



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
PROBATION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



WHO WE ARE

The Probation Oversight Commission is a civilian commission appointed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and supported by a team of nine staff. Commissioners bring diverse expertise and lived experience to guide oversight, improve transparency, and ensure accountability within the Probation Department. We work to advance a safer, more just, and rehabilitative system for youth and adults involved in the justice system in Los Angeles County.



SAM PRATER
COMMISSIONER
FIRST SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT



MILINDA KAKANI, ESQ.
COMMISSIONER
SECOND SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT



SAMUEL LEWIS
COMMISSIONER
THIRD SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT



DOLORES CANALES
SECRETARY
FOURTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT



LT. DONALD D. MEREDITH
COMMISSIONER
FIFTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT



ESCHE JACKSON
COMMISSIONER
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AT-LARGE



BROOKE HARRIS, ESQ.
COMMISSIONER
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AT-LARGE



EDUARDO MUNDO
CHAIR
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AT-LARGE



DR. DIANE TERRY
VICE CHAIR
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AT-LARGE



WENDELYN JULIEN, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
PROBATION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, AND THE PATH FORWARD

By Eduardo Mundo



**EDUARDO
MUNDO**
POC CHAIR

DEAR members of the Board of Supervisors, members of the Los Angeles community, and current employees of the Probation Department, it was a privilege to serve as Chair of the Probation Oversight Commission (POC) for the year covered by this report.

The challenge of maintaining focus and providing a meaningful space for robust discussion and engagement while constantly responding to the ongoing issues confronting our detention facilities cannot not be understated. Yet, the POC and the administrative team, led by Director Wendelyn Julien, continued to meet the challenge and rise to the standards expected by the PRIT established bylaws and stakeholders.

The information in the body of the yearly report clearly established that the POC is meeting its responsibility to all involved. The continued inspections of institutions and published findings, and in some cases recommendations, remained the core of our work. Through thoughtfully curated public meetings and townhalls, stakeholders remained informed and engaged. Most importantly, the collection of data revealed itself as a critical asset in understanding the current condition of the juvenile justice system in the County of Los Angeles. It also reminded us of the distance remaining in fully realizing Juvenile Justice Reimagined.

Undeniably, Probation is the pulse of the juvenile justice system in this County. Yet, its beat is dictated by entities it serves, not control. Because of this, reducing the juvenile hall population remains a daunting task. Over and over, the data presented at our meetings reminded stakeholders of a juvenile justice system that is handcuffed by a court process operating in the model of criminal court rather than guided by principles of Welfare Institution Code and adhering to the concept of a delinquency venue, grounded in trauma free care and rehabilitation.

As we continue our work in the current year, it is anticipated the continued collection and sharing of data will guide us all in our effort to thoughtfully communicate with each other, find common ground as we inch closer to realizing an improved situation for our youth and the employees who are charged with the responsibility of providing care.

Thank You.

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE-FIRST APPROACH

By Wendelyn Julien



**WENDELYN
JULIEN**

POC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What is “People First”? A “People First” approach recognizes the humanity in all of us. Conceptually, this means that all people have inherent needs and inalienable rights and that their voices and experiences matter. This impacts how we talk to each other, how we listen to each other, how we conduct and frame our recommendations at the POC. This is not a naïve approach – we fully understand that many of the people served by and who work for the Probation Department have experienced harm and have caused harm. We also understand that some great philosophical differences divide us, but we stand firm in the belief that we do have shared goals and that we must work together to achieve a Probation Department that heals harms, promotes real public safety, and cares for its clients and staff.

WHEN the Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission (POC) was launched in 2021, the commissioners and staff made a conscious decision not to develop a list of priorities for reform. Instead, they adopted, organized, and prioritized the 93 recommendations developed by the Probation Reform Implementation Team (PRIT) and the principles and goals of Youth Justice Reimagined. The POC commissioners and staff then focused on developing what is, in my opinion and experience as an organizational leader, the most important part of any new organization – defining and building its culture and core values. Now, almost five years later, the POC has become a trusted, respected organization dedicated to those values, the core of which is a “People-First” approach.

