

THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY

# JUVENILE PROBATION

## OUTCOMES

## STUDY PART

# III

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

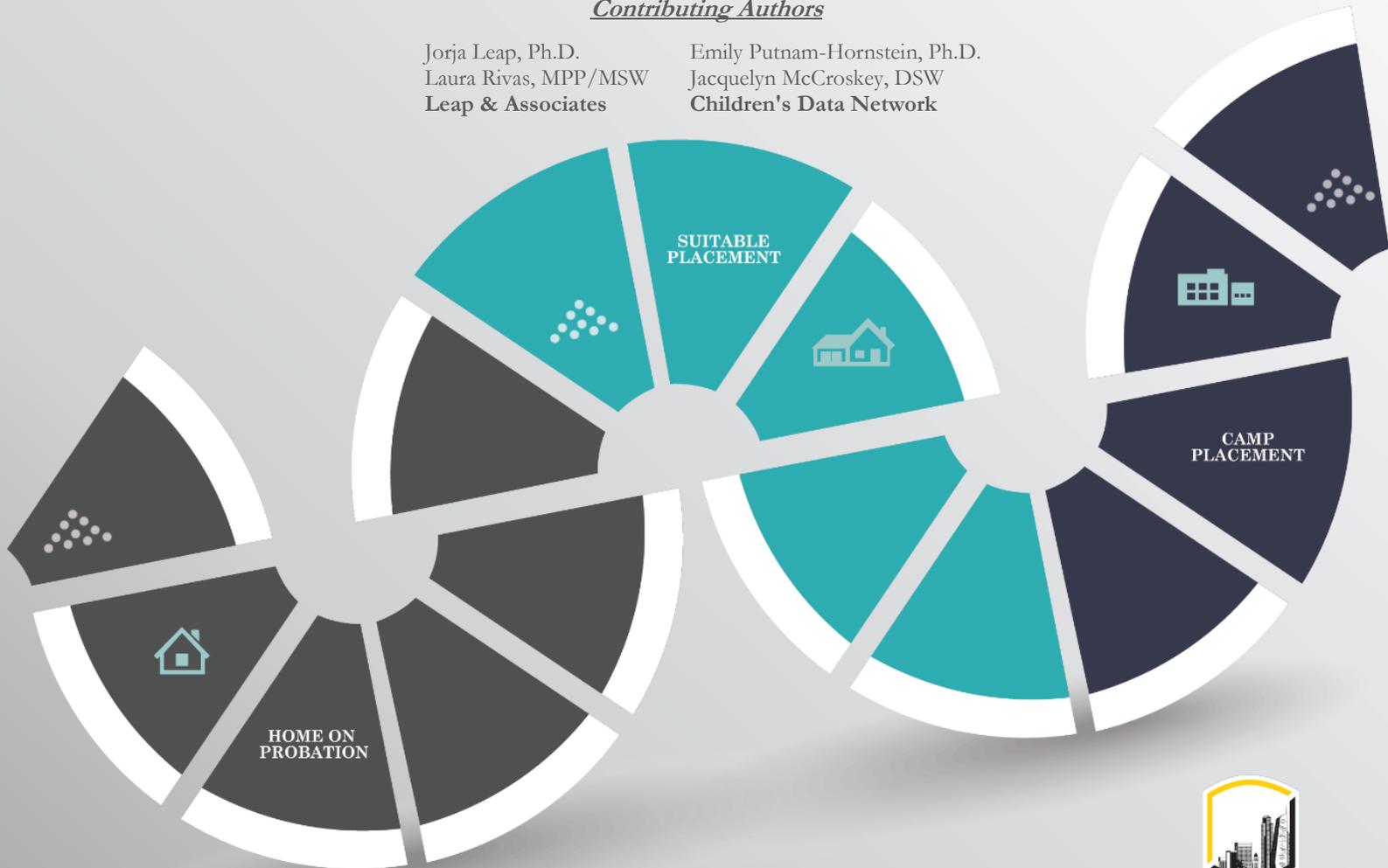
*Assessing the Experiences of  
Probation-Involved Youth Exiting from  
Out-of-Home Placements across Two Cohorts*

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Regular Supervision
- School-Based Probation Supervision
- 241.1 Dual Supervision Unit
- Child Trafficking Unit
- Placement Community Transition Services (PCTS)
- Intensive Gang Unit Supervision Program (IGSP)
- Camp Community Transition Program (CCTP)
- Residential Based Services (RBS)
- Residential Treatment Services Bureau (RTSB)

Without their collaboration and participation, this study would not have been possible. We would like to give a special thanks to Deputy Probation Officers who shared their insights and experiences supervising Probation youth. Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to Probation's Program Analyst, Sandy Woods, who coordinated and provided guidance on data collection.

