

Ventura County Juvenile Justice Plan

April 2017



Ventura County Probation Agency

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

Ventura County participates in the State of California’s Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) program, which funds programs that use strategies with demonstrated effectiveness in reducing juvenile delinquency. All counties participating in the JJCPA were required to initially develop and submit to the state a county-level comprehensive juvenile justice plan that included an assessment of existing local resources targeted to youth involved in the juvenile justice system or at risk of involvement and their families; these plans also included a local action strategy for responding to identified gaps in the continuum of juvenile justice services. Counties must update their plans on a regular basis.¹

Ventura County submitted its initial Juvenile Justice Plan to the state in 2001 and completed a comprehensive update in April 2008. The updated 2008 plan provided information about youth who participate in probation services, summarized existing programs and services for youth involved with the juvenile justice system and youth at risk of system involvement, and laid out a roadmap for the county’s continuing efforts to improve service for these populations.

The current update to the plan, completed in April 2017, is part of a process that began in September 2015. In 2015, the county contracted with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), a nonprofit research organization, to complete several interconnected tasks related to JJCPA programming, including a process evaluation of the county’s JJCPA programs and development of a comprehensive data measurement report for the programs. As

¹ Board of State and Community Corrections. (2016). *Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act, Annual Report*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

the final task, NCCD worked with the county to update the plan. Throughout this work, NCCD has consulted with numerous local stakeholders, with the Ventura County Probation Agency (VCPA) as its main contact.

The purpose of updating this plan is to assess the county's continuum of juvenile services in order to determine what is working well and where changes may be needed. The plan explores current demographic data and reviews challenges, strengths, and weaknesses related to serving the county's juvenile population. It represents the county's intentional effort to ensure that programs are appropriate for the current youth population; pinpoint service gaps; provide recommendations for local stakeholders to collaboratively meet the needs of at-risk youth, young offenders, and their families; and to protect public safety in the community.

Ventura County has a history of championing data-driven juvenile justice reform efforts, including many years of implementing the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) and addressing disproportionate minority contact (DMC)/racial and ethnic disparities (RED) in the juvenile system. The county also was one of five sites statewide selected to participate in the Healthy Returns Initiative (HRI), a project of the California Endowment, from 2005 to 2009; HRI's purpose was to improve outcomes for probation-involved youth with mental and physical health issues. More recently, the county has implemented programming grounded in evidence-based practices such as positive youth development, including the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme's Evening Reporting Center for youth in JJCPA-funded programs. The county also uses probation data, including age and zip code data, to target programming for young people based on these and other factors. These examples are just some evidence of the county's commitment to collaboratively explore and implement innovative,

data-centered solutions to meet the needs of justice-involved youth while also addressing public safety concerns.

B. Methodology

NCCD used a mixed-methods approach for data collection to complete this update to the plan. This process included reviewing documents and data provided by VCPA as well as data from the US Census, California State Department of Education, California Healthy Kids Survey, California Office of the Attorney General, and other secondary sources.

NCCD also conducted a site visit to VCPA in August 2016 in order to facilitate individual interviews and community listening sessions with stakeholders, including county agency staff, community-based service providers, and adult and youth community members (with a total of 46 participants). Listening sessions were held in several locations, including multiple sites in Oxnard and one in Simi Valley; in Oxnard, one session was designed for Spanish-speaking participants and one was for youth. In addition, NCCD administered a survey to local stakeholders in January/February 2016 as part of conducting the process evaluation of JJCPA programs; data from this survey informs the plan's findings and recommendations.

II. GENERAL POPULATION

Ventura County, which is composed of 10 incorporated cities and several unincorporated areas, is home to 840,833 residents; it is the thirteenth most populous county in California. The

county seat is in the city of Ventura and the most populous city is Oxnard, making up 24% of the county's total population.²

The county's diverse geography includes urban centers, agricultural lands, and forested areas, including the Los Padres National Forest. Its economic base features biotechnology, agriculture, advanced technologies, oil production, military testing and development, and tourism. Major industries and employers include the US military (Ventura County has two naval bases and an Air National Guard base) and the county government.³

Countywide, the median household income is \$77,348. About 11% of the population lives below the poverty level.⁴

