

Progress Update on RAND Evaluation of JJCPA Funded Programs in Los Angeles County

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Justice Policy Program

Activity Since December 2022

Provide consultation and report on the JJCPA programs in compliance with JJCPA Program Outcomes, BSCC rules and requirements, and County requirements

- Developed evidence summaries for JJCPA-funded services for JJCPA Annual Plan (April 2023)
- Summarized literature related to measurement of juvenile justice outcomes (June 2023)
- Assisted Probation with interpretation of trend data and developing evidence summaries for the BSCC Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act – Data Report (September 2023)
- Drafted language related to the evidence for programs and services for juvenile justice-involved youth, as summarized in the 2022 gap analysis report, for the CMJJP (November 2023)

Update on Evaluation Efforts and Timeline – First Set of Programs

2021

- Mental Health Screening, Assessment, and Treatment
- Multisystemic Therapy
- CARE Program
- Juvenile Mental Health Court

Initial Set of Programs: Progress Update

- Data Collection/Analysis
 - Completed qualitative analysis of interview data from all four programs
 - Drafted summary of qualitative analysis for evaluation reports
 - Received updated quantitative data in December 2022; coordinated with Probation and programs to clean data through May 2023
 - Analyzed quantitative data in June/July 2023 and shared preliminary findings with Probation to ensure face validity of findings in September/October 2023
- Reports/Publication Process
 - Finalizing two reports (JMHC + CARE; MST + MHSAT) based on data and conducting quality assurance review of quantitative analysis
 - Enter RAND QA in January/February 2024, reports expected ~April 2024

Update on Evaluation Efforts and Timeline – Second Set of Programs

2022

- DPH Substance Use Programs (Youth Substance Use, CENS, YES)
- LA County DEO (Formerly WDACS)
- LA City EWDD
- Youth Development Training
- PPP (Ready 2 Rise)
- DPH Office of Violence Prevention Trauma Prevention Initiative/Capacity Building Training

Second Set of Programs: Progress Updates

- Data Collection/Analysis
 - Completed qualitative interviews with stakeholders from all programs and completed qualitative coding
 - Completed qualitative analysis for capacity building programs and Substance Use programs; in final stages of analysis for DEO (formerly WDACS)/EWDD
 - Quantitative data is not applicable to capacity building programs; data for youth-serving programs not yet available
- Reports/Publication Process
 - Report on capacity building programs currently being drafted, expect to enter RAND QA in January, reports expected ~April 2024
 - Summary of qualitative findings for substance use programs complete; report pending availability of quantitative data
 - Qualitative findings for DEO/EWDD expected January 2024; report pending availability of quantitative data

Update on Evaluation Efforts and Timeline – Third Set of Programs

2023

- Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation
- City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks
- City of Los Angeles Housing Authority
- Los Angeles County Development Authority
- City of Paramount

Third Set of Programs: Progress Updates

- Data Collection/Analysis
 - Completed 49 interviews with staff members across programs
 - Received quantitative program data from from all five agencies (October/November 2023)
 - Awaiting juvenile justice contact data (if available) from all five agencies
- Reports/Publication Process
 - Analysis of qualitative data in progress and expected to be complete January/February 2024
 - Analysis of quantitative data to begin ASAP
 - Report timeline pending access to remaining quantitative data

Gap Analysis 2023 Findings

Goals of the 2023 Gap Analysis

- Discussions with JJCPA funded programs throughout our tenure as the JJCPA evaluator highlighted the challenges that programs encounter to the collection of data that can be used for evaluation purposes
- Collection of data for evaluation has several advantages, including providing data that can be used for quality improvement efforts, supporting participation in external evaluations, and helping programs obtain funding
- To address this gap between current practice and “optimal” practice, RAND:
 - Conducted a survey of JJCPA-funded programs in July/August 2023 to describe the state of data collection efforts
 - Developed a toolkit, drawing on best practices for program evaluation and the survey responses, that programs can use to bolster their current data collection practices