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- Dr. Karen Streich, Mental Health Clinical Program Manager III, *Department of Mental Health*
- Siph Kim, Juvenile Justice and Probation Camps/Halls Division, *Department of Mental Health*

This report would not have been possible without the young people and families who were involved in this study. Their experiences demonstrate the resilience and perseverance that makes this work meaningful.

Finally, we would like to thank our research assistant, Diandra Torres for her assistance on this study, and Dr. Margaret Finnegan for her assistance on reviewing this report.

# THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY JUVENILE PROBATION OUTCOMES STUDIES

2011

## PART I

In Part I of the Los Angeles County Probation Juvenile Outcomes Study, data were collected and analyzed from youth exiting suitable placement and camp in 2011 in order to document their trajectories and illustrate the challenges these youth and their families face before, during, and after their placement. Data were drawn from Probation's database and paper case files. Data from other County agencies were then used to augment Probation data. Additionally, eight in-depth case narratives were produced to provide a qualitative appreciation for their experience in Probation. The purpose of the study was to capture and tell the story of youth placed in Probation suitable placement and Probation camps in order to inform practice and policy decisions intended to improve system responses and prevent involvement with Probation.



CASE FILE REVIEW  
COUNTY DATA

2015

## PART II

In Part II of this study, Probation was obligated to “support a longitudinal study and develop baseline data tracking systems to assist in the evaluation of systemic outcomes for youth” (see Paragraph 73, #6 External Partnership of the MOA between the Los Angeles County Probation Department and the U.S. Department of Justice). This study fulfills this requirement by collecting data for youth cohorts exiting suitable placement and camp in 2015 and comparing results to those reported for the 2011 cohorts. The purpose of the comparison is to evaluate outcomes for youth within the context of the systems change Probation has been and continues to implement. Moving in this direction improves the ability to assess Probation efforts to improve services and outcomes. In addition to replicating the 2015 study, the current study includes interviews with a sample of youth, their families, and supervising deputy probation officers.



CASE FILE REVIEW  
DPO INTERVIEWS  
YOUTH/FAMILY INTERVIEWS  
COUNTY DATA

## WHY WERE THESE STUDIES COMPLETED?

A number of efforts related to juvenile justice exist in Los Angeles County, but unfortunately, outcomes for Probation-involved youth are not produced consistently, and projects rarely have data to understand issues confronting Probation-involved youth from a comprehensive perspective. These shortcomings are largely due to inadequate or underutilized data systems combined with limited to no connection between County agency databases. This study focused on the data challenges that exist in Los Angeles County while simultaneously using available data to “make the case” that better use of data is critical to improving the well-being of children and families. Specifically, these studies produced in-depth descriptions of youth who penetrate deeply into the Probation system.

The timing of study placements for the youth identified in these study varies. To ensure consistency and clarity, the study standardized data collection by recreating timelines for the youth tracked in this study. In other words, data were collected on the:

ORIGINAL ARREST

PRECEDING ARREST/PETITION

DURING STUDY PLACEMENT

AFTER EXIT

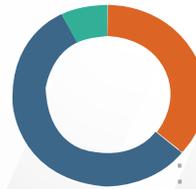
## DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2011 Cohort included all youth exiting suitable placements between January 1, 2011 and June 30, 2011, and all youth exiting from camp placements between July 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011. The total number of exits for suitable placements during the study time frame was 561, and the total number for camp placements was 1,102. Cohorts of 250 youth were randomly drawn from the two respective populations for a total of 500 youth, and 50 youth from each population were randomly selected for additional data collection. For the 2015 Cohort, data were gathered for cohorts of youth exiting suitable placement and camp between January 1, 2015 and March 31, 2015. A total of 120 cases were stratified and randomly sampled for additional data collection.