In terms of race/ethnicity, the overall population in Ventura County is about 47% White, 42% Hispanic/Latino, 7% Asian, and 2% Black.⁵ Regarding indigenous groups, an estimated 20,000 indigenous Oaxacan people from southern Mexico live and work in the county.⁶ About one quarter (23%) of the county's population is foreign born. More than one third (39%) speak a language other than English at home.⁷ Young people age 10 to 19 years old account for 14% of

² County of Ventura California, (2016). *About us*. Retrieved from <http://www.ventura.org/county-of-ventura/about-us>; US Census Bureau. (2017, January). *2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates* [Ventura County]. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

³ County of Ventura California, (2016). *About us*. Retrieved from <http://www.ventura.org/county-of-ventura/about-us>

⁴ US Census Bureau. (2017, January). *2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates* [Ventura County]. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mixteco.org, (2015). *Mixtecs in Ventura County*. Retrieved from <http://mixteco.org/mixtecs/>

⁷ US Census Bureau. (2017, January). *2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates* [Ventura County]. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

the county's total population. The county's youth population (ages 10 to 19) is about 51% Hispanic/Latino, 38% White, 5% Asian, and 1% Black.⁸

Following are various sources of demographic data for Ventura County, with a focus on data that affect the county's youth population. Data are provided for the county as a whole and, where available, for specific cities identified as those where VCPA serves the largest percentage of youth. County data are compared to state data where appropriate.

According to a one-day data snapshot from November 14, 2016, close to half (44%) of youth on probation live in the Oxnard/Port Hueneme area. Other areas with substantial proportions of probation-involved youth are Simi Valley (11%), the city of Ventura (10%), and the Fillmore/Santa Paula area (8%).⁹

In Oxnard, about two thirds (68%) of the city's population speak a language other than English at home; 14% of all people in the city live below the federal poverty level, and 25% of children under age 18 do so; and the median household income of \$60,621 is substantially lower than that for the county as whole (Table 1).

⁸ US Census Bureau. (2017, January). *2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates* [Ventura County]. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>; State of California, Department of Finance. (2016). *State and county population projections by race/ethnicity, sex, and age 2010–2060*, Sacramento, CA: Author.

⁹ VCPA provided this data to NCCD for the purposes of this plan.

Location	Ventura County	Oxnard	Port Hueneme	Simi Valley	Ventura (City)
Population					
Total population	840,833	203,495	22,058	126,103	108,889
Population age 10–19 years	120,074 (14% of total)	31,293 (15% of total)	2,934 (13% of total)	17,914 (14% of total)	12,789 (12% of total)
Foreign-born	23%	37%	*	19%	15%
Speak a language other than English at home	39%	68%	*	26%	27%
Employment and Economic Indicators					
Median household income	\$77,348	\$60,621	\$57,848	\$90,210	\$83,833
Live below poverty level (total population)	11%	14%	15%	4%	8%
Live below poverty level (children under 18)	16%	25%	18%	7%	15%
Unemployment (February 2017)	5%	5%	7%	4%	5%
Educational Attainment (Ages 25 and Older)					
Graduated high school/received GED	19%	21%	26%	25%	20%
Attended some college, no degree	24%	21%	27%	26%	27%
Has associate's degree	9%	7%	9%	11%	10%
Has undergraduate college degree	20%	12%	12%	22%	20%
Has graduate/ professional degree	12%	5%	6%	11%	13%
High school graduate or higher	83%	66%	80%	91%	89%

*Data not available.

III. YOUTH POPULATION

A. Characteristics

Following are data about Ventura County's youth population in areas including education, economics, family structure, child welfare, and human trafficking.

¹⁰ US Census Bureau. (2017, January). *2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates* [Ventura County]. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>; Employment Development Department. (2017, March). *Monthly labor force data for cities and census designated places (CDP)* [Ventura County]. Retrieved from <http://www.labormarketinfo.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/ventusub.xls>

1. Education

a. *Truancy, Suspension, and Expulsion*

According to the latest data available from the California Department of Education, Oxnard Union High School District has the county's highest truancy and expulsion rates. Fillmore Unified School District has the highest rate of suspension and the second-highest truancy and expulsion rates. Both districts' rates of truancy, suspension, and expulsion are substantially greater than the average for both the county as a whole and the state (Table 2).