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We strive to treat people in a way that makes them feel valued and welcome and we aim to serve as a role model for the Probation Department.

Father Gregory Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries, describes the two “unwavering principles” of his work as: “1) We are all inherently good (no exceptions), and 2) We belong to each other (no exceptions).” Father Boyle’s words guide my work, and I am grateful and proud that the POC staff and commissioners work diligently to treat all our diverse stakeholders with that level of dignity and respect. We strive to treat people in a way that makes them feel valued and welcome and we aim to serve as a role model for the Probation Department. Practice what you preach, if you will.

Two of the POC’s core values directly relate to the “People-First” approach. The first is Inclusive Collaboration. We see each stakeholder as the expert of their experiences and believe the engagement and understanding of many voices can bring a clear direction for the changes that are needed. In practice we engage all stakeholders and the public, value all voices, and hold space for voices of various viewpoints.

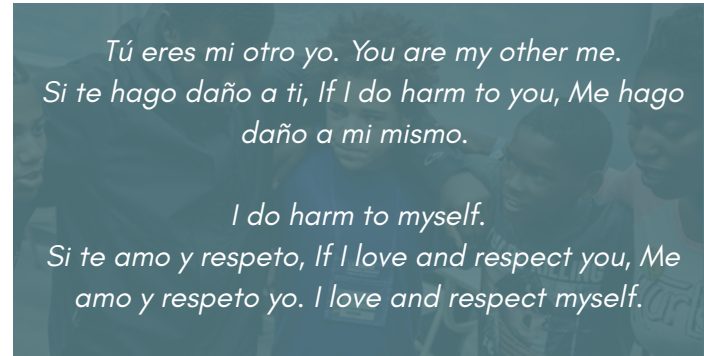
Second, and perhaps more important, is Compassion. We believe in compassion for all people. Compassion informs our work, validates and supports everyone involved, and reminds us that everyone wants to be treated with kindness and respect. We acknowledge injustice and validate and understand the human experience. In practice, we work to understand other’s point of view, engage everyone with respect, understand trauma and its consequences, assume best intentions, and act out of empathy and understanding.

So what does this actually mean, to embody a “People-First” approach?

First, it means that when you come to our meetings or reach out to us, you will be welcomed with a smile, encouraged to participate, and have your basic needs and accommodations met. Second, it means that we will listen to you, believe you, and provide a space as safe as possible for you to share your thoughts and concerns. Finally, it means that when we speak out, when we draft reports, when we make recommendations, and when we criticize the Department, we will do so profoundly considering: the impact of our work on the people reading and listening. We will stay true to our core values and our reform priorities, but we will do so thinking first about the youth and adults on Probation, their families, the staff of the Department, and all the many other agency and public stakeholders concerned with this work.

We will certainly falter, but we will course correct and remind ourselves of our core value of humility, staying grounded to the truths of injustice. Our humility will breed accountability, keep us objective, and allow for us to prioritize the needs of those we serve. We will stay focused on the people – and with our eyes on justice.

In closing, I’ll share one of my favorite poems that addresses the people-first approach, a brilliant poem by playwright and activist Luis Valdez about the Mayan concept of unity and collectivity titled **In Lak’ech.**



*Tú eres mi otro yo. You are my other me.
Si te hago daño a ti, If I do harm to you, Me hago
daño a mi mismo.*

*I do harm to myself.
Si te amo y respeto, If I love and respect you, Me
amo y respeto yo. I love and respect myself.*

STRUCTURE AND BUDGET

The staff and budget of the POC have grown gradually since its launch in 2021 with a staff size of eight (8) during the 2024-25 fiscal year being less than half of the originally contemplated size in the Board-approved organizational chart that had nineteen (19) staff members. Despite this, the commission has exceeded expectations for engagement, report development, and involvement in Board motions and stayed well within its budget over its first four fiscal years. The POC has accomplished this by hiring and retaining excellent staff, exercising discretion with county resources, and creatively partnering with other internal and external agencies to advocate for reform.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
NUMBER OF STAFF	6	7	7	8
NUMBER OF VACANCIES	0	0	0	0
BUDGET/ SAVINGS	\$2.266M/\$1.23M	\$1.845M/\$0.635M	\$1.944M/\$0.268M	\$2.21M/\$0.345M

