentored selected sites in the integration of effective trauma screening with mental health screening and RNR probation case planning and management. The seminal training approach provided by Dr. Cruise ensured deliberate attention on the identification and treatment for the comprehensive behavioral health needs that are critical to successful cessation of future delinquency and positive behavior change among court and probation-involved youth with behavioral health needs.

³ The Dennis M. Mondoro Probation and Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Project was supported by Grant # 2018-CZ-BX-K002 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

Additionally, a youth justice system committed to family involvement and engagement ensures that there are flexible and authentic opportunities for families to partner in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the case plan for the probation-involved youth. The research, derived from practical experiences in juvenile probation, has increasingly reflected that institutionalizing these practices helps to realize improved desistance of delinquent behavior.

It is in this holistic framework that a juvenile probation department, court, and youth justice system realize the best likelihood to operate in effective and efficient ways that result in achieving their goals, objectives, and outcomes.

Effective departmental management practices are often overlooked or minimized when assessing how to realize desired system and youth outcomes. Probation departments and youth justice systems are often primarily only accountable for levels of effort (e.g., outputs) and are therefore focused on “completing the designated process.” Effective departmental management practice must involve clarity of mission and accountability measures (and the intention and capacity to routinely report outcomes), policies, and procedures. The alignment must also include a comprehensive training and coaching curriculum that ensures the probation and court staff possesses the requisite skills to practice the balanced approach with probationers.

It is unfortunate that oftentimes little effort is expended on the relationship between professional orientation of probation officers and recidivism. According to research findings, the significance of the relationship between probation officer orientation and the success or failure of probationers cannot be overstated (Paparozzi and DeMichele, 2008). If the individuals and managers operationalizing and overseeing the delivery of services are inappropriate role models, inflexible in their response to probationer relapses, or philosophically opposed to intervention approaches and expected interactions with probationers, youth outcomes will suffer. Examining, understanding, and modifying, when appropriate, the professional orientations and attitudes of probation officers is a critical step in the adoption of evidence-based practices.

It is therefore critical to understand that references made to 'best practices' within this System Review Guidebook speak to the research related to adolescent development, youth trauma, effective service/program interventions, and intentional management, training and quality assurance for probation-involved youth and youth justice system stakeholders. In particular, the latter includes attorneys, court administration, and judges.

DEVELOPMENT OF A PROBATION AND YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM REVIEW LEADERSHIP TEAM

The creation of a Probation and Youth Justice System Review Leadership Team is the immediate first step in the review process. The team is integral to the successful administration and completion of the review and the importance of its role cannot be overstated. The collective function of the System Review Leadership Team (SRLT) is to provide oversight and guidance on the scope of issues examined in the review, identify desired outcomes and goals, discuss and refine areas requiring deeper analysis, and collaboratively respond to the findings.

The SRLT will convene at every site visit and will typically participate in routine conference calls and ongoing electronic communications with the outside consultants between on-site technical assistance visits. The team should meet to discuss and collaboratively plan the agenda for the scheduled on-site visits. The SRLT should also plan specific review activities, analyze data on probation services and programs, receive and discuss findings from the System Review activities, and discuss and consider ideas for improvements based on those findings.

In order for the review and implementation of the recommendations to be most successful, the following parties are **strongly encouraged** to be members of the SRLT:

- ✿ Director of Probation Services / Chief Probation Officer
- ✿ Court Administration (e.g., Administrator, Clerk)
- ✿ Deputy Director / Deputy Chief Probation Officer
- ✿ Probation Supervisor
- ✿ Presiding Youth Court Judge
- ✿ Prosecutor
- ✿ Defense Counsel
- ✿ Special Court Supervisor(s) (e.g. Drug Court, Mental Health Court)
- ✿ Diversion Program Coordinator

These entities represent the ideal minimum members of the SRLT. However, each jurisdiction should thoughtfully consider who else should be on the team and identify all of the major partner affiliates that influence the key decision points in a youth's process through the delinquency system.

DESIGN AND WORK PLAN

The design of the System Review follows the framework detailed below. However, areas of emphasis may be identified through discussions with the SRLT and other leadership focusing on the most critical issues that are confronting the department. A review may also be prompted by concerns that have been raised in the broader community about a department's functioning or the handling of a particularly high-profile case. Whatever the impetus, it is important that time be taken to “brainstorm the issues” and determine the priorities for review. Consideration should be given to the amount of time a jurisdiction has to undertake a review and what personnel resources will be available to organize and lead the review. This manner of preparatory exploration of key issues will clarify several factors that will impact the nature and scope of the System Review. These include:

- 🌿 Impetus for the review
- 🌿 Project scope (including the timeframe for completion and the resources to be used in the review)
- 🌿 Goals, objectives and outcomes for the probation department, court, and court administration
- 🌿 Organizing the issues into the framework of elements depicted in the Probation and Youth Justice System Review Guidebook

As previously indicated, the issues for review were originally organized into four elements. Over the past seventeen years, these elements have provided a well-organized and comprehensive framework for the review and analysis. In this Probation and Youth Justice System Review Guidebook, the overarching focus and scope of issues addressed are organized in the same manner that has produced successful system improvement in multiple state and local jurisdictions across the United States. The elements are:

1. Administration
2. Probation Supervision
3. Intra- and Interagency Work Processes
4. Quality Assurance

Within each of the elements, the statement of work should describe the importance of the particular element to the participating jurisdiction, the questions that are to be answered, and the methods that are to be used.

It is also important to highlight that the comprehensive nature of the System Review will intentionally seek to identify current strengths in policy and practice. In all elements of the review, these areas are sought so that the SRLT and participating staff may routinize and replicate those positive practices across

their probation and youth justice system. Additionally, it is the perspective of the RFK National Resource Center that we must share those strengths and successes with other jurisdictions across the country.

METHODOLOGIES

A critical part of the System Review involves deciding which methodologies will be most effective at identifying areas of the probation and court's policies and practices that are in need of improvement or those which solidly align with current research-informed practice. The identification of which methodologies to use should be accomplished by the individuals charged with organizing and carrying out the System Review in tandem with the SRLT. Careful consideration of the chosen activities by these persons not only assures access to the people or documents needed for the particular activities, but also encourages ideas about the best way to conduct each selected analytical and review methodology. Following is the array of methods that can be used and are routinely employed by the RFK National Resource Center to examine the four elements of the review. These methodologies have proven integral to developing the final findings and viable recommendations for system enhancement and improved youth outcomes consistent with the identified mission and goals of the participating jurisdiction.

Document Review

An important methodology used to review the mission, vision, strategies, policies, and procedures of the probation department and court administration is a document review. It is particularly useful to direct significant attention to an analysis of the probation officer's manual and to any memorialized compilation of affiliated policies and procedures since these core documents should be guiding the probation and court's work on a day-to-day basis. A review of these documents should focus on the probation and court's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement and continually answer the following two questions:

- 🌿 Do the documents reflect the mission, vision, goals, and sought outcomes of the probation department and court?
- 🌿 Do the documents provide a detailed description of how these foundational elements connect to the daily operations of a probation office and court?

Specific attention will also be given to whether the documents reflect a focus on youth and their unique developmental

needs as supported by current research. It is not uncommon to find that these manuals have not been updated to reflect an understanding of the key tenets of adolescent development and the corresponding policies and procedures that translate the science and research into practice.

In addition, other written materials such as the following will be reviewed as needed:

- Annual report
- Statistical reports detailing prevalence, case characteristics, and outcomes
- Probationer case files
- Standard probation orders
- Information sharing agreements
- Authorization/Consent for release of information
- Memoranda of understanding with stakeholder agencies (schools, behavioral health providers, etc.)
- Service contracts
- Strategic plans

The examination of these documents will help determine how well they support and reflect best practices for probation services and whether there are opportunities to improve upon or add to the guiding documents of a probation department and court.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

It is important to meet with internal and external stakeholders and agencies to determine what their experience has been working with the probation department and the court.

The SRLT should work with a set of questions focused on interactions or transactions within the department and interagency work processes (see Appendix C for a list of sample questions).

Interviews with key stakeholders can take place in a group setting or with individuals and should be held early in the review process to ensure comprehensive examination of the issues identified in the four major elements of the System Review process. This method is also designed to solicit input on additional concerns or strengths (e.g. operational, philosophy, practices, etc.) from stakeholders external to the probation department and the court. These key external stakeholders should be identified in concert with the SRLT. This process provides a finding in and of itself by identifying who the SRLT believes is important to the examination and functioning of probation and the court. Key stakeholders may include:

- Judges
- Police
- Children's Services
- Court Administration
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Prosecutor
- Defense Counsel
- Schools
- Private Providers
- Agency Directors
- Therapists
- School Resource Officers
- Others as identified

Employee Survey Categories:

- Pre-disposition Investigations
- Case Supervision
- Court Processing
- Departmental Management and Supervision
- Resources and Service Delivery
- Best Practices
- Client Outcomes
- Interagency Relationships

Employee Survey

The use of an employee survey presents a critically important opportunity to get input from the probation and court staff. The anonymity of an employee survey provides the best method for the examination of many different areas of current practice and the honest reporting of opinion, concerns, ideas, and recommendations.

At a minimum, it is recommended that an electronic survey of employees include probation officers and their supervisors, and court administration staff. The survey is routinely comprised of closed-ended questions, asking respondents to reflect strength of agreement or disagreement with statements about practice, followed by open-ended questions designed to elicit more expansive responses. The scale for responding to the closed-ended questions can include a range of responses such as: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*, and *do not know*. Appendix D is the employee survey that was used in Clark County (Las Vegas), Nevada.

The open-ended questions (Appendix E) called for the respondents to identify particular areas that could be improved. These areas included delivery of services to probationers, operations of the department, and the work experience of the probation officers. All of the survey questions were developed in partnership with the SRLT. The participants in the survey are not identified with their responses and the open-ended questions should be reported in summary manner with care to omit survey respondent identifiers.

The results of the survey are brought back to the respondents and are examined in greater detail, focusing on significant trends and large variances in the responses. This probative follow-up discussion serves to corroborate and/or clarify areas of significance and provides an opportunity to assess for consensus or disagreement on noteworthy topic areas. This meeting provides another valuable opportunity for the probation staff to partner in the review and to introduce alternative practices which could improve their work with probationers, their department, the court, and other stakeholders.

Process Mapping

A process mapping exercise with a select group of probation officers and/or probation managers and relevant stakeholders is an invaluable opportunity to analyze interfaces, handoffs, bottlenecks, and other case flow issues for youth involved with the probation and youth justice system. Using a well-defined protocol (see Appendix F), this exercise becomes the anchor for the entire review process and identifies key decision points and the practices that inform them (See Appendix G for an example process map). The case flow mapping exercise can initially be accomplished by viewing or constructing a case flow process for the youth justice system. The key decision points will be identified with the goal of collectively clarifying professional staff responsibilities, mandates, and expected products and outcomes that support improved decision-making at each key step, including within the court. Against an established consensus for the probation system's goals, this mapping process creates an understanding of the most appropriate decision points and practices around which improvements or reforms may be developed and/or planned on behalf of youth involved in the probation and youth justice system.

The process mapping methodology is also very useful when holding supplemental meetings with outside agencies to gain external perspectives on interagency work processes. Issues identified during the process mapping exercise are used as targeted topics for discussion with the SRLT and system stakeholders and highlight areas of practice that require further analysis.

Goals for Process Mapping:
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- ✿ Understand the steps in the various system and court processes
- ✿ Identify what happens (action), who is responsible (decision), and what output or outcome is expected or produced at each step (product)
- ✿ Discuss/Assess the quantity and/or quality of the information being gathered and utilized in each step of the process
- ✿ Identify process gaps
- ✿ Identify necessary resources (workforce and program)
- ✿ Identify what is and is not working in the youth justice and probation system

Probation Orders Analysis

This methodology involves developing an assigned workgroup and reviewing all relevant standard and supplemental probation orders with a focus on three key issues:

1. Number of conditions on the orders
2. Types of conditions on the orders
3. Language and accessibility of the orders

The analysis is intended to highlight developmental concepts and research underlying the need for streamlining conditions and seeks to provide information and feedback to help jurisdictions target individual youth strengths, goals, and needs. The analysis and review will be incorporated into the final report of findings and recommendations for enhancing and strengthening probation orders within the probation and youth justice system.