Across study years, race/ethnicity distributions show similar patterns across the two groups of exits (2015 Cohort results shown on the right). *NOTE: Females were oversampled in both studies to ensure appropriate representation in the results. In both studies, the actual percentage of females exiting from suitable placements was 20% in 2011 and 24% in 2015, and the percentage of females exiting from camp placements was 20% in 2011 and 13% in 2015.*

MALE (SP=55%, CCP=62%)

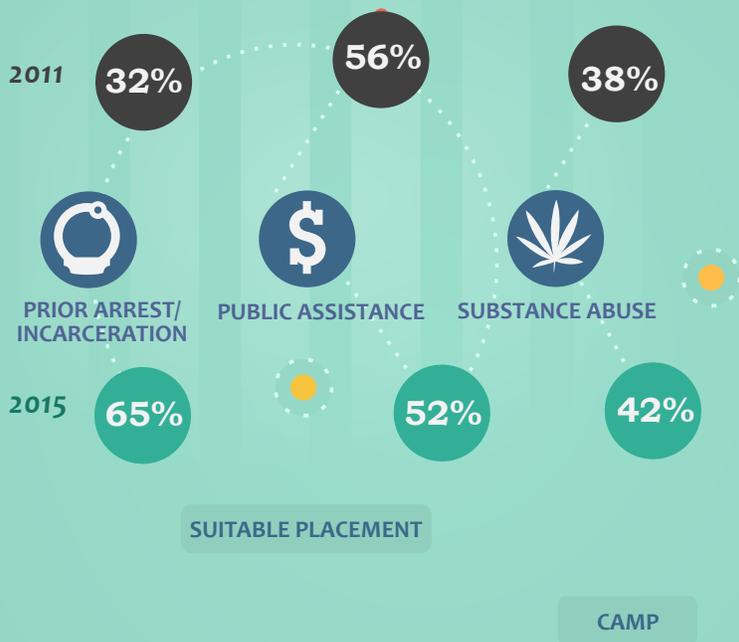
FEMALE (SP=45%, CCP=38%)



LATINO (SP=68%, CCP=68%)

AFRICAN-AMERICAN (SP=18%, CCP=32%)

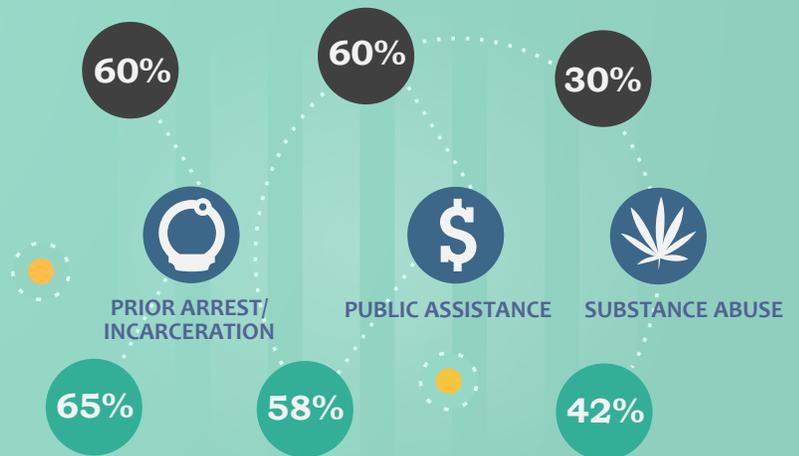
OTHER (SP=13%, CCP=0%)



## FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

The data for the 2015 Cohort show a consistent pattern with that from 2011: Study youth and their families experience many hardships before entering the Probation system and appear to be marginalized based on poverty, language, and disabilities. The 2015 Cohort families are more likely to have prior criminal justice involvement than the 2011 Cohort families, but the 2011 Cohort families are more likely to experience homelessness and be involved in a gang.

Additionally, approximately half of the 2015 Cohort families are in need of bilingual services in both groups.