INSPECTIONS

During this period, the L.A. County Probation Oversight Commission (POC) completed its fourth cycle of annual inspections across all probation detention facilities. These reviews, mandated under state law, offer independent oversight of conditions, services, and practices, with findings reported to the Board of Supervisors and the public.

System-Wide Themes

The POC found dedicated staff working under uneven conditions. Some facilities, like Campus Vernon Kilpatrick, demonstrated how a trauma-informed, teamwork-based model can foster safety and rehabilitation. Others, such as Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall, continued to face serious challenges including overcrowding, violence, and inconsistent programming.

Facility upgrades improved physical environments, particularly at Dorothy Kirby Center, but staffing shortages and incomplete adoption of the L.A. Model limited progress overall. Educational opportunities available to youth showed promise through stronger partnerships with the Los Angeles County Office of Education.



Facility Highlights

- Dorothy Kirby Center (DKC): Reorganized into three separate facilities (Placement, Camp, and SYTF) with new classrooms and programs. Youth reported positive staff relationships, but full implementation of the L.A. Model remains incomplete
- Campus Vernon Kilpatrick (CVK): Offered a model trauma-responsive environment where youth thrived, though underutilized facilities and staff shortages limited impact
- Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (LPJH): Continued to struggle with overpopulation, racial tensions and resulting violence, and reliance on uses of force including Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray. Some improvements in interagency collaboration were noted.
- Barry J. Nidorf SYTF & Camps: Provided treatment and successful smaller-scale environments but often lacked resources, consistent staffing, and integrated practice models.

Looking Ahead

The inspections show progress in facility improvements, education, and youth programs in comparison to years past but also emphasize the urgent need for consistent adoption of a trauma-informed model and stronger interagency collaboration. Without these systemic changes, outcomes will continue to depend more on individual staff discretion than on a stable, rehabilitative culture of care.



REPORTS

In 2024–25, the Probation Oversight Commission (POC) produced a wide array of reports that reflect its commitment to transparency, accountability, and reform. These reports span facility compliance, service delivery, population analysis, and systemic reform—demonstrating the Commission’s ability to provide both detailed oversight and broad policy guidance.

Facility Oversight and Compliance

The POC examined the Department’s progress toward compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), raising concerns about investigation practices, staff training, and protections for youth. Our feedback underscored the need for stronger safeguards, clearer roles, and prevention-focused education

Read our [**PREA Report**](#).



Substance Use and Treatment

Recognizing substance abuse as one of the most pressing challenges facing detained youth, the Commission issued a comprehensive survey report documenting service gaps, program cancellations, and the urgent need for medical-model approaches to treatment. Recommendations emphasized wider availability of harm-reduction strategies, consistent access to programming, and expanded partnerships with providers specializing in recovery and youth engagement

Read our [**Substance Abuse Report**](#)

Community Partnerships

Through a listening session with 21 community-based organizations, the POC captured provider perspectives on contracting, clearance, and facility entry barriers. These findings revealed systemic challenges that hinder service delivery and offered actionable recommendations to professionalize and strengthen partnerships with community providers

CBO Relationships: Programming in Facilities

A focused audit of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall programming found that 73% of scheduled programs occurred as planned, marking improvement over prior years. Still, cancellations due to staffing gaps, searches, service provider cancellations, and scheduling errors highlighted the need for greater reliability and substitute systems to ensure youth access to consistent, high-quality programming