Meetings with Department Director and Supervisory/ Managerial Staff

Whether the System Review is conducted using outside consultants or individuals within the department and court administration charged with organizing and carrying out all review activities, it is important for those individuals to meet regularly with the probation department director, supervisory or managerial staff, and relevant court officials. These meetings should include discussions on the progress of the review, the leadership's expectations of the review, and suggestions for addressing many of the findings as the System Review progresses. This provides the dynamic opportunity for any needed remedial actions on the part of management without waiting for the final report of the review to be completed.

Probation Officer Group Interviews

If the review is conducted by outside consultants, an important additional method to gain information from the probation officers and gain the trust that their participation in the review is a meaningful activity, is to extend an open invitation to all probation officers in the department to meet with the consultants without any of the probation supervisors or managers present. The purpose of the meetings are two-fold: 1) to discuss the process map and how daily practices align or deviate from the written flowchart; and 2) to share results of the employee survey and to develop more clarity for the interpretation of the survey responses. The method encourages an open meeting to discuss perspectives and information that the probation officers believe is pertinent to the probation system review. In summary, this review method permits a critique of operations and practice while encouraging recommendations for improvements and reform.

Court Observation

There are a myriad of benefits to be gained from observing court in session during the course of the System Review. The observed proceedings include detention hearings/reviews, initial/arrestment hearings, plea/adjudication, disposition matters, and motions or revocation actions. The observation permits awareness of the routine practice of the prosecutor, public defender, probation officer, and judge within the court room, as well as how each stakeholder interacts with their colleagues and engages with the youth and family.

Focus Groups

The conduct of focus groups is a useful method for obtaining the input of parents, youth, and the additional consumers of probation and court services (e.g. victims, law enforcement, etc.). The focus group discussions should be guided by a set of questions for the parents (see Appendix H for sample questions) and a set of questions for the youth (see Appendix I for sample questions), and other targeted groups to ensure coverage of similar or the same issues, thereby potentially adding more value to the collective feedback.

Soliciting participation in the focus groups can often be a challenge. Jurisdictions may consider alternative opportunities to hear from parents, youth, and other groups. These might include individualized interviews with particular clients, or requesting that parents and youth complete an exit survey about their experiences during the probationary period. They might also consider non-routine business hours to accommodate variable schedules for focus group participants.

**Kari Rumbaugh, Assistant Deputy Administrator
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The Probation System Review was an opportunity that Nebraska immediately knew would benefit Probation. The intensive review process was supported by the Chief Justice, State Court and Probation Administrators and local probation management. This project was made possible due to a strong relationship with John Tuell and the impact that the probation system reviews have had in other states. We selected Lancaster County...because they have had strong judicial leadership. Nebraska is a statewide probation system within the Judicial Branch so therefore in addition to learning specifically how Lancaster County could enhance probation; we were also focused on statewide impacts for probation youth.

As the site visits continued throughout the review the impact of having John Tuell and the RFK Consultant Team lead the review was clear. They created an environment where all voices mattered and were heard, from judiciary to probation officers in the field. Their juvenile justice expertise led the group to identifying gaps and determine what is best for youth. During the implementation phase, the 15 recommendations from the Probation System Review were prioritized and the Lancaster County collaboration began work on shared focused priorities. The review ensured open communication, recommendations focused on probation specifically and feedback from experts with years of experience and knowledge to help move the recommendations into real action. Nebraska wants to thank the RFK National Resource Center Team for their dedication to juvenile justice youth and families and leadership in helping states make true change to affect the lives of youth and families we work with every day.




Youth Outcomes and System Performance Capacity Development

The identification of relevant and useful data to support a probation department, court and prosecutor's ability to report on achievement of desired outcomes and system performance is critical to the System Review process. There is frequently an obvious need for an intensified focus on core data that will improve the long-term capacity of states and local sites to collect, manage, and track outcome and system performance measures for probation and court involved youth. Therefore, this methodology focuses on two aspects of data collection: management and reporting.

First, using guidance published in a data planning article published by the RFK National Resource Center in 2014 (Siegel) and also informed by the National Center for Youth Justice's *Fundamental Measures in Youth Justice* (retrievable at: <https://www.ncjj.org/fmjj/default.asp>), the SRLT (supported by additional expert personnel, e.g. information technology, data analyst, etc.) will populate a working grid to identify the most relevant data elements and questions that will inform everyday practice, population trends and characteristics for routine managerial oversight, and outcome (youth and system) reports.

Second, the probation managers and officers will participate in an examination of measures and outcomes related to probation officer performance. With guidance from the SRLT and input from the probation managers and officers, a scan

of current indicators used to measure and evaluate probation officer performance is developed. The next step includes a facilitated group meeting with the probation officers and supervisors to determine:

-  What are the desired outcomes for probationers?
-  What factors affect the achievement of those outcomes?
-  What is used to measure the achievement of outcomes?

After these exercises are completed, a subsequent review and analysis is conducted to identify how and if the performance indicators relate to the achievement of desired client and system outcomes. The second portion of the data analysis is designed to ensure that probation officer activities are effective, efficient, and aligned with practices that positively impact youth outcomes and system performance.

ELEMENTS OF THE PROBATION and YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM REVIEW

ELEMENT A: ADMINISTRATION

The review of program planning and implementation focuses on a probation department and court's policies, procedures, and operations, as well as how probation practice and court process is carried out as reflected in the feedback from probation officers, court officials and administration, other key stakeholders, and consumers. The analysis is followed by descriptions of operations and covers training, management practices, and probation and court practices. Probation practices include probation supervision, service delivery to probationers, and a qualitative and subjective exploration of the various views, perspectives, and philosophies held about probation practices. Court practices include timely case processing, goals and objectives of each key court hearing, and information used to inform judicial decisions and orders.

Issues

Some of the key issues in this review element may be:

1. Whether the probation policy and procedures manual is a relevant guide for daily practice.
2. How management practices contribute to the overall functioning of a department.
3. How the design and delivery of training support desired probation practices.
4. Whether probation supervision is effectively carried out and whether services to probationers are effectively delivered.
5. Whether principles and tenets of swift and fair practice in the court administration and courtroom are applied with fidelity.

In addressing departmental practice and implementation in Element A, the review begins with an analysis of policies, procedures, and operations that govern the administration of the department. Specifically, the SRLT and other stakeholders examine how probation and court practices are informed and guided by memorialized documentation related to leadership, managerial oversight, supervision of clients, and training. This is also the initial opportunity to ensure that the review is significantly informed by feedback from probation officers and relevant stakeholders (e.g. judges, prosecutors, public defenders, etc.).

Questions that guide this part of the review within Element A include:

- Do the mission, vision, policies, and procedures link well to each other, reflect best practices for achievement of youth outcomes, and connect to daily youth probation and court operations?
- Are the policies, procedures, and desired youth outcomes articulated in a current manual or compilation of standard operating procedures?
- Is the role of probation officers defined within those documents (e.g. enforcement, supporting positive behavior change, balance of both)?
- Is there a routinized system of managerial oversight that contributes to fidelity of best practice among all staff within the department and among its partners?
- Is there a training curriculum that ensures probation and court staff are effectively trained to use the best practices to achieve those articulated goals and outcomes?

These questions can be challenging to examine and the answers difficult to digest; however, they must be explored. An effective organization/youth justice system must have a clear mission that undergirds the strategies that guide its daily operations, and the policies, procedures, and protocols to govern the daily operations must also be included. High-performing organizations and youth justice systems experience greater organizational effectiveness when vision, mission, and values statements are clearly articulated and accountability plans are incorporated into a management strategy.

Data Sources and Resources

To determine whether the probation manual is an effective guide to daily practice, the SRLT needs to systematically analyze its content and elicit feedback from its users. The manual should serve as the foundational document to guide the probation officers' work. It should detail the operational functions of the probation officers and direct them to carry out their roles and responsibilities for probation supervision and treatment. In addition to the manual itself, additional data sources include employee survey responses about the manual, key stakeholders' views of probation officers' daily functioning, and the views of supervisors and probation managers about the manual's utility. Authoritative resources should guide the manual review, including the statutory framework under which probation practices are mandated to function. Additionally, national guidelines from resources such as the American Probation and Parole Association and

JURISDICTIONAL EXAMPLE:

Clark County, Nevada

Clark County (includes Las Vegas), Nevada adopted statutory reform that required the training and implementation of the Youth Level of Service – Case Management Inventory (YLS-CMI). During their System Review and implementation period of the Mondoro Project, Clark County developed policies, procedures, and practices for compliance with the statute adopted in January 2020. This process involved discard of previous policies reliant on un-validated instruments and report formats and incrementally overcame resistance from probation staff and several key justice system partners. Staff transitions, including both departures and new appointments, accompanied the ultimately successful YLS-CMI implementation into practice. The Clark County Juvenile Probation Division created a specialized assessment unit (Assessment Court Report Unit (ACRU)) to ensure adherence and inter-rater reliability to fidelity of the YLS-CMI. In tandem with targeted changes to policy regarding the YLS-CMI, Juvenile Probation amended multiple standard operating procedures (SOP's) to produce an updated set of expectations to reflect operational practices that emphasized adolescent brain science and commitment to e positive youth development. and application of a developmental approach to case management reflecting and understanding of the neuroscience of

adolescent brain development. This action resulted in an updated Probation Practice Manual from which probation management could train staff on best practice expectations as detailed in policy and protocols. Among the other system improvement actions implemented, the Clark County DJJS also:

- ✿ increased reliance on The Harbor (local Juvenile Assessment Center situated in multiple sites across the county) that produced enhanced opportunities to divert from filing a formal petition and permitting improved assessment of community treatment and services necessary to reduce future engagement with the juvenile court,
- ✿ introduced the Growth-Focused Case Management approach and secured training and technical assistance to assist in implementation to support DJJS/Juvenile Probation's commitment to positive youth development approaches in probation case management, and
- ✿ expanded the Quality Assurance – Continuous Quality Improvement Unit staff level to reflect a new commitment to collecting, managing and reporting data on specific outcomes and measures that will be developed with information from the Fundamental Measures for Juvenile Justice (FMJJ).

Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) principles, or the Enhanced Youth Justice Guidelines (revised 2018, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges), can assist in this activity.

In the review of how management practices contribute to the overall functioning of a department and court, the examination should be based on the foundation (or best practice standard) that a department and court administration has in place: 1) a carefully articulated mission and vision, 2) a clear set of strategies to achieve the mission and vision, and 3) corresponding policies and procedures that clearly direct and evaluate the staff in its performance. The managers and probation officers within the department and key court administration are significant sources of information in the review of management practices across the youth justice system. The stakeholders can be guided through self-assessment and executive coaching to identify the strengths and weaknesses of its management practices. The employee survey responses provide a good source of data to evaluate management practices, as do the group interviews with probation officers and supervisors, and court administration. Effective management is also characterized by a coordinated system of routine managerial meetings and

communication forums, including supervisory and line staff, intra- and interagency partners, community members, and key policy makers. A source for assessing the department's current structure and capacity in this area is the Management Oversight Practices / Communication Grid and can be found in Appendix J. Authoritative resources from literature reviews on management practice can also serve to illustrate effective management practices.

Sources for the review of the design and delivery of training to support probation practices should include a complete review of the training curriculum (see Appendix K). This review will examine pre-service, orientation, in-service and special skills and all corresponding training materials. The training curriculum should, at a minimum, encompass the scope of activities contained in the probation manual and relevant court policies. It should help both the probation officers and court officials to understand his/her role and the tools and resources that need to be employed to effectively carry out that role and identify training strengths and weaknesses. This input can be accomplished through a review of the employee survey responses and in conversation with the probation officers and court staff.