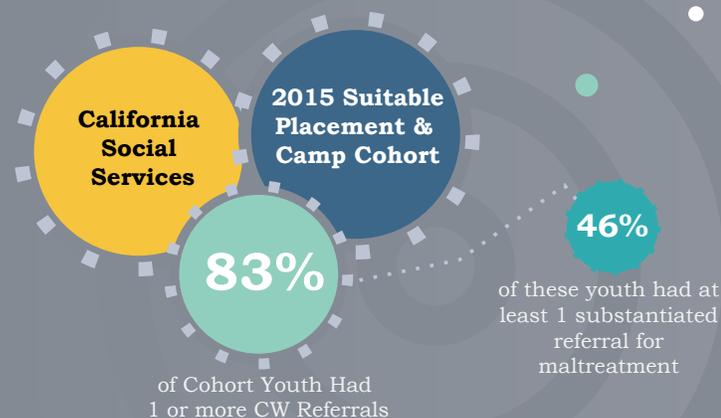
**NOTE:** It is important to note that differences across study years may be an artifact of recording information rather than true differences in characteristics. It is for this reason we do not assess statistical significance of any difference in these tables, but rather, use the descriptive results as a general guide to understand the background and experiences of youth in the study.

## CHILD WELFARE

In terms of contact with California's Child Welfare Services, at least one referral for alleged abuse or neglect was identified for a majority of youth (83%) in both cohorts.

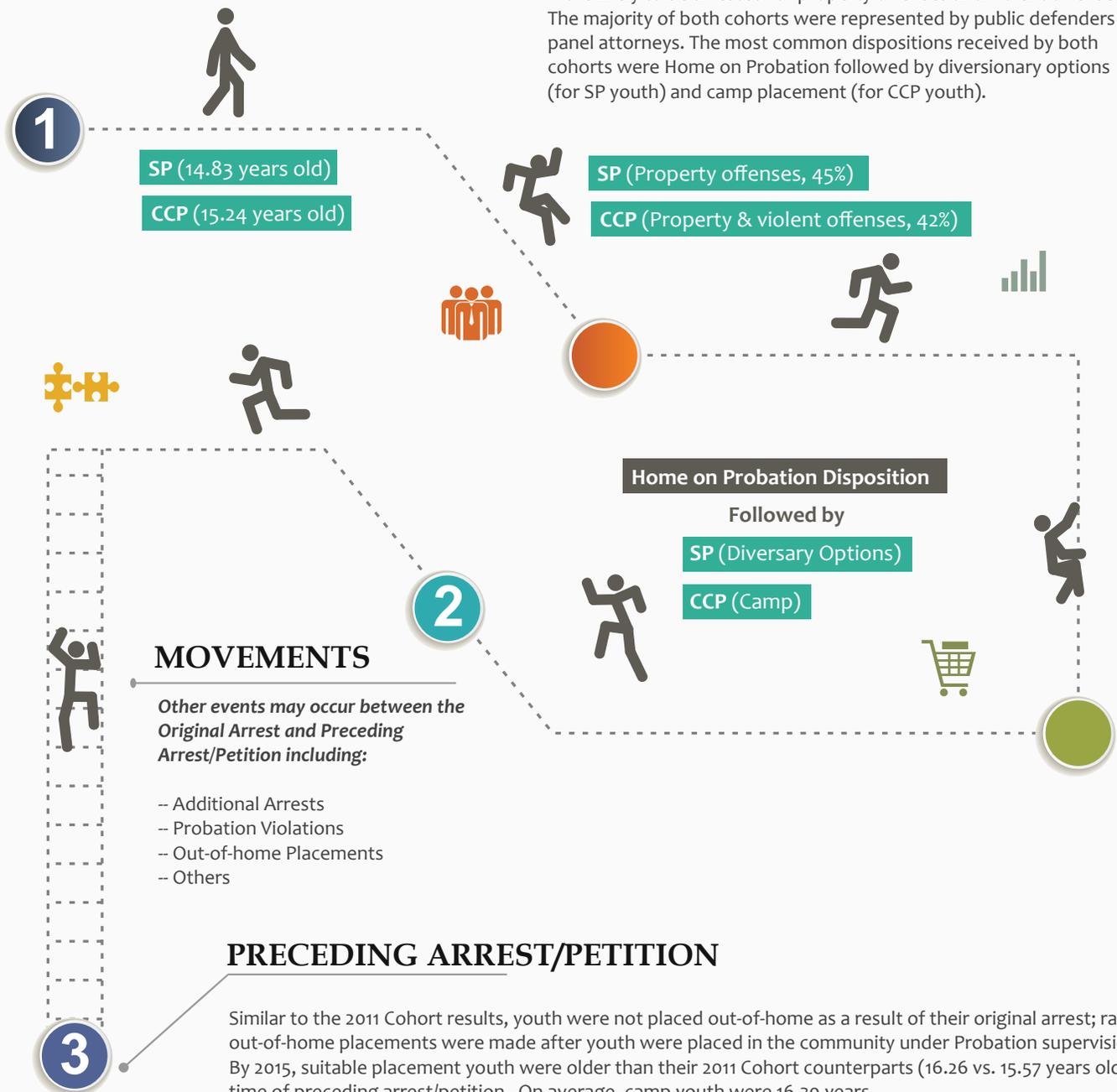
Among youth with child welfare system contact, 46% had at least one substantiated allegation. On average, the first substantiation was 7.7 years, but one-third of youth were first substantiated before age 5.

