

NAPA COUNTY
RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT ON
ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT FINAL REPORT
June 15, 2022

Findings

Finding 1: The current number of Probation Officers assigned to the Department appears to be sufficient with respect to maintaining the system. However, there are additional training and rehabilitation activities that are not being provided due to probation officers' high volume of Court appearances, submission of Court reports, meetings with victims and families, and ongoing supervision of probationers. The hiring of additional Probation Officers would help spread the work out more evenly and help to reduce recidivism.

The Chief Probation Officer disagrees in part with the finding to the extent that the finding asserts additional training and rehabilitation activities are not being provided due to the high level of duties of a probation officer. The Probation Department has worked for many years to reduce caseload sizes through the implementation of evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism. Probation Officer caseloads are now reasonable and similar to caseloads of other comparable counties. The Department offers its staff the opportunity to attend a wide variety of trainings to help reduce recidivism. Probation officers provide high-quality supervision, including facilitating cognitive behavioral intervention training, to our clients. Of course, legislation has the potential to drastically affect the number of people on probation, by either significantly adding clients (*e.g.*, AB 109), or reducing the length of probation (*e.g.*, AB 1950). Currently the decrease in caseloads over time has resulted in a manageable workload. The department agrees that if resources were unlimited, the addition of staff would create opportunities for innovation. The Department is engaged in a strategic planning process that will evaluate workload as it relates to practices and programs. The Department will continue to evaluate staffing needs and the needs of the community and request positions if required in the future.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 2: The Probation Department is currently working to develop a coordinated case management system, which will assist Probation Officers in managing their caseloads and provide information about the types of services received by probationers.

The Chief Probation Officer agrees with this finding. The first iteration of the case management system was implemented in 2014 in Adult Probation with systematic builds and integration with each criminal justice partner. The system is still being built out with plans to return to Adult Probation to fully expand functions to manage the information recommended in the findings.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 3: There are no formal quality assurance and performance evaluation programs to measure the impact that therapeutic treatment activities are having on reducing recidivism. There should be in-house research examining whether cognitive-behavioral groups led by Probation Officers have a positive impact on reducing recidivism.

The Chief Probation Officer agrees with this finding. The Department recently added a Probation Program Services Manager who will be developing a quality assurance program in the Department. Additionally, the Department will be contracting with the University of Cincinnati who will provide technical assistance in developing performance measures and outcomes. There have been several efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of services internally; however, there has not historically been dedicated resources and ongoing systems to continuously evaluate programming and services in a uniform way to track over time.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 4: The Adult Probation Department utilizes Evidence-Based practices such as cognitive behavior therapy but does not collect its own data (outcome measures) as to the efficacy of these groups in reducing recidivism.

The Chief Probation Officer disagrees in part with this finding, specifically that the Probation Department does not collect its own data. The current case management system (CJNet) utilized by the Department has a custom-built program module that enables the probation officer who facilitates each group to enter data about the group tied to individual level offender data. However, the challenge is pulling the data out of the system in aggregate to evaluate program efficacy. The Napa County Information Technology Services Department is seeking to continue to build a data warehouse that will conceptually be able to aggregate the data for analysis and evaluation in the future. Historically, there has not been dedicated resources and ongoing systems to continuously evaluate programming and services in a uniform way to track over time.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 5: Water leaks in the Probation Department have been reported over a period of ten years. Air testing for contaminants such as lead and mold have been requested and air samples have been taken. Public Works has been responsive to reports of water leakage and has followed up with proper clean-up of potentially hazardous materials.

The Chief Probation Officer agrees with this finding. Air testing was completed in the Adult Probation Office in multiple locations in Spring of 2022. The test results reported that spore counts at the building interior were comparable to control samples taken outside.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 6: Violations of the terms of probation result primarily from the presence of mental illness, drug usage, or gang involvement, but the Department lacks the resources to effectively treat individuals with these designations.

The Chief Probation Officer disagrees wholly with this finding. The challenges listed significantly contribute to behaviors that violate conditions of probation, along with antisocial values/beliefs, family dysfunction, education, and other factors. While the department can use additional resources to

continue to be creative in addressing recidivism, the department believes it has effectively used the resources provided to help address these factors. The department has an embedded mental health staff, is part of a collaborative Mental Health Court team, and staff are well educated on the mental health services provided in the community. The department also has an officer dedicated to supervising gang offenders. This officer receives special training and works closely with partner agencies who are experienced in working with gangs. To address drug use, the department has dedicated resources like an embedded alcohol and drug counselor, specialty collaborative caseloads like Drug Court and Prop 36, as well as residential treatment options. Staff also receive significant training on the job and in their CORE coursework and training in the identification of individuals under the influence, and how to respond to substance abuse behaviors.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 7: The definition of recidivism used in the past is a new violation of the law that occurs during a probation supervision term. There are many ways that recidivism has been looked at in the past under previous administrations. Recidivism is a key subject for data analysis that must be looked at in the future.