This element of the review examines with emphasis whether managerial and supervisory practices are in place to ensure that probation supervision is effectively carried out and to assess whether services to probationers are effectively delivered. The sources and methods for this aspect of the review include the employee survey, stakeholder meetings and interviews, and focus groups with parents and probationers and are reflective of the importance of informing the review through staff and consumer feedback. Review in this area can include an examination of the probation officer's role, assignment of cases and levels of supervision, and working conditions. The review of the actual delivery of services to probationers should include the capacity to deliver services, assessment and referral to services, resources and unmet needs of youths, and reports from youths on their probation experiences. Authoritative sources should include a department's own reports of its metrics for the delivery of services, covering not just the probation processes (completion of reports, number of contacts with probationers, etc.), but also its progress with the provision of treatment resources and achievement of related intermediate outcomes.

Potential Findings and Recommendations

A jurisdiction will likely see the greatest volume of findings and recommendations in the Administration element because the areas of examination are the foundation upon which probation and court practices stand. It is possible that a jurisdiction will find that, absent a recent update, it needs a significant overhaul of its manual, or that its probation officer roles and responsibilities are not as clear as they need to be, or that its training curriculum is in need of updates and revisions. The recommendations that flow from these findings may be extensive and should be specific, providing clear direction as to the next steps a probation department and court might take to improve its practices.

ELEMENT B: PROBATION SUPERVISION

The review and analysis of probation supervision practices and approaches includes the decision-making processes throughout the youth justice system (e.g. arrest, referral, adjudication, disposition, case planning and management, revocation, case closure) and the resulting assignment and oversight of particular groups of probationers in specific programs against the best practices standards (see Appendix L). The review necessarily focuses on the department's capacity for probation supervision and practice development and improvement.

Issues

Some of the key issues in this review element may be:

1. Analysis of the probation officers' approach to supervision, the role of the probation officer, their day-to-day tasks and how they connect to desired youth outcomes.
2. Review of professional staff responsibilities, mandates and expected products and outcomes that support improved decision-making at each key step.
3. Analysis of decision-making processes and the assignment and handling of particular groups of probationers (e.g. risk levels, special populations) in specific programs.

Questions that guide this part of the review within Element B include:

- 🌱 How are cases assigned to probation officers?
- 🌱 What role does the probation officer play in the life of a probationer?
- 🌱 Are supervision levels matched based on risks and needs through structured decision-making tools?
- 🌱 How are services matched to a youth's needs?
- 🌱 What products are the probation officers' responsible for creating? How are they used?
- 🌱 What are the supervision criteria for each probationer group?
- 🌱 How clearly are client outcomes identified for each probationer?
- 🌱 How do probation officers' tasks connect to desired youth outcomes?
- 🌱 How is staff evaluated? Based on what criteria?

Data Sources and Resources

To determine whether decision-making processes are clearly articulated, understood, and accompanied with corresponding tools, the SRLT should:

- 🌱 Undertake a file review of sample cases.
- 🌱 Analyze the department's use of screening, assessment, and other decision-making tools (see Appendix M).
- 🌱 Consider the responses from the employee survey, designated focus groups, and court system stakeholders.

The SRLT should also consider how the organization is structured to make key decisions about probationers (e.g. whether all of its probation officers should conduct assessments and make corresponding recommendations regarding individual probationers, or whether this function should be performed in a separate assessment unit).

Authoritative resources for this review area include the American Bar Association (ABA) Joint Commission on Juvenile Justice Standards (1996), the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' (NCJFCJ) 2017 Resolution Regarding Juvenile Probation and Adolescent Development, as well as a department's own reports of the effectiveness of its decision-making and assessment practices.

JURISDICTIONAL EXAMPLE: Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin the System Review team worked with the RFK National Resource Center consultants to review documents and manuals that covered training, policy development, management practices, probation supervision, family engagement guidance and practice, inter-agency collaboration at charging decisions and plea-dispositional processes, and outcome reporting methods. After receipt of the final report of recommendations, the Milwaukee County Division of Youth and Family Services revamped their Intake operations in coordination with the District Attorney's office; developed a new family engagement guide for parents, families, and stakeholders; created new agency "data dashboards" for use in routine cross-discipline meetings; and, sought to implement a bifurcated plea-dispositional process that more effectively used results from a risk-needs-responsivity instrument to inform recommendations.

How the methodology and performance for particular programs is supported by data and best practices can best be reviewed by examining a department's own data sources and the literature on evidence-based practice. Data development and getting an effective data collection system in place is a challenge for most probation departments. This is a critical review component to enable and assure that data drives and augments professional judgement toward effective probation practice. The questions the SRLT must ask include: 1) whether it has data about the characteristics of youth placed in particular programs; 2) whether it has data about the outcomes achieved by youth in each of the programs in a way that is sufficient to assess the effectiveness of its programs; and 3) whether the department has developed routine reporting practices of qualitative and quantitative data to inform successes and necessary areas of adjustment to policy, practice and programs. If the answer to these questions is "no," then the review team needs to address what data development needs to take place and develop corresponding recommendations.

Determining how well a department understands and employs best practices and evidence-based practices related to probation assignment and balancing supervision and monitoring with support for positive behavioral change can be accomplished in this portion of the review. This task can be accomplished by examining the responses to the employee survey and through group interviews with probation officers. It can also be supplemented with file reviews to assess how well structured decision-making tools and positive youth development principles associated with desired behavior changes are tied to treatment and supervision recommendations. Another important method involves solicitation of input from other key stakeholder interviews to ensure the full spectrum of perspectives regarding the department's challenges and most promising programs and practices.

Potential Findings and Recommendations

Once again, the findings and recommendations will be unique to each jurisdiction. However, the history of the System Review process suggests that the likely focus areas for further examination and improvement will include:

- ✿ Examination/improvement of decision-making tools (e.g. screening and/or assessment instruments, court reports, court process, etc.).
- ✿ Examination/improvement of the criteria or methodology for the assignment of youth in particular types of court intervention or programs.
- ✿ Examination/improvement of probation supervision strategies and methods and the corresponding oversight of same (including application of adolescent development, pro-social connections are incorporated into case plans, and growth focused case management approaches).
- ✿ Undertaking significant data development efforts so that it has the data to gauge its effectiveness.
- ✿ Constructing a new or improved benchmarking system for internal system performance, probation youth outcomes, or service provider results.

ELEMENT C: INTRA- AND INTERAGENCY WORK PROCESSES

Work processes impacting system performance and youth outcomes in probation and the youth justice system involve major sets of interconnected activities through which decisions are made and services are delivered. In order to be effective, these processes must be well conceived, clearly articulated, coordinated, and subject to periodic review and

monitoring to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Most often, the work processes depend on the cooperation of many interrelated parts of the probation department and court as well as a wide array of outside organizations. Efforts to review these work processes will involve examination of various professional roles inside the department and court, within and across other public agencies, and with private provider agencies.

Issues

Some of the key issues in this review element may be:

1. How the case flow process functions within a department and court and whether key information is available at critical decision-making points.
2. Whether the relationship with the court is clear and functioning well in terms of roles and responsibilities.
3. How interagency processes function from the perspective of probation and court, and the key agency partners and how linkages can be strengthened.
4. Whether ongoing forums exist to resolve issues between probation, the court and other agencies.

Questions that guide this part of the review within Element C include:

- Are the roles and responsibilities of all the court partners reflected in policy or protocol?
- How effective are the linkages between the court partners and probation?
- What is the nature of the relationships with outside stakeholders and partners?
- Is there a service/treatment referral protocol?
- How effective is the service/treatment referral process?
- What information do the service/treatment providers receive?
- Are communications and client progress updates meeting the needs of both parties?
- Are there cross-system collaborations and communication forums?
- What regular forums exist with stakeholders and providers for troubleshooting and problem solving?

In Element C, the review is concerned with examining the intra- and interagency partner relationships that impact practice and ultimately system performance and youth outcomes. Heretofore in this System Review Guidebook, we have identified specific jurisdictional examples to highlight particular review activities. However, since this topic area is examined in every jurisdiction through the lens of all of

the relationships that are critical to the effective functioning of a probation department and its relevant stakeholders, below is a brief listing of the kinds of issues that have presented themselves with those stakeholders and partners in jurisdictions in which the RFK National Resource Center's consultants have worked since 2006:

PROBATION PARTNER	ISSUES / PRACTICES
Law enforcement	Investigation and processing timelines for non-detention and detention arrests
Prosecution	Criteria for petition and/or alternative response decisions; timelines for filing; probation officer duties in informal adjustments and/or diversion
Judicial	Disposition and probation order practices; probation officer expectations
Courts	Notification processes; case processing/hearing timelines; reporting requirements
Education/ School Systems	Disciplinary policies; school resource officer practices
Service Providers	Referral processing; coordination of participation and treatment summary information outcome-based contracting

While not all relationships will result in concerns that require revisions or reform to practice, the framework of this review calls for an exploration of current policies and procedures that affect each of these youth-serving relationships.

Data Sources and Resources

To determine how the case flow process functions within a department and whether key information is available at critical decision-making points, it is useful to identify a select group of experienced probation officers to analyze the intra-agency case flow process. This can be accomplished using a mapping exercise modeled on the Cross Functional Process Map from Robert Damelio's book, *The Basics of Process Mapping, 2nd Edition* (2011). Process mapping allows members of an organization to:

- analyze interfaces, handoffs, bottlenecks, and other case flow process issues
- identify information available at each point
- compliment on what works well
- identify any areas needing improvement
- identify what performance measures should follow from the desired work processes

The mapping process should consist of identifying probation officers' actions in each of four functions (e.g. referral/intake, pre-adjudication investigation, adjudication and disposition,

and supervision), the decisions to be made, and the resulting products. This method maximizes opportunities to learn about the multiple perspectives of probation officers.

To determine whether the relationship with the court is clear and functioning well in terms of roles and responsibilities, the best sources of data are the responses to the employee survey, group interviews with probation officers, and interviews with the judges and court personnel who are part of the key stakeholder group. Since this relationship is so important to the overall functioning of a probation department, this part of the review provides an excellent opportunity to reexamine the roles and responsibilities of the probation officers in relation to the court, the flow of paper and information between a department and the court, the comportment of both probation officers and judges in relation to one another, and the level of satisfaction on the part of the department and the judges regarding the relationship.

The functionality of interagency processes and linkages with outside agencies, contractors, and community-based organizations (see Appendix L) should begin with a determination of the current effectiveness, strengths, and opportunities for improvement. The data sources for this determination include key stakeholder interviews, focus group or stakeholder meetings with outside agencies, employee survey responses, and meetings with supervisors and line staff.

Whether ongoing forums exist to resolve issues between probation, the court, and other agencies is an additional critical question to answer. The character of the relationships between probation and other agencies is ever changing due to developments in law, policy, and practice. These changes can jointly and individually impact each of the entities. It is therefore critical that forums be in place to resolve problems and modify practices. A probation department should have in place open forums for broad communications (announcements, personnel and policy changes, etc.); representative committees that meet regularly to do problem solving, potential problem solving, and joint policy development; and interagency agreements to specify actions that are to take place on a regular basis between agencies (for information sharing, joint protocols, etc.). If these do not already exist, the System Review is a good opportunity to specify the need for their development and support methods to effectively implement these priority communication forums.

Potential Findings and Recommendations

In the intra- and interagency work processes review element, youth justice stakeholders may find that there are hidden problems in the relationships within and among key agencies and organizations. It may find that the review only serves

to highlight those problems that were already known. Whichever is the case, the System Review presents a fresh opportunity to look at and improve these relationships. A probation department or court administration may find that there are unnecessary steps or paperwork in its interagency work processes that slow the process and frustrate staff in the performance of their functions and duties. Or, it may find things such as the referral process to outside agencies needs strengthening or the feedback from the providers regarding the treatment process is lacking. A probation department and court administration may recommend that its forums for resolution of ongoing issues, both internal and external, need to be strengthened in order to improve its intra- and interagency relationships. The findings may also yield particular relationships that feature strengths that can and should be replicated in other interagency interactions. To be certain, it is clear that relationships and history of interaction must be examined to determine how they may be affecting the practices – and thereby impacting achievement of positive results. However, it is important to note that the primary focus of this area of the review is directed toward the development of enhanced policy and protocol language to ensure the sustainability of the practice improvements.