District	Truancy Rate	Suspension Rate	Expulsion Rate
Oxnard Union High School District	65.9	5.2	0.4
Fillmore Unified School District	41.3	5.3	0.3
Ventura Unified School District	40.7	2.9	0.1
Simi Valley Unified School District	39.2	3.5	0.2
Ojai Unified School District	37.2	2.9	0.0
Santa Paula Unified School District	35.3	4.0	0.1
Rio School District	32.5	2.1	0.1
Oxnard School District	30.1	2.9	0.0
Ventura County (total)	33.8	3.1	0.1
CALIFORNIA (TOTAL)	31.4	3.8	0.1

*The state Education Code (Section 48260) states that "a pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than a 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, shall be classified as truant"

¹¹ California Department of Education, Data Reporting Office. (2017, February). *Truancy report, Ventura County 2014–2015*. Retrieved from <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>; California Department of Education, Data Reporting Office. (2017, February). *Suspension and expulsion report, Ventura County 2014–2015*. Retrieved from <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

b. *California Healthy Kids Survey*

The California Healthy Kids Survey, which is administered statewide in many school districts every other year, provides student-reported data on various indicators related to learning and health, including school connectedness, developmental supports and opportunities, safety, violence and harassment, substance use, and physical and mental health. The 2015–16 survey results indicate that Oxnard Union High School District students reported lower levels of school safety, feeling connected to school, and having caring adult relationships than students in the Simi Valley Unified School District. The last item is particularly notable for students in nontraditional schools in the Oxnard district compared to the Simi Valley district, with 22% of Oxnard students reporting high levels of having caring adult relationships at school compared to 59% of Simi Valley students.

Regarding substance use and behavioral health issues, students in both districts reported relatively comparable levels of heavy drug use, with students in nontraditional schools reporting the largest percentages of heavy drug use (32% in Oxnard, 35% in Simi Valley). In general, about one third of students across the board experienced chronic hopelessness or sadness in the last 12 months; however, this figure rises to nearly one-half (49%) among Simi Valley students in nontraditional schools. Similarly, while about one fifth to one sixth of students seriously considered attempting suicide in the last 12 months, this proportion increased to one third (33%) for Simi Valley students in nontraditional schools.

In terms of language access, about half of all Oxnard students reported that a language other than English is spoken in their home most of the time, compared to about one fifth of

most Simi Valley students. Other than English, the most commonly spoken language at home reported by students in both districts is Spanish (Table 3).

District	Oxnard Union High School District			Simi Valley Unified High School District		
	9th Grade (N = 3,205)	11th Grade (N = 2,912)	NT* (N = 314)	9th Grade (N = 827)	11th Grade (N = 724)	NT* (N = 167)
School Connectedness						
School perceived as safe or very safe	54%	55%	57%	74%	70%	75%
Skipped school or cut classes (more than a few times) [†]	6%	10%	30%	2%	7%	30%
School connectedness (high)	42%	39%	35%	60%	50%	65%
Caring adult relationships at school (high)	25%	27%	22%	32%	34%	59%
Substance Use and Mental Health						
Current heavy drug user	8%	10%	32%	4%	10%	35%
Experienced chronic sadness/hopelessness [†]	31%	33%	36%	31%	37%	49%
Seriously considered attempting suicide [†]	16%	16%	16%	19%	21%	33%
Experienced cyberbullying [†]	18%	16%	17%	20%	19%	19%
Other Indicators						
Language other than English spoken most of the time at home	50%	49%	49%	20%	21%	29%
Considers self to be member of a gang	6%	6%	9%	2%	3%	9%

Note: N size refers to the total number of students who participated in the survey; it does not indicate individual sample size for each survey item.

*NT refers to nontraditional school; this includes continuation, community day, and other alternative school types.

[†]Within the last 12 months.