Overall, females and African-Americans were more likely to have a history of maltreatment.



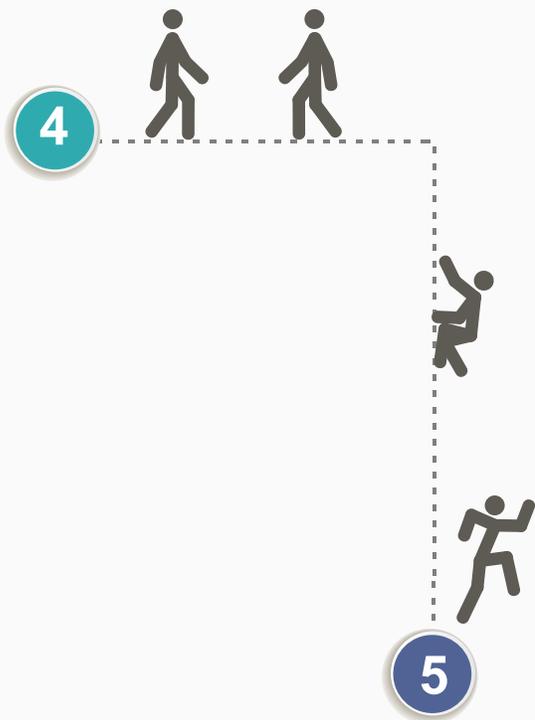
# ORIGINAL ARREST (2015 Cohort Only)

The “Original Arrest” is the originating event that brought youth under Probation supervision prior to the study placement. Data were captured for this arrest for 2015 Cohort youth but not for 2011 Cohort youth. At the time of their Original Arrest, youth were 15 years old at the time they entered the juvenile justice system for both cohorts, but camp youth were slightly older. Suitable placement youth were more likely to be arrested for property offenses while camp youth were more likely to be arrested for property offenses and violent offenses. The majority of both cohorts were represented by public defenders or panel attorneys. The most common dispositions received by both cohorts were Home on Probation followed by diversionary options (for SP youth) and camp placement (for CCP youth).



Study placements for suitable placement youth were more likely to be a result of a Probation violation across the 2011 and 2015 Cohort. However, this pattern of findings differs for camp youth across study years. In 2015, camp youth were more likely to be arrested for a new charge and ordered camp placement compared to Probation violations for the 2011 Cohort.

When the preceding event was a new arrest, half of the new arrests for suitable placement youth were related to the youth’s living situation or school, and one-third of camp youth. For those with violations, the most common violations for both groups were: drug use, school participation/poor grades, and not reporting to the Deputy Probation Officer when required to do so.



## DURING PLACEMENT

In 2015, one-third of suitable placement youth were placed in Boys' Republic, Rancho San Antonio Boys Home, and Penny Lane facilities. The distribution of these placements were different for the 2011 Cohort. On average, youth remained in placement for 7.5 months in 2011, and by 2015, the average number of months in placement decreased to 6.34 months. All of the 2015 Cohort youth returned home after suitable placement.