ELEMENT D: QUALITY ASSURANCE

Probationers' achievement of successful outcomes should be the main business of any probation department and youth justice system and the gravitational point around which all of the probation officers' and court administration's activities center.

“The achievement of successful outcomes first depends on a careful identification of what outcomes are sought; second, an examination and address of the factors that affect achievement; and third, the development of a measurement system to document achievement. The importance of the third item, or performance measurement, cannot be overstated because often what gets measured is what people value and where they focus their efforts.”

(Los Angeles County Probation Program Audit report, p. 46)

It is important to note that the review work conducted in Element D is also supported by and integrated with the analysis completed in Element A related to the routinized

system of managerial oversight that contributes to fidelity of best practice among all staff within the probation department, court, and among its relevant partners (e.g., attorneys, treatment/service provider agencies, schools, law enforcement, and families). This combination of findings and recommendations provides the best opportunity to realize the goals of sustainable quality assurance.

Issues

Some of the key issues in this review element may be:

1. Whether the youth justice system has established clear definitions for the various recidivism measures associated with their goals (e.g. closed probation cases, successful completion of probation terms, diverted youth, special populations, and court programs, etc.).
2. Whether a probation department is focused on the achievement of intermediate outcomes related to positive behavioral change in addition to recidivism.
3. Whether a probation department and court has developed a clearly articulated set of client outcomes.
4. How a probation department and court measures and evaluates worker performance.
5. How worker performance and its measurement are related to desired outcomes.
6. How a probation department is ensuring fidelity to their use of a risk screening tool and/or risk-needs assessment (see Appendix N).

The System Review does not prescribe a set of youth outcomes for participant jurisdictions. The outcomes, measures, and benchmark goals for each probation department and corresponding youth justice system should be developed and prioritized in consideration of the baseline data, characteristics (e.g. age, gender, race, offense type, etc.), policy, and statutory mandates unique to that jurisdiction. However, the System Review process **does** prioritize a group of client outcomes that align with results likely sought and achieved by the implementation of best practice approaches and practices. Many of these outcomes have been mentioned throughout this publication but are offered here as a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, list for jurisdictions to consider:

Recidivism (post-closure [by level of risk]):

- Intensive supervision
- Diversion
- Informal adjustment/alternative response
- Specialty court
- Unique target populations (e.g. girls, youth of color, emerging adults)

Program completion rates (including all of the above, and):

- Restitution
- Community supervision
- Special skills training programs (e.g. law education, special skills competency training, etc.)

Behavioral domains (specifically identified in relation to the risk-needs tool(s) used, but including):

- Education
- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Pro-social connections
- Family functioning

In addition, since the System Review focuses on system performance, the following outcomes are examined for appropriate alignment with best practice and the jurisdiction's population characteristics:

Length of probation terms (e.g. by risk level)

Reductions in:

- Detention rates
- Length of stay
- Technical violations and rates of revocations
- Secure correction commitments

Establishment of case processing time standards for each key decision point in the life of a youth's case:

- Arrest-referral (detained and non-detained)
- Intake-initial hearing
- Initial hearing-adjudication
- Adjudication-disposition

The examination conducted under Element D that addresses system performance measurement and client outcomes is also intended to focus on worker performance, the completion of particular case processes, and setting and measuring client outcomes. The context for this discussion is prioritized toward identifying the activities that have a clear and positive relationship with desired youth outcomes and system efficiency and effectiveness. The analysis is not intended to result in an evaluation of individual worker performance.

This review element also provides an opportunity to structure a performance measurement system for the array of service provider partners through the implementation of a performance-based contracting process. This ensures that the community partners (service providers) are effectively delivering treatment interventions that are contributing to or producing desired youth outcomes.

Questions that guide this part of the review include:

- ✿ What performance measures exist presently for the completion of specific case processes (e.g. meetings with probationers, collateral contacts, and timely completion of reports)?
- ✿ Has the probation department and court clearly articulated a set of client outcomes?
- ✿ What measures exist for the achievement of successful client outcomes?
- ✿ What measures exist for the case assignment and caseload standards?
- ✿ Do client outcomes drive probation practice and activities and court policy and process?
- ✿ Do treatment providers know what outcomes are expected of their interventions with probationers?
- ✿ How are client outcomes identified in the individual case (intermediate- and long-term outcomes)?
- ✿ What results are achieved by the current programs and practices?
- ✿ Are the programs and practices of the probation department the best that can be provided and are the programs carried out in an effective manner?
- ✿ How do the practices relate to national standards for delivery of probation services and court administration?

Data Sources and Resources

To determine whether probation and courts are focused on the achievement of intermediate outcomes in addition to recidivism, the key sources of information will be its own internal performance reports, responses from the employee survey, and interviews with key stakeholders. While recidivism cannot be ignored since it relates to public expectation regarding the role of the system and public safety, there are a number of other factors that influence whether the youth commits additional offenses. In fact, intermediate outcomes (e.g. enrollment in school, paying restitution, entering into treatment) may be more directly related to the performance of the youth justice system (Thomas, NCJJ, 2006, p. 3 citing Petersilia, 1993 and Dilulio, 1991).

Determining how a probation department and its key youth justice affiliates measures worker performance can be accomplished by looking at the reporting measures it uses for overall departmental performance and by looking at the performance review instrument for probation officers and court personnel. Often, the performance indicators will focus primarily on the measurement of case processes (e.g. number of monthly contacts, timely completion of reports, other timely completion of forms, etc.). A related

issue is consistency in the measurement of performance. This refers to whether the standards that constitute good performance are clear throughout a department/agency and whether the performance measures are consistently applied by each supervisor using tools that reflect those standards. "Performance measures tell us where the organization is relative to its goals, how well the organization is doing, and point to things that can improve the organization's effectiveness. Ultimately, we measure to improve the performance." (Thomas, NCJJ, 2006, pp. 2-3)

Whether probation and the court has clearly articulated a set of outcomes can be determined through the employee survey responses and in group interviews with supervisors and probation officers and court staff. Probation may have in place several documents that identify desired outcomes for probationers in the individual service plans, probation conditions, and recommendations to the court. The key is to determine whether the probation officers themselves can articulate the outcomes they seek for probationers and then make sure that the documents, tools, and activities they utilize direct their performance toward achievement of the articulated outcomes. Additionally, the coordination and integration of expectations for system performance and youth outcomes with the court is critical to the achievement of goals and outcomes.

The System Review can utilize an exercise with the probation managers and supervisors and court staff to determine how worker performance and its measurement are related to desired outcomes. The steps of that exercise are detailed as follows:

1. List the desired outcomes and all of the factors that affect achievement of those outcomes.
2. Develop a list of probation officer and court actions that could relate to the achievement of those outcomes (see Appendix O: Jefferson Parish Probation Officer Evaluation Form).
3. Review the list of desired outcomes against the tools they use (e.g. individual service plans, probation conditions, court orders) to identify outcomes for individual probationers.
4. Review the probation department's performance reports and measures to determine how they relate to desired outcomes.

There are also several indices to consider when examining whether benchmark goals and outcomes exist for a department's programs and practices. The first consideration is whether probation, court – and the prosecutor's office

(particularly related to diversion) – has the data to inform itself about the programs and practices that are promising and effective. Next, the SRLT should consider whether the probation department, court and prosecutor has identified what activities and responsibilities it wants to measure. The SRLT should consider whether, if there are existing indices and benchmarks, the foundation and routine standard of practice is in place for effective measurement by establishing baselines and goals and developing internal and public reporting systems.

Finally, another index of the youth justice system's commitment to benchmarking lies in its establishment of a performance-based contracting system for its contracted services. The collaborative partners should have identified outputs and outcomes for its program providers to help assure its commitment to evidence-based treatment and service interventions for youth and families.

Potential Findings and Recommendations

It is not uncommon to discover that there is ambiguity in the identification of desired outcomes and the review and evaluation of probation officer and court activity in relation to the outcomes. Many probation departments and courts are focused on process outcomes as opposed to client outcomes and their performance measurement systems are similarly focused. While it is desirable to have client outcomes drive performance and activities, the System Review may reveal that is not the case. Probation and court administration may find that it needs to revisit the construct of its whole performance measurement, evaluation, and/or quality assurance system. Further, probation and court leadership and staff may determine that it needs to strengthen its articulation of desired client outcomes, focusing also on achievement of those intermediate outcomes that have an important relationship to the variety of reduced recidivism measures commensurate with the population of youth in targeted programs (e.g. diversion, probation, specialty courts, etc.).

Suggested Data Elements

Detention

- # of youth in detention
 - Average daily population
 - Annual total
 - By race / ethnicity / dual status
- Average length of stay
- Detention stays by type
 - Arrest
 - Pre-adjudication
 - Technical violation/Revocation
 - Discretionary sanction imposed by probation officer for non-compliant behavior

Charges

- # and type of charges
- # or % of status offenses

Intake

- # of referrals made annually
- # of risk-to-reoffend screens provided
- # or % of low, moderate and high scores

Case Types

- % of cases referred by:
 - Non-filing result
 - Diversion program
 - Alternative response (e.g. restorative justice, etc.)
- % of referrals formally filed
- % of informal adjustments / deferred adjudications
- % of cases adjudicated

Population Characteristics

- Ethnicity of youth diverted, filed, informally adjusted/deferred, adjudicated
- Age, gender, ethnicity of youth in detention annually
- Age, gender, ethnicity of youth referred
- Age, gender, ethnicity of youth adjudicated and disposed to formal supervision
- Age, gender, ethnicity of youth receiving technical violations and revocations

Percentage of cases disposed of at the adjudication hearing

Percentage of Pre-Dispositional Reports

Risk-Needs Assessment

- % of youth who receive a risk-needs assessment pre-disposition (by risk level)
- % of youth who receive a risk-needs assessment post-disposition (by risk level)

Behavioral domains (specifically identified in relation to the risk-needs tool(s) used, but including):

- Education
- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Pro-social connections
- Family functioning

Length of probation terms

- Length of court-ordered term (by risk level)
- Length of actual term (by risk level)
- *including age, race, ethnicity characteristics

Technical Violations / Revocations

- # or % of technical violations
 - By risk level
 - By type of TV (curfew, education, drug tests, etc.)
- # or % of revocations
 - By risk level
 - By type (technical violation? New charge?)

Program completion rates

- Restitution
- Community supervision
- Target populations (e.g. Intensive Supervision, Dual Status, etc.)
- Specialized courts (Drug, Mental Health, Sexual Offender, etc.)
- Special skills training programs (e.g. law education, special skills competency training, etc.)

Recidivism (post-closure [by level of risk]):

- Intensive supervision
- Diversion
- Informal adjustment/alternative response
- Specialty court
- Unique target populations (e.g. girls, minority, dual status, young offenders)
- *including age, race, ethnicity characteristics for each recidivism measure

Case processing times for each key decision point in the life of a youth's case:

- Arrest-referral (detained and non-detained)
- Intake-initial hearing
- Initial hearing-adjudication
- Adjudication-disposition

Examples of System Performance Benchmarks:

- % of low-risk cases will be processed in an alternative manner (e.g. diversion, informal adjustment, etc.)
- % of youth will be screened for trauma
- % cases used a structured decision-making tool to guide key decisions (e.g. case processing, planning, and service interventions)
- % of cases will reach disposition within 60 days of referral
- % of case plan referrals will be completed within 10 days of the development of the case plan
- % of the time treatment is initiated within 30 days of the development of the case plan
- % of cases reassessed using a structured risk-needs tool every 6 months
- % of probation revocation decisions guided by a graduated response tool

Reductions in:

- Detention rates
- Length of stay
- Technical violations and rates of revocations
- Secure correction commitments
- Recidivism

The System Review will also include frequent reference to NCJJ's *Fundamental Measures in Juvenile Justice*, available at: <https://www.ncjj.org/fmjj/>, as this resource provides invaluable guidance and specific data measures that inform data collection and management reporting practices.