Read our **[Los Padrinos Programming Report](#)**



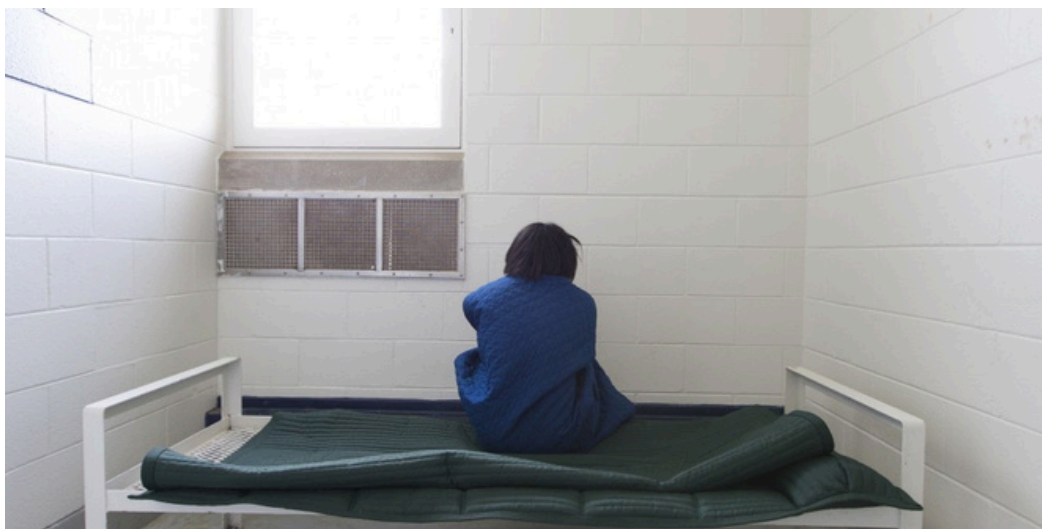
Photo courtesy of L.A. County Probation

Data and Demographic Analyses

The POC released multiple data-driven reports using Probation’s population “snapshots.”

These included:

- **Youth with DCFS involvement:** Nearly half of detained youth had a history with child welfare, underscoring the vulnerability of crossover youth. [**READ THE REPORT**](#)
- **Geographic impacts:** Youth most often came from South L.A., the Harbor, and Southeast regions, providing insight into community-level disproportionalities. [**READ THE REPORT**](#)
- **Charges and legal status:** 70% of the youth detained at Los Padrinos were not booked on the most serious charges of murder, attempted murder or manslaughter, and over 85% were still pre-adjudication. [**READ THE REPORT**](#)
- **Disabilities:** Nearly one in ten detained youth were flagged as developmentally disabled, with additional youth connected to Regional Centers, revealing significant needs for specialized support. [**READ THE REPORT**](#)
- **Risk assessment (LADS scores):** Analysis showed many youth with low LADS scores remained detained, raising critical questions about detention decisions. [**READ THE REPORT**](#)



The Imprint, 2018

[illegible]

SOLUTIONS AND REFORM GUIDANCE

In response to court orders, state regulators, and Board motions, the POC advanced solutions to depopulate Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall. Recommendations included expedited court reviews, stronger use of community-based alternatives, and interagency coordination to ensure timely, supported releases. **SOLUTIONS TO DEPOPULATE LP**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The POC's community engagement efforts reached more people than ever, combining strong public participation at meetings with broad digital outreach.



ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS





COMMUNITY VOICES

- Public comments at meetings and town halls continued to provide meaningful accountability.
- Parents and advocates represented **70% of in-person engagements** in late 2024, a trend that carried into 2025.

EXPANDING ACCESS

- Nearly 9 in 10 participants attended Commission meetings virtually, underscoring the importance of YouTube Live and WebEx in removing barriers to access.
- New followers and subscribers across platforms—particularly on YouTube and Instagram—demonstrated growing interest in oversight work.

SUMMARY

The POC's approach to community engagement blends accessibility, transparency, and inclusivity. By pairing consistent public meetings with robust digital communications, the Commission has built durable pathways for the community to stay informed and shape the future of probation oversight.



**PROBATION
OVERSIGHT
COMMISSION**
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