

MEMORANDUM

To: Empowerment Congress' Justice & Public Safety Committee
From: Probation Department Oversight Working Group
Date: May 3, 2016
Re: Proposed response in consideration of the comments raised on Monday, April 18, 2016

During its April 18, 2016 meeting, the Empowerment Congress' Justice & Public Safety Committee requested that the Probation Department Oversight Working Group (Working Group) and consultant consider taking action in six areas. Although the consultant has not yet been hired, the Working Group very much appreciated these suggestions for consideration, and has attempted to address these comments in the following memorandum. A member of the Working Group would also be happy to attend a future Justice and Public Safety Committee Meeting to answer any follow-up questions. Members of the Justice & Public Safety Committee are also always invited to attend any of the Oversight Commission Working Group meetings, which are generally held every other Wednesday afternoon, and open to the public.

The Empowerment Congress asked that the Working Group and Consultant consider the following six recommendations:

- 1. The Working Group should have community awareness and understand the makeup of impacted communities so its work can be done in a culturally sensitive context.**

The Working Group agrees and understands with the importance of this consideration. The Working Group will be holding a series of evening Town Hall meetings in each of the Supervisorial districts, so that members of the community will be able to attend – after work or school – and share concerns and ideas and suggestions. Interpreters will be provided at each of the town hall meetings, and outreach will be done to encourage participation from community members who have been directly or indirectly impacted by or involved in the Probation Department. When the dates for these Town Hall meetings are established, the Working Group will make sure to inform

the Empowerment Congress's Justice & Public Safety Committee of the times and locations for each meeting.

Additionally, the Working Group includes representation from and the invaluable experience and perspective of a member who has been formerly involved in the Probation system.

2. Interview victims of crime to get their perspective on services.

The Working Group plans to invite Chaplain Javier Stauring, the former Co-Director of the Office of Restorative Justice of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, to make a presentation to the working group. In addition to serving on the Los Angeles County Juvenile Reentry Council, Chaplain Stauring has extensive experience overseeing the restorative justice programs of Ministry to Victims of Crime and Ministry to Formerly Incarcerated Youth. The Working Group will also reach out to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Bureau of Victim Services, in conducting outreach for its forthcoming Town Hall meetings.

3. Allow former probationers to be interviewed about their experiences with the department.

The Working Group will conduct outreach and invite former probationers involved in different community-based organizations to share their experiences with the Probation Department. The Working Group plans to reach out to former probationers involved in InsideOUT Writers, Manifest Works, the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, C/Hope, Homeboy Industries, and other organizations to solicit input. The Working Group welcomes ideas for additional outreach and other ways to be inclusive of the community of former probationers in Los Angeles County.

4. Ensure Working Group focuses not solely or primarily on structure, but also on outcomes.

The Working Group agrees this consideration is essential. The February 16, 2016 Motion by the Board of Supervisors, which created this Working Group, emphasizes the opportunity for reform of the Probation Department, which is currently before us. The Working Group recognizes that meaningful reform does not elevate form over substance, or structure over outcomes, and will be seeking to ensure that any restructuring that takes

place does so with a focus on improving outcomes for everyone involved in and impacted by the Probation Department.

The Statement of Work for the Consultant (available at: <https://www.lacounty.gov/files/3-10-16%20Agenda%20Item%204%20Draft%20Scope%20of%20Work.pdf>) also reflects this understanding, emphasizing the impact of any recommendations on adult and youth clients, and the importance of promoting rehabilitation and public safety.

5. Human Decency. Gauge how compassionate employees deal with clients and client response to staff.

The Working Group believes this important point can be assessed by examining the Department's hiring and training practices; grievance procedures and practices; and, interviews conducted with current and former probationers in the juvenile and adults systems. The Working Group is currently pursuing all of the aforementioned avenues, and welcomes any additional ideas for assessing this issue in the department.

6. Create a website accessible by the public, where the work of the committee and consultant is posted.

This website has already been created, and is maintained and updated regularly. It can be found at the following site: <http://www.lacounty.gov/probation-oversight>