**Services:** During suitable placement, the top three types of service referrals were similar across cohort years and to the year prior to study placement: mental health service referrals, social/behavioral service referrals, and family-based supportive service referrals. Across study years, substance abuse, mental health, and family-based supportive services increased between 2011 and 2015.

Camp youth in the 2015 Cohort were more likely to be placed in Camp Scott, Scudder, Paige, and the Dorothy Kirby Center. Camp Scott and Scudder are artificially high because they are facilities for females and this study oversampled females. The average number of months in camp in 2011 was 4.40 months and by 2015, the average number of months in camp was 5.79. The majority (80%) of camp youth were released home after camp, and 20% were placed in suitable placement as a step-down approach to supervision.

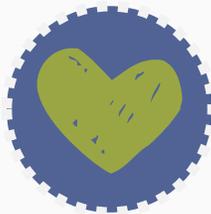
**Services:** Camp youth were more likely to be referred to social/behavioral services, and mental health services. The proportion of service referrals increased over time for education referrals and mental health services. Overall, camp youth were more likely than suitable placement youth to receive evidence-based practices (EBP) referrals across study years.

## AFTER PLACEMENT

Youth were tracked after their study placement until the youth terminated from Probation supervision or one year after their exit from study placements--whichever came first.



After exit, suitable placement youth were more likely than camp youth to receive EBP referrals and services.



The need for mental health and substance use treatment decreased over time for the suitable placement and camp youth in the 2015 Cohort.



When all exits were included in the analysis, recidivism remained the same across time for both cohorts with approximately one-fifth of youth receiving a new arrest within 6 months of their exit from placement and only 13% receiving sustained petitions in delinquency court. However, when exits in 2015 were limited to only "true exits," the new arrest rate dropped to 14% and the sustained petition rate dropped to 8% for the 2015 suitable placement cohort. Unfortunately, "true exits" are difficult to differentiate in the 2011 data due to the way the data were extracted.

## DPO INTERVIEWS

A total of 44 Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) interviews were conducted across 8 Probation Bureau/Units at the end of the tracking period.

DPO identified Probation youth were intelligent, mature, and independent. However, family strengths were more difficult to identify for some Probation Bureau/Units compared to others. Overall, DPOs discussed critical areas that impact youth progress, challenges to family engagement, and difficulty with accessing services in particular areas (including but not limited to: bilingual services, variety of services in certain geographic areas).