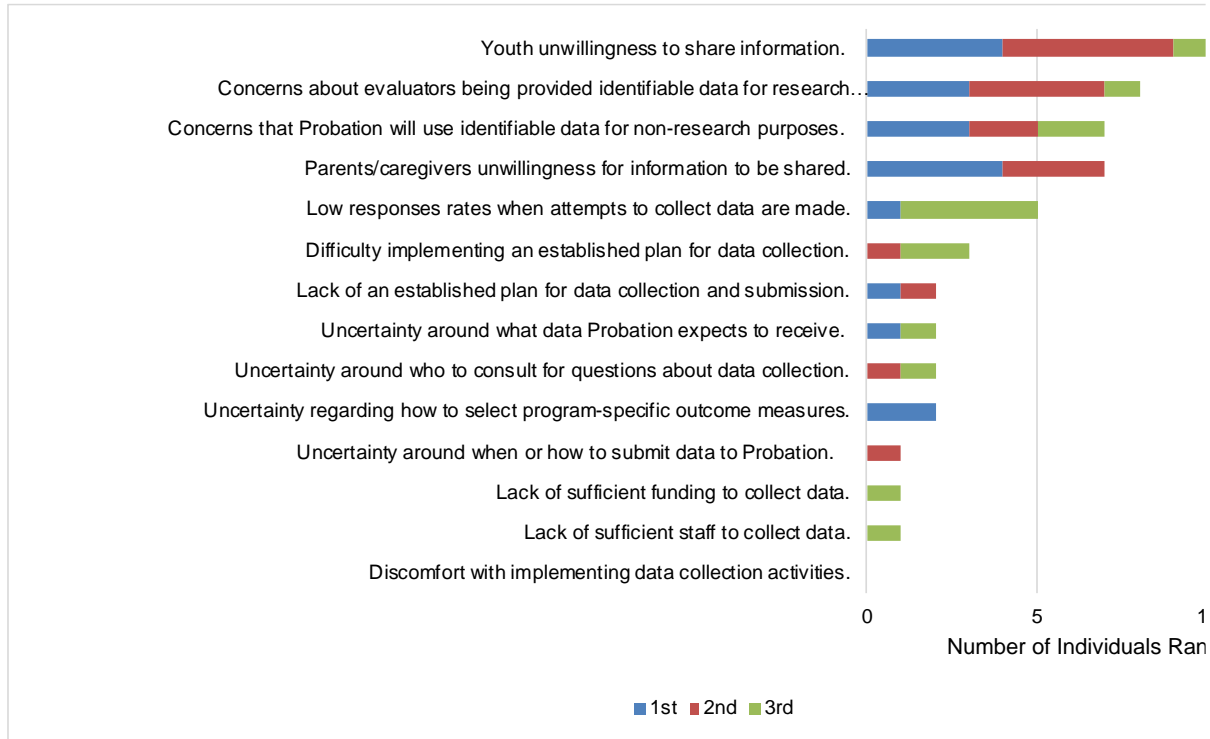
Survey Findings

Table 1. Availability of Resources to Support Evaluation-Related Data Collection

Resources	Percentage
An established plan/workflow for data collection	71%
Designated program staff who are responsible for data collection	57%
Program staff who are knowledgeable regarding data collection	57%
An established plan for submitting data to Probation	57%
Existing program databases or files that can be used to extract data to be used for evaluation	43%
Designated areas within the program to collect and secure collected data	43%
Survey instruments used to collect data from youth	14%