CONCLUSION OF THE REVIEW

PUBLICATION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Once the analysis phase of the review is complete, a report of findings and recommendations is created by the RFK National Resource Center consultant team. In the case where the self-assessment and review is conducted internally, it is strongly advised this report also be completed. The memorialization of the comprehensive list of findings and recommendations provides the blueprint for action, a chance to prioritize next steps, and improved opportunities to institutionalize reforms. The publication and dissemination of these findings and recommendations, and in what forums, should be at the sole discretion of the department and court's management.⁴ There may likely be information in the report that the probation department and court administration will want to hold closely in order to accomplish its objectives. On the other hand, there is likely to be information that, if published, could assist the probation department and court administration to effectively implement its recommendations for improvements.

An Executive Summary can provide for a broader dissemination of the findings and recommendations because it can be written in a format that protects specific information. Further, it may be that excerpts of the report can be shared in particular forums to which they relate without sharing the entire report. These decisions should be considered carefully by the SRLT to assure that the greatest benefit accrues from the ambitious undertaking of the System Review. The collaboration among the multiple agencies represented on the SRLT has the ability to influence other leaders and critical stakeholders towards a similar self-assessment, and sharing the findings and recommendations with others can have a positive impact far beyond the local jurisdiction within the state or more broadly across the youth justice field nationally.

IMPLEMENTATION OF REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Once the review has been completed and the report has been accepted by the SRLT and probation and the court specifically, it is time to turn attention to the implementation of the report's recommendations. The first step is to gather

JURISDICTIONAL EXAMPLE:

Greene County, Missouri

Greene County is within the 31st Judicial District of Missouri and is located in the southwest quadrant of Missouri. It is home to the city of Springfield. As an example of the dynamic nature of the System Review process and reliant upon the early observations of the SRLT, the Chief Juvenile Officer/Family Court Administrator established a Change Task Force (CTF) within sixty days of launching the review. To comport with tenets of Implementation Science, the CTF was comprised of supervisory personnel from several aspects of the Juvenile Office. Their task was to create a plan for restructuring the management and leadership structure. Immediate action on the recommendations of the CTF established a cross-functional team (CFT) that apportioned leadership responsibilities and ensured shared levels of oversight, coaching, and support. Three years after restructuring and guided by a Three-Year Strategic Plan, Greene County is more effectively operating under this new structure. The leadership has committed to operational principles of adolescent development, incentivized positive youth development practices, and case planning informed by risk-need-responsivity instruments. A key element of the Cross Functional Leadership Team structure incorporated the Data Analyst position as part of the team. Greene County also expanded the number of personnel assigned to the Data Analyst/Quality Assurance Unit and ensured quantitative and qualitative data was routinely used to inform progress and adjustments to their reforms during their routine Cross Functional Leadership Team meetings. It is notable that the Chief Juvenile Officer/Family Court Administrator exhibited humility and openness to change during this important re-shaping of the Juvenile Office which demonstrated respect and value for the recommended structural changes that resulted in re-assignment of responsibilities – but also to ceding of some aspects of authority.

the personnel who are critical to the implementation of reform within the youth justice system. That group should consider the report in its entirety and identify what areas and recommendations are priorities for implementation. It is likely that implementation will need to be a staged process, beginning with the areas that are ripe for action and provide the best opportunity to realize success. The plan will likely need to sequence action steps for other areas of reform over a prescribed period of time. Since each jurisdictional review frequently yields a unique set of findings and

⁴ Noting the discretion of the probation department and court administration's leadership to share the results of the review with the public, in part or in the whole, relates to the situation in which those agencies itself has initiated the review. If the review was ordered by an outside agency, it will be incumbent upon that agency to decide how it is going to handle the publication of the review's findings and recommendations.

recommendations and the implementation of each will vary due to individual jurisdictional circumstances, it is useful to employ a set of principles from the emerging science on effective implementation of system change and reform. Over the past six years, the RFK National Resource Center has expanded the System Review process to incorporate the research and principles of Implementation Science and Change Management. These principles include team development and function, stages and drivers, scaling and sequencing, and cycles of improvement. In a number of jurisdictions, we have provided enhanced technical assistance to support the development of the infrastructure, methods, and activities that a probation department and youth justice system stakeholders need to effectively implement the recommendations made through the System Review.

Implementation Science is described as “the study of factors that influence the full and effective use of innovations in practice” (Fixsen et al., 2015). The RFK National Resource Center has incorporated a focus on two sets of activities (intervention-level activity and implementation-level activity) and two sets of outcomes (intervention outcomes and implementation outcomes) when translating the recommendations into action plan strategies. The development of expert Implementation Team(s) within each jurisdiction intentionally disrupts the status quo among stakeholders, in particular among community supervision and probation practitioners. Consistent with the research, the Implementation Teams or “agents of change” are charged with refining a complex set of routines; demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities to help practitioners and staff make full and effective use of the innovations; and providing guidance of the change processes through usability testing. Within this context, the development of a detailed work plan is critical. It is important to be realistic in deciding what can be undertaken, during what time period, and with what resources. Contextual factors will need to be taken into

account such as budget periods and constraints, political pressures, employee participation and morale, and other department goals that must be managed during the period of implementation. The work plan should be very specific in terms of the recommendations that will be undertaken with specific individuals identified for involvement and with deadlines for completion. Simply put: who will do what by when. In the absence of any of these three factors, progress will slow considerably and risks stalling.

As the implementation plan progresses, it is recommended that routine progress reports be provided. The updates should be provided to personnel within key youth justice agencies (particularly among probation, court, and litigant attorneys), to other relevant constituents and to key stakeholders and consumers who are invested in the youth justice system's success. Upon completion of practice and policy changes within the implementation plan, the collaboration of stakeholders leading implementation efforts should publish routine implementation reports/updates. These should include improved outcomes already evident and a forecast of those improvements and outcomes likely to be realized in the future. Finally, a system of quality assurance should be developed so that the implementation of the recommendations can be tracked, reports on realization of intended outcomes can be reported, and sustainability of the improved practices and reforms can be maintained. The use of Implementation Science and research-driven Change Management practices to accomplish long-term, successful reforms has for too long been lacking and/or ignored. We at the RFK National Resource Center feel a professional responsibility to “do better, now that we (and science) know better” and have successfully deployed key implementation principles and practices within state and local jurisdictions that have resulted in impressive and sustainable youth outcomes and improved system performance.

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APPENDIX A

Roster of Probation and Youth Justice System Review Partners

STATE AND LOCAL JURISDICTIONS THAT HAVE COMPLETED THE RFK NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER'S PROBATION AND YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM REVIEW:

2005 Los Angeles County, California

2010 Newton County, Georgia

2010 Jefferson Parish, Louisiana

2012 State of New Hampshire

2014 Hammond Region, Louisiana

2015 Territory of Guam

2015 Illinois (DuPage County, Ogle County, and the 2nd Judicial Circuit)

2016 Idaho (Twin Falls County and Jefferson County)

2016 Arkansas (Pulaski County, Sebastian County, and the 10th Judicial District)

2017 Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

2017 El Paso County, Texas

2017 Clark County, Nevada (Las Vegas)*

2017 Fairfax County, Virginia*

2017 Davidson County, Tennessee

2017 Lancaster County, Nebraska*

2018 Washington County, Minnesota

2018 State of Delaware

2018 Cook County, Illinois

2018 Cobb County, Georgia

2018 Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Arizona

2019 Hennepin County, Minnesota (Minneapolis)

2019 Umatilla Indian Tribes, Oregon

2019 Dutchess County, New York*

2019 Greene County, Missouri*

2019 King County, Washington (Seattle)*

2020 Hennepin County, Minnesota - Implementation

2020 Cobb County, Georgia - Implementation

2020 Milwaukee County, Wisconsin - Implementation

2021 State of Nebraska

2022 State of Arkansas

* Participated in the Dennis M. Mondoro Probation and Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Project, supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice

APPENDIX B

Overview of Risk Screens, Behavioral Health Screens & Risk-Needs Assessments

Gina Vincent, PhD, National Youth Screening & Assessment Partners, LLC

There are a number of validated risk screening and assessment tools that can be used by the court to determine a youth's risk of reoffending. Risk screening tools are brief, generally contain mostly historical risk factors that are often based on youth's official juvenile records, and generally do not require much specialized training to complete. These tools are sometimes preferable in situations where a decision needs to be made relatively quickly and there may be limited access to information; such as a decision regarding whether to divert youth from formal processing. Risk screening tools will answer the question regarding whether a youth is relatively low or relatively high risk to reoffend, but most do not provide any guidance about what type of intervention youth may need to avoid further offending (see Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, for further information).

RISK SCREENING TOOL EXAMPLES:

Below are only a few examples of brief risk tools and where to obtain more information. These tools vary in the extent to which they a) contain any dynamic risk factors (factors that are associated with the youth's offending, are capable of change, and may become the targets for intervention), b) require an interview with a youth and/or parent for scoring the tool, and c) have been studied and validated. Most will require local validation to ensure the cut off scores for determining whether a youth is low, moderate, or high risk to reoffend are appropriate for the jurisdiction and population (see Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012').

Arizona Risk-Needs Assessment (ARNA)

Schwalbe, C. (2008). *Risk assessment stability: A revalidation study of the Arizona Risk/Needs Assessment Instrument*. *Research on Social Work Practice Online*, 1, 1-9.

Ohio Youth Assessment System - Diversion Tool

Report: Latessa, E., Lovins, B., & Ostrowski, K. (July 2009). *The Ohio Youth Assessment System: Final Report*. Center for Criminal Justice Research University of Cincinnati; https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/reports/project_reports/OYAS_final_report.pdf
Also see: <https://slideplayer.com/slide/3607701/>

Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory: Screening Version (YLS/CMI:SV)

Can be obtained from Multi-Health Systems: <https://www.mhs.com/MHS-Publicsafety?prodname=YLSCMI-SRV>

RISK-NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS:

Risk assessment instruments (often referred to as risk-needs assessments) also provide information that can be used to determine potential interventions that may prevent further delinquent behavior. Like the brief risk tools, these instruments also will identify who is relatively low versus relatively high risk to reoffend. Unlike the brief risk tools, these instruments measure domains of dynamic risk factors (sometimes referred to as 'criminogenic needs') that would become the targets for intervening with youth in order to decrease the likelihood of offending again, and enable reassessments to measure changes in risk. These include the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY), Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI), and Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT). Several summaries of these instruments are available (e.g. Vincent, 2011²; Vincent, Terry, & Maney, 2009³). Many probation agencies use these instruments to assist with diversion decisions rather than using a short risk tool because the risk-needs instruments provide more information and tend to have more validation.

1 Vincent, G. M., Guy, L. S., & Grisso, T. (2012). *Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation*. Chicago, IL: John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. www.NYSAP.us

2 Vincent, G. M. (2011). *Screening and Assessment in Juvenile Justice Systems: Identifying Mental Health Needs and Risk of Reoffending*. Washington, DC: Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health.
3 Vincent, G. M., Terry, A., & Maney, S. (2009). Risk/Needs tools for antisocial behavior and violence among youthful populations. In J. Andrade (Ed.) *Handbook of Violence Risk Assessment and Treatment for Forensic Mental Health Practitioners* (pp. 337-424). New York: Springer

SCREENING TOOLS TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH, TRAUMA, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES

There are screening tools that can be implemented at the intake stage of juvenile court processing to identify potential substance abuse, mental health, and trauma issues. Behavioral health screening instruments are designed to be a relatively brief process to obtain information and “triage” the need for further clinical evaluation or an immediate intervention.