Response to Finding 7: The Chief Probation Officer agrees with this finding.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 8: The job satisfaction of Probation Officers is high yet there can be considerable stress given the constant exposure to handling complex and heart-rendering cases involving victims and their families.

Response to Finding 8: The Chief Probation Officer agrees with this finding.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 9: Since the 2008-2009 Grand Jury investigation there has been minimal turnover of Probation Officers and consistent reports of job satisfaction and good morale. In addition, opportunities for career advancement are available.

Response to Finding 9: The Chief Probation Officer agrees with this finding.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Adult Probation Department should hire additional staff to handle the 1,300 to 1,400 yearly supervision cases. Increased caseloads limit the ability to provide more individualized treatment services and case supervision.

Response, Chief Probation Officer: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted at this time. While it is imperative to appropriately resource the department to rehabilitate offenders and contribute to victim and community safety, caseload sizes have been reduced significantly over the past decade resulting in manageable caseloads. Given that resources are not unlimited, the department has requested the appropriate size of staff for the division. However, staffing will continue to be evaluated as the department implements the strategic plan and will recommend an increase in staffing, if and when it becomes necessary.

Response, Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Recommendation 2: The Adult Probation Department should develop a formal quality assurance and performance evaluation component to ensure that treatment programs are having a positive impact on recidivism and that Probation Officers are meeting performance standards.

Response, Chief Probation Officer: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The development of outcome measures and performance evaluation standards will take considerable amount of time and effort and will be dependent on other county agencies to provide the technological support to retrieve and aggregate system data. Additionally, dedicated resources will need to be identified to ensure sustainability. It is anticipated that this recommendation will be implemented as part of the three-year strategic plan.

Response, Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Recommendation 3: The Adult Probation Department should generate its own evidence as to how effective treatment services are with respect to reducing recidivism.

Response, Chief Probation Officer: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The Department will require enhanced data entry capability into the CJNet system which requires the support of the County IT Department to upgrade and customize the system to enable robust data entry. This will require additional dedicated staffing resources as well as a data warehouse to aggregate and analyze the data. The Department will contract with the University of Cincinnati to provide technical assistance to design data requirements. This recommendation will start immediately but is anticipated to take up to four years to fully implement.

Response, Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.

Recommendation 4: The Chief Probation Officer and Director of IT Services should continue to improve the Napa County Criminal Justice Network (CJNet) by increasing the capacity for analyzing data changes and trends over time in order to improve treatment delivery and case supervision. A data “warehouse” system would facilitate Information Technology (IT) coordination between the Police Department and other law enforcement agencies.

Response, Chief Probation Officer: The recommendation has not yet been fully implemented but will be implemented in the future. The Chief Probation Officer and the Napa County Information Technology

Department have been working collaboratively to build the CJNet system for many years. The Adult Probation Module will require enhanced customization to support quality data extraction. The data “warehouse” has been partially built but is not currently operational. Given the complexity of the system, the required system enhancements, hiring and training of staff to support the development of the data warehouse, and ongoing system implementation to support quality data reports, it is estimated that this recommendation will take up to four years to fully implement. It should be noted that while some integration of outside systems is possible, it is not known whether the data warehouse can fully support the analysis of law enforcement systems that are external to the CJNet system.

Recommendation 5: The Chief Probation Officer and Director of Health and Human Services should explore ways of providing additional mental health, substance abuse, and gang affiliation treatment services with the goal of lowering recidivism rates.

Joint Response, Chief Probation Officer and Director of Health and Human Services: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be in the future. It is important to note that close coordination already exists between the Probation Department and the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). In fact, HHS staff are embedded into the Adult Probation Office to provide direct service to clients in the areas of mental health services, alcohol and drug services and enrollment into public assistance programs. With the exception of gang affiliation treatment services, the two entities have a long-standing history of positive collaboration and cooperation reflected by the co-location of staff who work together to serve this population. That said, the Chief Probation Officer and Director of HHS have discussed implementing a system to further enhance collaboration and communication around broader resources and system issues with the goal of increasing service utilization and care coordination among agencies. By meeting regularly and identifying and leveraging appropriate funding sources, resource utilization rates, and potential gaps in service, it is believed that resources can be combined to increase services and lower recidivism rates. It is anticipated that the implementation of a collaborative multi-disciplinary team will be designed and implemented within one year. HHS also anticipates applying for grant funding that will help to further enhance this process.