Survey Findings

Figure 1. Ranking of Top Three Challenges to Data Collection and Submission



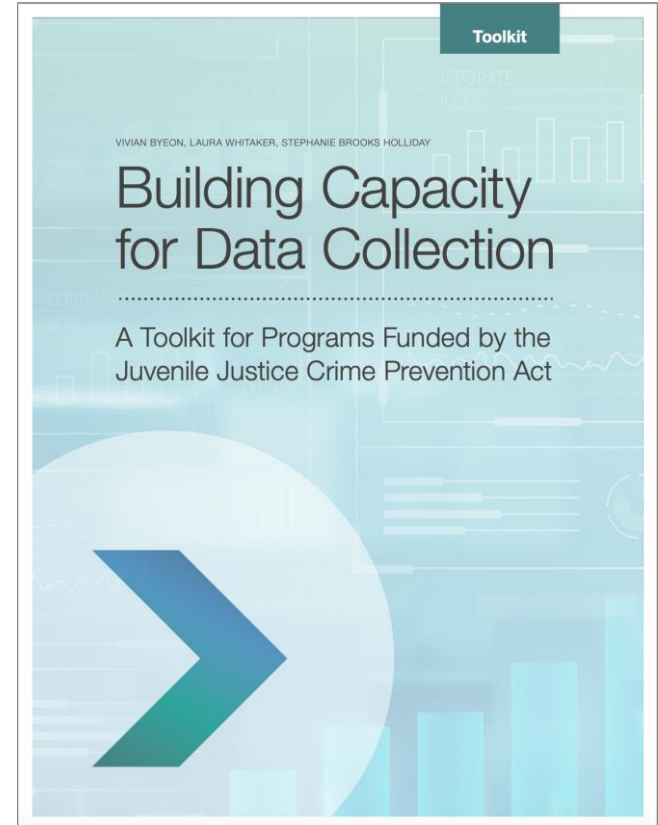
Survey Findings

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Rated Challenges to Data Collection and Submission

Challenges	Mean	Standard Deviation
Parents'/caregivers' unwillingness for information to be shared	1.44	1.30
Concerns that Probation will use identifiable data for nonresearch purposes	1.40	1.52
Youth unwillingness to share information	1.36	1.32
Concerns about evaluators being provided identifiable data for research purposes	1.32	1.41
Low response rates when attempts to collect data are made	1.00	1.22
Uncertainty regarding how to select program-specific outcome measures	0.96	1.34
Difficulty implementing an established plan for data collection	0.88	1.11
Lack of sufficient staff to collect data	0.79	1.15
Discomfort with implementing data collection activities	0.71	1.02
Uncertainty around who to consult for questions about data collection	0.67	1.07
Uncertainty around what data Probation expects to receive	0.54	0.96
Lack of sufficient funding to collect data	0.43	0.77
Lack of an established plan for data collection and submission	0.40	0.89
Uncertainty around when or how to submit data to Probation	0.29	0.73

Toolkit Overview

- Step 1: Decide what data to measure and collect
- Step 2: Decide how you will collect data for the program participation and outcome measures you have identified
- Step 3: Develop a plan for data collection
- Step 4: Prepare materials to inform participants about data collection
- Step 5: Document the data collection plan and train staff members
- Step 6: Collect data using the plan and prepare to modify the data collection plan
- Step 7: Prepare the data for analysis
- Step 8: Share results with staff and make programmatic changes



Sample Page

Step 1c: Apply SMART Principles to Participation and Outcome Measures

Once you have identified participation and outcome measures for your program, we recommend that you apply SMART principles (University of California, undated) to each measure. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Applying SMART principles to your measures will help you to refine your measures, give them clearer definitions, and increase the chances that data collection for these measures is feasible. Below, we outline what these principles mean for your measures:

- **Specific:** The measure should describe exactly what is expected to change and for whom, as well as how this will be accomplished.
- **Measurable:** There should be a way to assess progress toward your program's measure.
- **Achievable:** The desired participation or outcome must be feasible for your target population, and your program must have the resources to support these changes.

- **Relevant:** The measure should be related to the program's purpose.
- **Time-bound:** The time frame in which the participation or outcome is expected to occur is specified.

We can examine two examples of measures to demonstrate these principles. Table 6 compares two sample measures identified by a hypothetical program that offers an educational session about substance use disorder (SUD) treatment with the goal of getting youth connected to formal SUD treatment. In this table, we apply the SMART principles to determine which is the better measure.

This section provides a basic overview of the ways you might go about identifying participation and outcome measures. Once you have completed identifying your program's activities, participation, and outcome measures, you may document them in Table B.2 in Appendix B. If you are interested in more guidance or additional toolkits, please see the box below for recommended resources.

TABLE 6
SMART Principles Applied to Two Sample Measures for SUD Treatment Program

SMART Principles	Sample Measure #1: Improve Initiation of SUD Treatment	Sample Measure #2: 50% of Youth Who Participate in a SUD Educational Session Will Initiate Treatment Two Months After the Session
Specific	NO. This measure could be made more specific by including information about what "improve" means.	YES. This measure clearly indicates that the goal is to increase the number of youth who start SUD treatment, which is more specific than just looking for improvement. It also more clearly identifies the target population (i.e., youth).
Measurable	NO. While we know what will be measured, it is not clear when or who we will measure initiation from.	YES. This measure focuses on the number of individuals who initiate in SUD treatment after receiving the session and sets a specific target goal, which is easy to measure.
Achievable	UNCLEAR. This outcome may be realistic, but it is difficult to tell because it is not very specific or measurable.	YES. This outcome appears to be realistic.
Relevant	YES. This measure is relevant to the program's desired outcome of increasing treatment initiation among youth with SUDs.	YES. This measure is relevant to the program's desired outcome of increasing treatment initiation among youth with SUDs.
Time-bound	NO. A specific time frame is not identified, so we do not know when initiation is expected to occur.	YES. This outcome is time-bound because it is tied to a specific time frame of 2 months following the completion of the educational session.