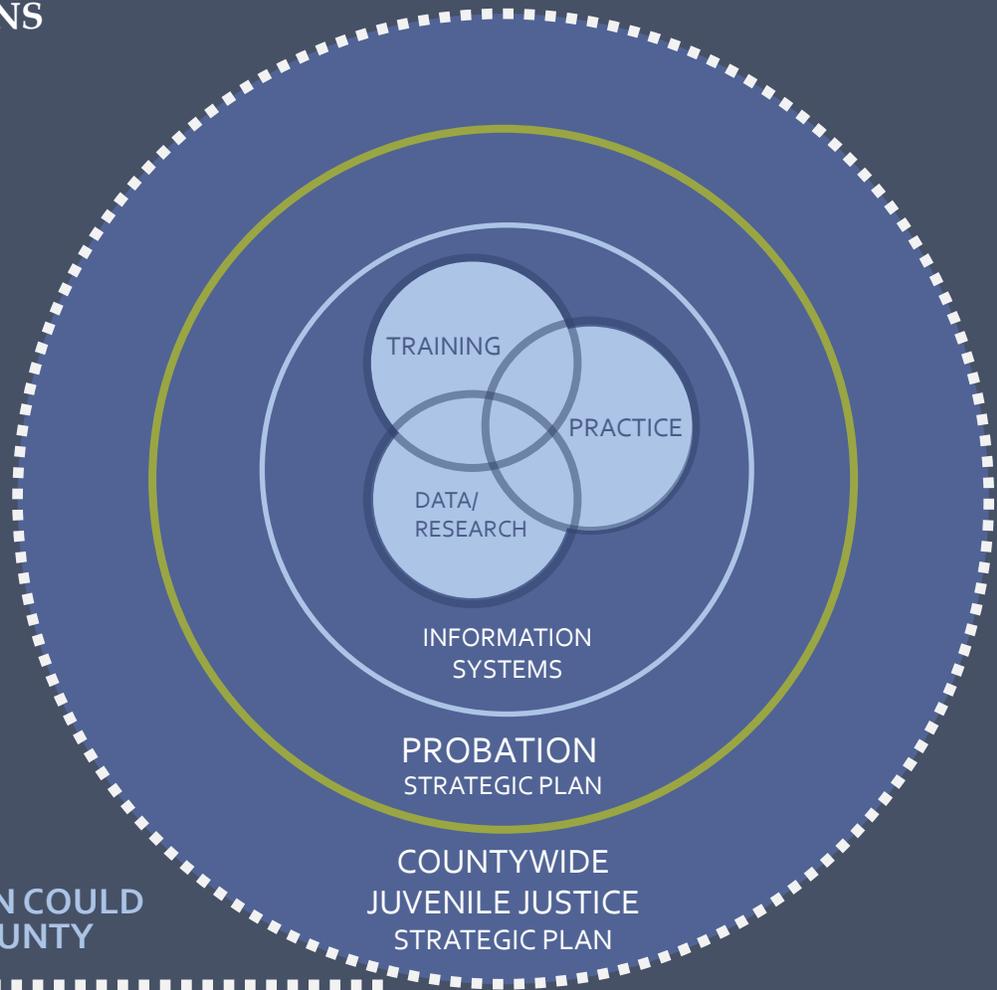
## YOUTH/FAMILY INTERVIEWS

A total of 30 youth and family interviews were conducted pre- and post-interviews (shortly after exit and at the end of the tracking period).

Predominant themes in youth and family interviews include experiences before Probation suitable placement or camp, during, and after exit. Generally, youth reported positive reviews about the available programming and services, family involvement, and relationships with Deputy Probation Officers and/or staff. After exit, half of the youth recounted lessons learned from the programs and/or staff. For respondents, furthering their education became a main focus.

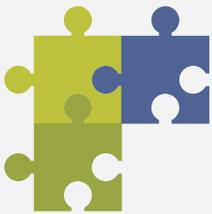
# REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from this study parallel those in the Probation Outcomes Study, Part I and the Probation Workgroup Report currently in press. In particular the Probation Workgroup provides detailed recommendations and direction in several areas critical to Probation’s success including: the development of a countywide, juvenile justice comprehensive plan; the identification of current services provided to Probation-involved youth and gaps in those services; improvement of a service referral system based on validated screening and assessment tools and a web-based service navigation system; and a research agenda with clear measures and outcomes that should be reported on a regular basis to the public. Those recommendations are not repeated here, but rather, we believe this report should be considered in concert with those recommendations. In addition to those recommendations, however, we offer a general approach to building an infrastructure that aligns with best practices in juvenile justice and creates the foundation from which the Los Angeles County Probation Department can be accountable and transparent to the families and communities it serves.



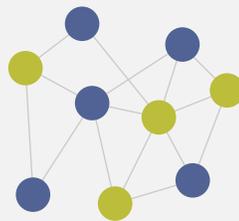
## HOW JUVENILE PROBATION COULD WORK IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

### TRAINING



- ✓ ONGOING TRAINING
- ✓ CONNECTED ACROSS UNITS/PCMS
- ✓ DEGREE COMPLETION

### PRACTICE



- ✓ CONTINUITY/NAVIGATION
- ✓ SEAMLESS CONNECTION TO SERVICES
- ✓ COORDINATION/COLLABORATION WITH KEY PARTNERS

### DATA/RESEARCH



- ✓ BEST PRACTICES/EBPs
- ✓ INTERNAL RESEARCH CAPACITY
- ✓ EXTERNAL RESEARCH PARTNERS

### INFORMATION SYSTEMS PCMS



- ✓ REAL TIME
- ✓ CONTINUOUS CASE MANAGEMENT
- ✓ CONTINUITY ACROSS UNITS
- ✓ SERVICES TRACKING

### PROBATION STRATEGIC PLAN

CONNECTED TO ALL COMPONENTS TO FACILITATE, SUPPORT AND HOLD ACCOUNTABLE

### COUNTYWIDE JUVENILE JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

DRIVES PRACTICE, POLICY, AND RESEARCH - HOLDS ALL STAKEHOLDERS ACCOUNTABLE