¹² WestEd. (n.d.) *California Healthy Kids Survey: Oxnard Union High Secondary 2015–2016—Main report*. Retrieved from http://surveydata.wested.org/resources/Oxnard_Union_High_1516_Sec_CHKS.pdf; WestEd. (n.d.) *California Healthy Kids Survey: Simi Valley Unified Secondary 2015-16: Main report*. Retrieved from http://surveydata.wested.org/resources/Simi_Valley_Unified_1516_Sec_CHKS.pdf

Self-reported gang membership by Oxnard and Simi Valley students is highest among students in nontraditional schools (9% for both districts; Table 3). Students in the Oxnard district also participated in a “Gang Awareness Module” as part of the 2015–16 survey administration (Simi Valley did not use this module). About half of Oxnard students in ninth grade and in nontraditional schools reported some or a lot of gang members at their school; this figure drops to about one third for students in eleventh grade. Compared with ninth and eleventh graders, a higher percentage of students in nontraditional schools reported that there are some or a lot of gang members in their neighborhood (39%) and that some or a lot of their friends are in a gang (31%). Additionally, while more than half of students in ninth grade (58%) and eleventh grade (57%) reported that their school or neighborhood provides engaging activities to do after school, only about one quarter (27%) of students in nontraditional schools reported this availability (Table 4).

Table 4			
California Healthy Kids Survey Data, 2015–2016			
Oxnard Union High School District: Gang Awareness Module¹³			
	Grade 9 (N = 2,812)	Grade 11 (N = 2,555)	NT* (N = 268)
Ever been member of gang	6%	4%	9%
Gang members at school (some/a lot)	47%	35%	45%
Gang members in neighborhood (some/a lot)	28%	25%	39%
Friends in gang (some/a lot)	14%	12%	31%
School/neighborhood offers interesting afterschool activities for people your age	58%	57%	27%

*NT refers to nontraditional school; includes continuation, community day, and other alternative school types.

¹³ WestEd. (n.d.) *California Healthy Kids Survey: Oxnard Union High Secondary 2015–2016—Main report*. Retrieved from http://surveydata.wested.org/resources/Oxnard_Union_High_1516_Sec_CHKS.pdf

2. Free and Reduced-Price School Meal Eligibility

Overall, half (50%) of public school students in Ventura County are eligible to receive free or reduced price meals (FRPM) compared with 59% of students statewide.¹⁴ Within the county, this proportion differs substantially. For example, in the Oxnard School District, with approximately 16,900 students in 21 elementary and middle schools, 85% of students in the district are eligible for FRPM. In the Santa Paula School District, with approximately 5,500 students, 84% of students in the district are eligible for FRPM. In Simi Valley Unified School District, with approximately 17,200 students in 28 schools, 30% of all students in the district are eligible.¹⁵

3. Household Structure

About one quarter (26%) of households in Ventura County are single-parent households with children.¹⁶ Of grandparents living with their own grandchildren (age 18 or younger) in Ventura County, 22% are responsible for raising their own grandchildren; this rate is slightly below the state level of 26%.¹⁷

¹⁴ KidsData.org. (2016, March). *Student eligibility to receive free or reduced price school meals*. Retrieved from <http://www.kidsdata.org/topic/518/free-school-meals-eligible/table#fmt=675&loc=2,363&tf=84&sortType=asc>

¹⁵ Data Reporting Office. (2016, March). *Student poverty FRPM data*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education; US Department of Education. (2016, March). *NCES Digest of Education Statistics*. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/>

¹⁶ Community Health Status Indicators. (2017). *Children in single-parent households (Ventura County)*. Retrieved from <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/CommunityHealth/profile/currentprofile/CA/Ventura/310044>.

¹⁷ US Census Bureau. (2017, January). *2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates [Ventura County]*. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

4. Child Welfare

Ventura County received 11,739 allegations/reports of child maltreatment (based on unduplicated counts of children with one or more allegations) between January 1 and December 31, 2015. The largest percentages of reported maltreatment were for general neglect (53%), physical abuse (20%), and sexual abuse (11%). Of these allegations, 1,175 (10%) were substantiated. The largest percentage of substantiated reports was for general neglect (78%); the state rate of substantiations of general neglect is 67%.¹⁸

As of July 1, 2016, there were 789 children ages 0 to 17 involved in Ventura County's child welfare system. County prevalence rates of white and Latino/a children in care were roughly comparable to state rates, which were slightly higher for both groups (Table 5).¹⁹

Table 5		
Prevalence Rates of Children in Care, 2016		
	State of California (Prevalence per 1,000 Children)	Ventura County (Prevalence per 1,000 Children)
Black	24.3	10.5
White	5.0	3.0
Latino/a	5.9	5.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	0.8
Native American	23.2	2.6
Multi-race	0	0
Total	5.9	4.0

¹⁸ California Child Welfare Indicators Project. (2017, February). *Children with one or more allegations for Jan 1, 2015 to Dec 31, 2015*. Retrieved from http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/

¹⁹ California Child Welfare Indicators Project. (2016, July). *CWS/CMS 2016 Quarter 3 Extract*. Retrieved from http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/

According to a data analysis conducted by VCPA in December 2015, approximately 5% of youth were identified as “crossover” or “dually involved” youth, i.e., youth who are concurrently involved in both the juvenile and child welfare systems in Ventura County.