While substance abuse is considered a “criminogenic need” that is a predictor of future delinquent behavior, mental health (including trauma) issues are considered “non-criminogenic responsivity factors” that can affect a young person’s ability to respond to interventions.

Some examples of long-standing behavioral health screening instruments that have been used in probation intake include the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument: Second Version (MAYSI-2), the Suicide Ideation Questionnaire (SIQ), and the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs-Short Screener (GAINS-SS). These screens can identify children who are in need of a comprehensive clinical evaluation.

More recent developments have been made in the field to identify children who may be experiencing trauma issues. Some examples of trauma screens include the Adverse Child Experience (ACE) Questionnaire, the UCLA Child/Adolescent PTSD Reaction Index, and the Child Trauma Screen (CTS) - formally referred to as the Connecticut Trauma Screen. A comprehensive review of trauma screening instruments was designed by Wevodau in 2016 and is available at <http://www.nysap.us/behhealth.html>

About the Author

Gina Vincent, PhD is the President of the National Youth Screening & Assessment Partners, LLC. She also serves as the Co-Director, Law & Psychiatry Program and the Systems & Psychosocial Advances Research Center (SPARC) within the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Dr. Vincent is considered among the foremost national experts on the implementation of risk-needs-responsivity instruments. NYSAP, LLC provides training and technical assistance to state and local jurisdictions. More information can be found at <http://www.nysap.us/>. The RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice relies on our partnership with Dr. Vincent and the NYSAP, LLC to inform our guidance and technical assistance for jurisdictions seeking to implement effective screening and assessment policies and practices within probation system reform.

APPENDIX C

Sample Questions for Key Stakeholders

Review key elements of the Probation and Youth Justice System Review .

1. How well do you think the Department of Juvenile Services provides needed services to juveniles through Department staff, contractors, and through linkages with other youth serving systems?
2. What are some of the unmet needs of juveniles that you think might be better served?
3. What do you think are the Department's programmatic strengths? Most promising practices?
4. Are there any program areas that you think require more attention and evaluation?
5. What do you think are the most important issues for the Department to address in terms of its mission and operation?
6. What do the juveniles find most troublesome about their probation experience?
7. What do the juveniles find most helpful about their probation experience?
8. Do you have any particular ideas for solutions to identified concerns or problems the Department faces?
9. How effective is the Department in its interaction with other agencies, including your agency or office?
10. Are there any other areas of concerns or issues that we have not touched on that you think should be addressed?

APPENDIX D

Probation Review Employee Survey

Probation Review Employee Survey	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
Pre-Disposition Investigation					
1. The Service Assessment Summaries are generally well written and of good quality					
2. Court reports are generally well written and of good quality					
3. The court reports do not provide sufficient detail regarding the needs of probationers					
4. Recommendations to the court for probationers are based on individualized needs for treatment					
5. Recommendations to the court for probationers are based on available community resources					
Case Supervision					
1. Probationers in specialized caseloads receive an enhanced level of supervision					
2. Probationers are receiving the required number of contacts as indicated by risk scores					
3. Client outcomes are clearly identified for each probationer to guide the service delivery					
4. Probation officers do not assure that probationers receive services to which they have been referred					
5. Probation officers do not work close enough with community resources to which they refer probationers					
6. Probation officers work closely with probationer's parents/caregivers to achieve desired outcomes.					
7. The levels of supervision are characterized by distinctly different activities on the part of the probation officer					
8. The caseload sizes do not allow for an adequate level of supervision					
9. Probationers need more help than they presently receive during their period of probation					
10. Additional resources are needed to adequately provide for the parent and family support network for probationers					
11. The enforcement of conditions is sufficient activity for the supervision of probationers					
12. The number of contacts required for each level of supervision is appropriate					
13. The supervision of probationers does not result in greater public safety					
14. The supervision of probationers is focused more on enforcement than rehabilitation					
15. The assignment of all probation officers to specific geographic areas would result in more effective supervision of probationers					

Probation Review Employee Survey	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
Departmental Management And Supervision					
1. Probation officers are supported in their work by the Department's administration					
2. Probation officers' efforts are supported in their work by their supervisors					
3. Probation officers' efforts are not adequately recognized by the Department					
4. Probation officers are provided the tools necessary to carry out their job functions					
5. The probation manual is a useful tool to direct the work of probation officers					
6. The judges do not base their decisions on probation officers' recommendations					
7. Probation officers are provided sufficient training to function effectively					
8. Juvenile Court judges respect the work of probation officers					
9. Probation officers are not adequately prepared to testify in court					
10. Judges read the probation officers' reports					
Resources And Service Delivery					
1. Probationers have access to treatment resources that address their particular needs					
2. Probationers do not have access to needed mental health services while on probation					
3. The current staffing/placement process is satisfactory					
4. Services to probationers are not provided in a timely manner					
5. Probationers have access to needed substance abuse resources while on probation					
6. Juveniles receive adequate support when they transition in and out of placement					
7. Juveniles do not have access to aftercare services upon return home to parents/caregivers					
8. Probation officers have a method for identifying probationers w/mental health needs					
9. Juveniles are not matched to placements equipped to address their individual needs					
10. There is sufficient oversight of juvenile probationers while in placement					
11. Adequate community resources exist to address the needs of juvenile probationers					
12. Most probationers are referred to the same services					
13. There is not adequate communication between treatment providers and probation officers					
14. Probation officers are provided with current information regarding the adequacy of community resources					
15. Additional funding is the most important solution to improve service delivery					

Probation Review Employee Survey	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
Best Practices					
1. Probation services are not based on best practices					
2. Evidence-based practices would be applied to all probationers if there was adequate funding					
3. Evidence-based practices are available in the community but are not used					
4. Probation officers are not knowledgeable about best practices for providing services to probationers					
5. Probation officers are knowledgeable about evidence-based practices and their impact on recidivism					
6. Current case management strategies are based on best practices					
7. The Department should coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area					
8. The availability of evidence-based practices in the community would allow some juveniles to stay out of placement					
Client Outcomes					
1. Probation officers are not knowledgeable about identifying client outcomes for probationers					
2. Probationer officers set clear, achievable goals for each probationer					
3. The Department uses the achievement of client outcomes to select and monitor providers who contract with the department					
4. The work of the Department is not related to the achievement of outcomes by probationers beyond the period of probation supervision					
5. There should be incentives and rewards for probation officers whose probationers achieve successful outcomes					
Inter-Agency Relationships					
1. The Department's relationships with DA Prosecution are not good					
2. The Department's relationships with community-based agencies have improved in the past three years					
3. The Probation Department's relationship with the Public Schools could be improved					
4. The Probation Department's relationship with the Public Schools is good					
5. The Probation Department's relationship with the community service providers could be improved					
6. The Department would function more effectively if its relationships with community-based agencies were better					
7. The Probation Department should look at data across service delivery systems to assist with the identification of prevention and earlier intervention opportunities					
8. The interface between [name of state agency overseeing operations] and Probation needs improvement					
9. Probationers' prior [name of state agency overseeing operations] involvement is known/documented					

APPENDIX E

Employee Survey Open-Ended Questions

Following is a set of open-ended questions that offer you the opportunity to provide your particular ideas about how the Department and its probation officers could function better. Please take some time to offer your comments and recommendations here. Thank you.

1. How could the probation manual be improved? What could be added?
2. What enables you to do your job most effectively?
3. What training would help you do your job?
4. What services are needed for probationers that do not exist at this time?
5. What client outcomes should the Department seek for probationers?
6. What specific ideas do you have for the improved delivery of probation services that you believe will result in better client outcomes?
7. What makes you uncomfortable or upset in court?
8. What ideas do you have about reducing the amount of paperwork?
9. What challenges do you face in your relationships with other agencies?
10. What are some of the special skills and talents that you offer to probation operations that aren't currently tapped in your role as probation officer?
11. In what ways would you like your work to be recognized?
12. Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years? What are your career aspirations?
13. Any additional comments?

APPENDIX F

Process Mapping Protocol

Thank you for participating in the Case Flow Process Mapping meeting as part of the Probation System Review initiative led by the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice.

You have been selected to participate based on your knowledge, experience and perspectives that you bring to the important work you do in the probation and juvenile justice system. We will be asking that you work together to analyze interfaces, handoffs, bottlenecks, and other case flow issues in the handling of cases involved in your juvenile justice and probation system. You will be asked to use – or develop – a current depiction of the case flow for delinquency matters in your jurisdiction, from arrest to case closure.

Please take a few minutes to review the following description of suggested Case Flow Process Mapping activities that walk you through each key decision point with a structured set of questions. You will be encouraged to candidly share your knowledge, experiences and perspectives to our meeting.

The development of a case flow mapping exercise can initially be accomplished by viewing, or constructing if one does not exist, a case-flow process for the juvenile justice system. The key decision points in the processing a juvenile case will be identified and we will collectively seek to clarify professional staff responsibilities and mandates and expected products and outcomes that support improved decision-making at each key step. During this exercise, you may note references to Robert Damelio's *The Basics of Process Mapping*, which provides guidance for the conduct of this case flow mapping process. Against an established consensus for the probation systems' goals, this mapping process creates an understanding of the most appropriate decision points and practices around which improvements or reforms may be developed and/or planned on behalf of youth involved in the

juvenile justice and probation system. The following activities are offered to illustrate what is sought by your engagement in the process mapping activity:

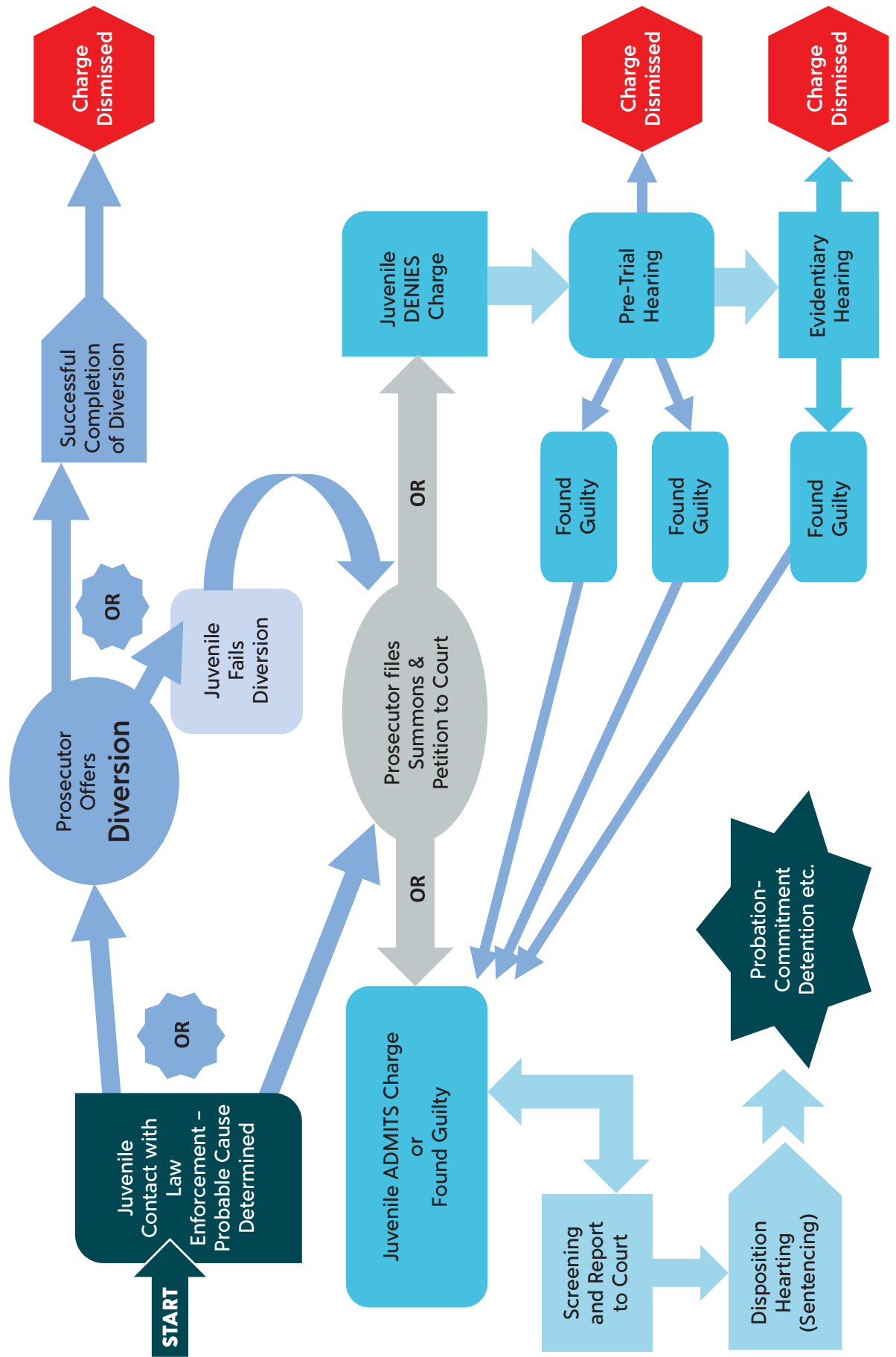
- ✿ Understanding of the steps in the various system and court processes
- ✿ Identification of what happens (action), who is responsible (decision), and what output or outcome is expected or produced at each step (product)
- ✿ Discussion/Assessment of the quantity and/or quality of the information being gathered and utilized in each step of the process
- ✿ Identification of process gaps
- ✿ Identification of necessary resources (workforce and program)
- ✿ Identification of what is and is not working