Sample Page

How Can I Develop My Own Questionnaire Items?

If you are planning to develop new questions or items for a questionnaire to measure your program outcomes, here are some additional resources that you may find useful. They cover topics such as guidance and tips for writing questions, sample question and response options, and additional resources. Please keep in mind that these resources are not specific to developing items for at-risk or juvenile justice-involved youth, and your program should consider the sensitivity of the items you are developing to make sure that they are appropriate for the population of youth and families that you serve.

- Youth Development Executives of King County, “Survey Selection and Design Guiding Questions,” undated-b: <https://ydekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Survey-Selection-and-Design-Guiding-Questions.pdf>
- Chase Harrison, “Tip Sheet on Question Wording,” Harvard University Program on Survey Research, updated November 17, 2007: https://psr.iq.harvard.edu/sites/projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/psr/files/PSRQuestionnaireTipSheet_0.pdf
- Sarah Fisher, “Great Survey Questions: How to Write Them & Avoid Common Mistakes,” *Qualtrics* blog, April 1, 2023: <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/writing-survey-questions/>
- Pew Research Center, “Writing Survey Questions,” undated <https://www.pewresearch.org/our-methods/u-s-surveys/writing-survey-questions/>

Examples and Worksheets

FIGURE 5

Example of a Program Walkthrough (from Step 3a) Being Used to Inform the Data Collection Plan

<p>How frequently is your program offered?</p> <p>Regularly (e.g., once a week) OR as a specially scheduled activity (e.g., a few times a year)? If regularly, how long are young people enrolled (e.g., 12 weeks? 6 months? Varies)?</p>	<p>Regularly, once a week for 12 weeks. Youth are enrolled for the full 12 weeks</p>
<p>Where is your program activity held?</p> <p>Is it indoors or outdoors? Is it held in the same location each time or different locations? Is there a natural entry point for the activity, like a door or gate that people pass through?</p>	<p>Program is held indoors at center each week. The exact room may vary depending on availability. Youth enter the center through the same entrance each time.</p>
<p>Who helps run your program activities?</p> <p>Who is on site when the activity is offered?</p>	<p>5 program staff administer weekly program activities with individual youth. Administrative (front office) staff are on site but do not interact with youth other than alerting program staff that youth have arrived.</p>
<p>What supplies or resources are used for the program activities?</p> <p>Are there office supplies, like paper and pencils? Do the youth have access to computers?</p>	<p>All activities are done with pens, pencils, and paper. Youth do not have access to computers during program activities.</p>
<p>Are there times that you are already collecting information from participants?</p> <p>Do youth sign up in advance of the session, and, if yes, how do they do so? If not, do they sign in or out at the event?</p>	<p>Youth and caregivers schedule sessions with front office staff in person or via phone or email. Program staff collect information about youth symptoms every week via paper forms.</p>

WORKSHEET B.1

Template for Program Walkthrough Activity

<p>How frequently is your program offered?</p> <p>Regularly (e.g., once a week) OR as a specially scheduled activity (e.g., a few times a year)? If regularly, how long are young people enrolled (e.g., 12 weeks? 6 months? Varies)?</p>	
<p>Where is your program activity held?</p> <p>Is it indoors or outdoors? Is it held in the same location each time or different locations? Is there a natural entry point for the activity, like a door or gate that people pass through?</p>	
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<p>What supplies or resources are used for the program activities?</p> <p>Are there office supplies, like paper and pencils? Do the youth have access to computers?</p>	
<p>Are there times that you are already collecting information from participants?</p> <p>Do youth sign up in advance of the session, and, if yes, how do they do so? If not, do they sign in or out at the event?</p>	

Feedback and Questions?

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