As you consider these issues in the development of the graphic depiction of the process flow map and an accompanying narrative, the following questions will support a systematic review of each decision point:

- ✿ What is intended to happen at this step?
- ✿ What actually happens at this step?
- ✿ Who is responsible for taking this action?
- ✿ Who are the partners (existing and desired) collaborating in this action?
- ✿ What is expected to occur (output and outcome) before the next step occurs?
- ✿ What is missing in between steps?
- ✿ What are the key decision points at which change or reform might be proposed?
- ✿ What are the necessary resources at each step (workforce and program)?

APPENDIX G Example of Process Map

Flowchart for Juvenile Court System



Focus Group Questions – Parents

1. How well do you think the probation department provides needed services to juveniles?
2. Are there programs or services that you think would better serve your child?
3. What kind of changes in your child do you wish the probation department could help your child make?
4. Are there policies or procedures of the Department that need improvement?
5. How well does the probation officer work with you and your child? What recommendations do you have for improvement?
6. What are you finding the most helpful about your child's probation experience?
7. What are you finding the least helpful about your child's probation experience?

APPENDIX I

Focus Group Questions – Youth

1. What has been most helpful to you about your probation experience? Why?
2. What has been least helpful to you about your probation experience? Why?
3. What kind of changes in your life do you wish the probation department could help you make?
4. How well do you think the probation officer works with you? Describe things the probation officer does...
5. What recommendations do you have for improving the way the probation officer works with you?
6. Are there any rules or ways that things work in probation that you think should be changed?
7. Is there something that would help you get off probation and stay out of trouble that isn't available to you?

APPENDIX J

Management Oversight Practices / Communication Grid

There are 8 identified purpose areas for Departmental Staff Meeting(s). Please indicate on the below table the meetings currently convened in each purpose category. If there are more in each Purpose category, please # the meetings within the *Current Meeting(s)* column.

Purpose	Current Meeting(s)	Chair / Facilitator	Mandated Participants	Frequency (Weekly, Monthly, Annually, etc.)	Length Of Time
Intra-Departmental Information Sharing					
Intra-Departmental Planning & Preparation					
Address Policy & Procedure Issues					
Problem Solving					
Operational Planning					
Department Performance Monitoring					
Provide an Environment for Relationship Building, Employee Empowerment and Value Clarification					
Discuss Intra- and Interagency Issues					

Professional Training Inventory

Provider	Title (* = required)	Abstract / Description (indicate competency or skill to be developed)	Target Audience (e.g. Mgmt., Line staff, etc.)	Hours	Required Time Frame (e.g. new employee orientation, annually, bi- annually?)	Additional Notes

APPENDIX L

Inventory of Programs and Services

Agency	Program	Service Description	Target Population (e.g. age, gender, criteria for participation)	Funding Source	Partnerships/Agreements	# Of Youth Referred Annually	# Of Youth Who Complete Annually	Average Length of Completion
Courts & Probation System - Programs/Services								
	Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)	Intensive, community-based youth and family intervention	Juveniles, ages 12–17			10–20	10	25 weeks
	Functional Family Therapy (FFT)	Family therapy intervention for the treatment of violent, criminal, behavioral, school, and conduct problems with youth and their families.	Juveniles, ages 17 & under.			40	32	20 weeks
	High Fidelity Wraparound	Intensive wraparound program led by facilitator/case manager	Juveniles, ages 17 & under.			50	45	1 year
	Peer Mediation	Peer Mediation & Conflict Resolution.	Court Ordered.		Public & Private Schools			3 days

Risk Screening Tool & Risk-Needs Assessment Implementation Checklists

Research has found that with some youths, any exposure to the juvenile justice system (e.g. community service or probation) can actually increase their chances of offending again.¹ It has also been found that the severity of the first offense is not a significant indicator of future patterns of offending,² and that the majority of low-risk youth are unlikely to reoffend even with little to no intervention.³ It follows that there would be benefit to juveniles, probation departments, and juvenile justice agencies to sort juvenile offenders by risk, to divert low risk offenders away from the juvenile justice system as often as possible, and to focus on services to high risk offenders.⁴

Validated and comprehensive risk assessment tools can assess a youth's likelihood to reoffend and suggest a proper level of intervention specifically tailored for that individual. A validated risk assessment can *guide intervention planning* by determining what areas of the youth's life can be changed in order to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. In addition, risk assessment can offer a *standardized method of important data collection to plan resource allocation and chart the overall progress of the youths*.⁵

Adoption of a risk assessment tool is unlikely to make much difference in the handling of young offenders unless it is paired with a case management approach that guides how the risk assessment should be used in case processing.⁶ Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) is a case management approach that, if implemented well, can lead to better outcomes for

individuals involved in the justice system.⁷ The RNR approach suggests that any formal processing and case management of youth should be commensurate with a youth's level of risk for reoffending and should address the youth's specific dynamic risk factors.

Implementing risk screening or assessment with RNR principles can conserve resources for probation departments and juvenile justice systems and improve outcomes for youth while still protecting public safety. However, the impact of these tools will ultimately be based on how well it is implemented and a site's individual characteristics.⁸ Quality implementation, quality assurance, and buy-in from stakeholders are all crucial to successfully implement risk tools and principles in juvenile systems.

The following Checklists have been developed by the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice in collaboration with Gina Vincent, Ph.D., of the National Youth Screening and Assessment Partners, LLC. They have been developed to assist probation departments and juvenile justice agencies in their review and evaluation of the quality of their implementation practices and quality assurance methods and mechanisms in relation to their risk assessment and RNR tools. Used internally or through external facilitation during the Probation System Review, the completion of these Checklists provide an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses, and align the use of their adopted tools with standards of best practice.

1 Gatti, U., Tremblay, R. E., & Vitaro, F. (2009). Iatrogenic effect of juvenile justice. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 50(8), 991-998.

2 Mulvey, E. P., Steinberg, L., Piquero, A. R., Besana, M., Fagan, J., Schubert, C. et al. (2010). Trajectories of desistance and continuity in antisocial behavior following court adjudication among serious adolescent offender. *Development and Psychopathology*, 22(2), 453-475.

3 Lipsey, M. W. (2009). The primary factors that characterize effective interventions with juvenile offenders: A meta-analytic overview. *Victims & Offenders*, 4(2), 124-147.

4 Vincent, G. M., Guy, L. S., Grisso, T. (2012). *Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation*. Chicago, IL: John D. & Catherine T MacArthur Foundation. www.NYSAP.us

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). Rehabilitating criminal justice policy and practice, *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 16,(1), 39-55.

8 Vincent, G. M., Guy, L. S., Gershenson, B. G., & McCabe, P. (2012a). Does risk assessment make a difference? Results of implementing the SAVRY in juvenile probation. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 30(4), 487-505.

Risk Screening Tool Implementation Checklist

1. What decision will the risk screening tool be used to inform?	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversion/alternative response <input type="checkbox"/> Filing / Petition <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
2. Who will administer the risk screening tool?	<input type="checkbox"/> Prosecutor's Office <input type="checkbox"/> Intake Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
3. What is the timeframe for staff to complete the tool?	<input type="checkbox"/> Within 24 hours of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Within 48 hours of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Within 72 hours of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Within 5 business days of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Within 1 week of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
4. In what form are the results compiled?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand-written <input type="checkbox"/> Computerized <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
5. Where are the results maintained?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hard copy in case file <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic database (name: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
6. Who receives the risk level results of the screening tool? Please note after each relevant entity the form in which they receive the results. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary sheet • Full report • Verbal summary • Other 	<input type="checkbox"/> Prosecutor: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defense Counsel: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Probation Department: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Judge: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Court Clerk: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Diversion Coordinator / Board: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Youth: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Guardian: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
7. Have the staff persons that will be administering the screening tool received training from a qualified trainer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> To be completed by: _____	Comments:
8. Have the entities that will use the results of the screening tool been trained on how the tool is administered and how the results will be used?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> To be completed by: _____	Comments:
9. How often is staff provided or required to complete "booster" training?	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> Every 24 months <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
10. Who will be responsible for managing the quality assurance of the administration and use of the tool?	Name: _____ Title: _____ Agency: _____	Comments:
11. Has a protocol for the administration and use of the tool been developed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> To be completed by: _____	Comments:
12. Is there a protocol for regular data reporting about the risk levels of youth and the outcomes of their case (e.g. disposition, diversion)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> To be completed by: _____	Comments:

Risk-Needs Assessment Tool Implementation Checklist

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE CHECKLIST FOR EACH SEPARATE KEY DECISION POINT AT WHICH THE ASSESSMENT IS ADMINISTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-filing <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-adjudication <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-disposition <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
1. Which categories of youth will receive the assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/> All youth <input type="checkbox"/> Youth who screened in with a validated risk screening tool <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Offenders <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
2. What decision(s) will the risk-needs assessment be used to inform?	<input type="checkbox"/> Filing <input type="checkbox"/> Identification of pre-trial services <input type="checkbox"/> Probation case plan <input type="checkbox"/> Category of supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Judge's dispositional order <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
3. Who will administer the risk-needs assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Intake Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Probation Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
4. What is the timeframe for staff to complete the tool?	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 days <input type="checkbox"/> 14 days <input type="checkbox"/> 21 days <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
5. In what form are the results compiled?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand-written report <input type="checkbox"/> Computerized report <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
6. Where are the results maintained?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hard copy in case file <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic database: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
7. Who receives the results of the risk-needs assessment? Please note after each relevant entity the form in which they receive the results. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary sheet • Full report • Verbal summary • Other 	<input type="checkbox"/> Prosecutor: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defense Counsel: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Probation Department: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Judge: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Court Clerk: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Youth: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Guardian: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Comments:
8. Have the staff persons who will be administering the assessment received training from a qualified trainer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No To be completed by: _____	Comments:
9. Are coaches or 'master trainers' available for staff to rely on if they have assessment questions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
10. How often is staff provided or required to complete "booster" training?	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> Every 24 months To be completed by: _____	Comments:
11. Have entities that will see/use the results of the assessment (e.g. judges) been trained on how it is administered and how the results can and will be used?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No To be completed by: _____	Comments:
12. Is there a policy or protocol in place for case plans to be checked by a supervisor to ensure these are in alignment with need areas and strengths?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No To be completed by: _____	Comments:
13. Has a protocol or policy for the administration and use of the tool been developed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No To be completed by: _____	Comments:
14. Has a data reporting system been developed so routine data reports are shared within the agency? What aggregate reports will be developed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No To be completed by: _____	Comments:

APPENDIX N

Risk Screening Tool & Risk-Needs Assessment Quality Assurance Checklists

Risk Screening Tool Quality Assurance Checklist		
<p>1. Is the tool being completed for every eligible youth?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	Comments:
<p>2. Is the tool being completed in a timely manner as defined in protocols?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	Comments:
<p>3. Are the results of the tool being shared with the relevant entity(ies) as defined in protocol or information sharing agreements?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	Comments:
<p>4. Are staff compiling the information into the approved format and sharing it with the relevant entity(ies) in a prescribed timeframe?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	Comments:
<p>5. What percentage of the time do low risk youth referrals receive the following alternative responses?</p>	<p>% Dismissal _____</p> <p>% Diversion _____</p> <p>% Informally processing _____</p> <p>% No filing _____</p>	Comments:
<p>6. Is the risk tool being input into the electronic database in a timely manner?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	Comments:

Risk-Needs Assessment Quality Assurance Checklist

1.	Is the tool being completed for every eligible youth? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
2.	Is the assessment being completed in a timely manner as defined in protocols? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
3.	Are the results of the tool being shared with the relevant entity(ies) as defined in protocol or information sharing agreements? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
4.	Are staff compiling the information into the approved format and sharing it with the relevant entity(ies) in a timely fashion? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
5.	Are youth receiving the appropriate level of supervision given their overall risk rating? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
6.	Are the results being used to create individualized case plans based on risk level and unique needs and strengths? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
7.	Are staff making appropriate service recommendations at disposition OR appropriate service referrals according to the service matrix (whichever is applicable)? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
8.	Is the tool being completed to reassess the youth's changing risks and needs as prescribed by policy? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
9.	Do the case plans reflect updated scores from the prescribed reassessment? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
10.	Is there evidence in the files that the reassessment results are being used to enhance decision-making and case management? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
11.	11. Do probation sanctions and rewards reflect the youth's risk level as determined through the assessment of needs and strengths? (if applicable) What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
12.	Are assessments being reviewed and approved by a supervisor? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
13.	Are case plans (if applicable) being reviewed and approved by a supervisor to ensure they are in alignment with the youth's risk factors and strengths What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
14.	Are assessments being input into the electronic database in a timely manner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:

Probation Officer Performance Evaluation



This document shall be used in conjunction with the Jefferson Parish Employee Evaluation in order to clarify not only what is expected of Probation Officer's in the pursuit of best practices (achieving process and client outcomes) but how that will ultimately relate to the employee evaluation, i.e. potential pay raises, continued employment, etc.

This document does not supersede the Jefferson Parish Employee Evaluation; it provides written criteria to assist the Probation Supervisor filling out the evaluation and to make the Probation Officer aware of what it means to meet, exceed or fall short of expectations. This document can also be used to aid the Probation Officer when filling out their Self-Evaluation required by the Department of Juvenile Services.

Probation Benchmarks

1. A higher percentage of cases will successfully complete probation without adjudication for a new delinquent offense
2. A higher percentage of cases requiring therapy / treatment services will receive an evidence based intervention
3. An increase in pro social activity (e.g. organized sports, church groups, mentoring)
4. Reduce the annual number of OJJ secure commitments to a lower percentage of the probation population
5. An increase in the number of youth diverted (deferred dispositions) who are referred by the schools and a reduction in school related arrests for active probation cases

PROBATION OFFICER

Performance Measure	Primary Duties	Exceeds
<p>U1: Knowledge and Skill:</p> <p>“Possesses and exercises the required job knowledge and full range of skills required for competent performance. Stays apprised of new information as it becomes available. Willing to spend time and effort to maintain current and thorough knowledge and skill.”</p> <p><i>Process Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral and Treatment Sanctions for Non-Compliance Assessment, Planning and Review <p><i>Client Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Academic Success Pro-Social Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggests educational options to parents for youth with academic difficulties Utilizes all options prior to staffing for out-of-home placement Provides general counseling to youth and family Utilizes Progressive Sanctioning Ladder to hold youth accountable Encourages youth to get involved in pro-social activities Encourages parents to get youth involved in pro-social activities Administers the SAVRY Encourages parents with a student demonstrating difficulties (educational and behavioral) to consult with JPPSS for ABIT referral Refer for assessment / treatment or drug education Investigate the background of children and families Prepares predisposition court reports Attends court hearings, gives testimony and makes recommendations Diverts appropriate low risk misdemeanor offenders to “Deferred Dispositional Agreements” or Informal FINS Prepares legal motions and forms Prepares Individual Service / Case Plans Prepares Service Plan Reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently high level performance Demonstrates an advanced proficiency in the full range of work skills and thorough job knowledge Learns quickly and keeps abreast of changes and new developments in the job Uses Parish and own resources to improve job knowledge Shares knowledge with others
<p>U2: Quality of Work:</p> <p>“Demonstrates high degree of accuracy and thoroughness. Completes work timely and without repetitious performance to achieve. Provides clean, neat and well-organized work products. Does not leave loose-ends.”</p> <p><i>Process Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral and Treatment <p><i>Client Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease Substance Abuse Connection to Evidence Based Treatment Intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works to ensure offenders entering the system are more capable leaving Conduct Drug Screens Monitor Treatment Visits schools Prepares and submits referrals for treatment and non-therapeutic services Follows up with treatment providers and maintains ongoing communication Writes Case / Activity Notes for Case File Investigate the background of children and families Prepares predisposition court reports Collects police reports for PDI and restitution investigations Monitors Probation conditions Enters information into court information system Administers the SAVRY Prepares Individual Service / Case Plans Prepares Service Plan Reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work consistently exceeds the expected level of accuracy, timeliness and thoroughness Rarely has to repeat the same tasks due to error Uses innovation to improve work quality

PROBATION OFFICER

Performance Measure	Primary Duties	Exceeds
<p>U3: Volume of Work:</p> <p>"Productive worker provides a proper amount of work. Uses proper work techniques that produce an expected volume of work."</p> <p><i>Process Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative Assessment, Planning and Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares monthly statistical reports Sets office appointments Writes Case / Activity Notes for Case File Visits Homes Enters information into court information system Visits job sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces an exceptional level of work output Utilizes innovative or cost-effective work techniques that enable consistently high levels of work output or efficiency
<p>U4: Safety:</p> <p>"Is familiar with and complies with Parish safety manual. No unacceptable safety violations, accidents, injuries to self or others."</p> <p><i>Process Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral and Treatment <p><i>Client Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employability Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visits homes Visits job sites Review Safety Manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long career characterized by excellent safety record, no safety violations, accidents or injuries to self or others Very safety conscious and advocates others to use safe work practices and procedures
<p>U5: Reliability:</p> <p>"Consistently starts / completes assignments within supervisor's established timelines and required level and amount of detail."</p> <p><i>Process Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative Assessment, Planning and Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares monthly statistical reports Prepares Individual Service / Case Plans Prepares Service Plan Reviews Prepares and submits referrals for treatment and non-therapeutic services Writes Case / Activity Notes for Case File Prepares predisposition court reports Attends court hearings, gives testimony and makes recommendations Enters information into court information system Administers the SAVRY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently starts/completes work ahead of schedule Employee is willing to adjust work schedule when warranted Uses time effectively to complete difficult tasks Performs work in exemplary detail without sacrificing efficiency or economy Work products are complete beyond standard expectations
<p>U6: Attendance:</p> <p>"Regularly punctual and present for work. Observes lunch hours, and break and quitting times."</p> <p><i>Process Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attends court hearings, gives testimony and makes recommendations Review Attendance policy 	N/A

PROBATION OFFICER

Performance Measure	Primary Duties	Exceeds
<p>U7: Working with Others:</p> <p>“Understands and works according to the need for teamwork and cooperation. Has a positive approach toward requirements of the job. Uses appropriate behavior effectively in varying situations. Exercises adequate interpersonal skills and understands human behavior such that working relationships are smooth and conflicts are resolved by mature and responsible means. Makes visible effort to get along well with co-workers and superiors.”</p> <p><i>Process Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral and Treatment Administrative Community Liaison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in OJJ / DJS staffings to secure services Routinely meets with Probation Supervisor as directed Actively participates in staff meetings Works with community, schools and providers to ensure collective ownership of desired outcomes Encourages the involvement of parents Prepares monthly statistical reports Participates in Supervisor Orientation with youth and family Enlists the support of the community to respond effectively to youth needs Collaborates with community partners to strengthen our ability to help those we serve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemplary in behavior towards others Oriented towards teamwork at all times Makes an extra effort to serve others Maintains an organizational perspective Able to deal effectively with a wide range of situations Has a sound understanding of interpersonal relations and effectively applies it with individuals or groups Resolves conflicts congenially Takes a positive approach in dealing with co-workers and superiors Exerts a positive influence for cooperation within the organization Promotes harmony among associates
<p>S1: Serving the Public:</p> <p>“Demonstrates positive public service behavior. Shows interest in and concern for the public's questions or concerns. Helpful and friendly toward the public. Demonstrates tolerance, respect and control in public contact. Follows through to completion on questions or concerns.”</p> <p><i>Process Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral and Treatment Sanctions for Non-Compliance Court Responsibility Community Liaison <p><i>Client Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection to Evidence Based Treatment Intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages the involvement of parents Makes arrests Makes restitution referrals and keeps victims involved in process Enlists the support of the community to respond effectively to youth needs Collaborates with community partners to strengthen our ability to help those we serve Visits homes Removes youth from community if their safety or the security of the public is jeopardized by their continued presence Encourages youth to get involved in pro-social activities Encourages parents to get youth involved in pro-social activities Diverts appropriate low risk misdemeanor offenders to “Deferred Dispositional Agreements” or Informal FINS Visits job sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently demonstrates good judgment and strong rapport in public contacts Listens to public concerns and resolves problems or refers to proper source Handles adverse or pressure situations in an ideal manner Always follows up with public inquiries

PROBATION OFFICER

Performance Measure	Primary Duties	Exceeds
S2: Communication: "Communicates clearly, concisely, accurately and effectively orally and in writing." <i>Process Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court Responsibility <i>Client Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Academic Success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructs parents to attend all school conferences (academic and disciplinary) Prepares predisposition court reports Suggests educational options to parents for youth with academic difficulties Writes Case / Activity Notes for Case File Makes referrals for mentoring Encourages youth to get involved in pro-social activities Encourages parents to get youth involved in pro-social activities Attends court hearings, gives testimony and makes recommendations Prepares legal motions and forms Routinely meets with Probation Supervisor as directed Actively participates in staff meetings Enters information into court information system Prepares Individual Service / Case Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes well-organized, understandable, and accurate reports Oral and written presentation is excellent Listens well and is successful in getting the point across Encourages open communications to achieve understanding
S3: Decision-making: "Adequately analyzes problems. Generally arrives at correct decisions." <i>Process Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanctions for Non-Compliance Court Responsibility <i>Client Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease Substance Abuse Employability Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes youth from community if their safety or the security of the public is jeopardized by their continued presence Sanction for non-compliance with Drug Screen Policy Diverts appropriate low risk misdemeanor offenders to "Deferred Dispositional Agreements" or Informal FINS Refers youth to vocational counselor for job placement Encourages parents with a student demonstrating difficulties (educational and behavioral) to consult with JPPSS for ABIT referral Makes referrals for mentoring Utilizes Progressive Sanctioning Ladder to hold youth accountable Holds parents accountable for non-compliance with court orders Makes arrests Prepares Individual Service / Case Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes correct decisions on the most complicated problems Always gathers the best information to make decisions
S4: Supervision and Management	N/A	N/A
S5: Equipment and Materials	N/A	N/A

The Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, a program of RFK Community Alliance, provides consultation, technical assistance, and training to serve local, state, and national leaders, practitioners, and youth-serving agencies to enhance system performance and improve outcomes for children involved with the youth justice system.

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