5. Human Trafficking

Research indicates that vulnerable youth, including those in the child welfare system, are particularly susceptible to being trafficked.²⁰ While local data on human trafficking is sparse, a recent study by the Ventura County Coalition Against Human Trafficking found that agencies in the county identified 57 victims of sex or labor trafficking between January 2014 and April 2016. Of these, almost all (95%) had experienced a form of sex trafficking; about one fifth (19%) were under age 18; nearly all (93%) were women or girls; and the most common race/ethnicity of victims was Asian, at 61%.²¹

The study included interviews with representatives of 13 agencies and organizations in the county, including VCPA, Behavioral Health, Children and Family Services, the district attorney’s office, police department, sheriff’s department, and community-based organizations. Interview participants agreed that human trafficking in Ventura County is under-identified, with some stating that additional training will likely lead to an increase in identification of trafficking victims and survivors. Some interview participants noted that staff have observed that some female youth in the county’s juvenile facility show signs of having been trafficked in the past and

²⁰ Clawson, H. J., Dutch, N., Solomon, A. & Grace, L. G. (2009). *Human trafficking into and within the United States: A review of the literature*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services.

²¹ Rhodes, K. (2016). *Human trafficking in Ventura County*. Ventura, CA: Ventura County Coalition Against Human Trafficking.

that a number of probation-involved youth (with youth in placement specifically cited) have likely been previous targets of sex traffickers.²²

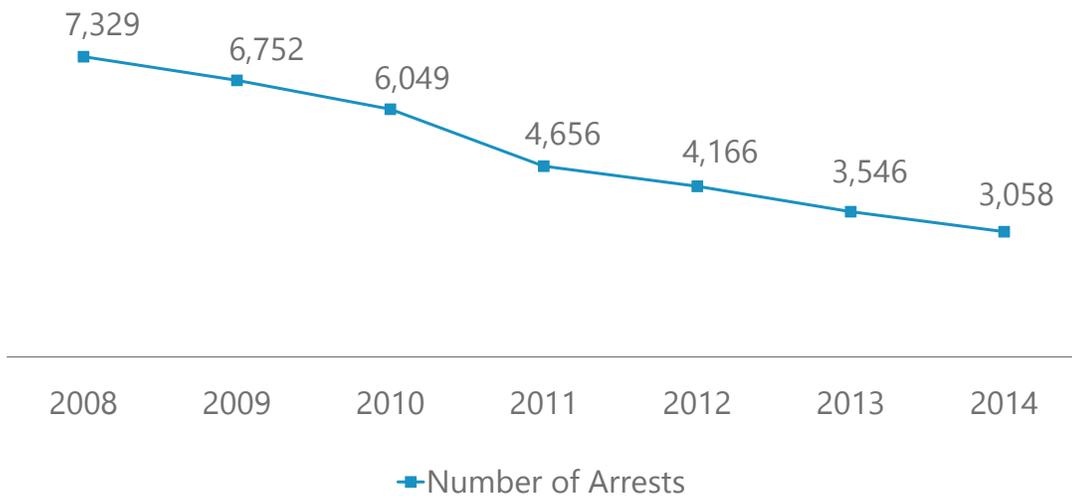
B. Juvenile Arrest and Probation Population in Ventura County

1. Arrest Data

Juvenile arrests in Ventura County have dropped substantially since the 2008 update of the county's Juvenile Justice Plan. Overall, juvenile arrests declined from a total of 7,329 in 2008 to 3,058 in 2014 (the last year for which comprehensive data were available from the state attorney general's office), reflecting an overall decrease of 58% (Figure 1).

Figure 1²³

Juvenile Arrests in Ventura County (All Offenses), 2008–2014



NCCCD | National Council on Crime & Delinquency

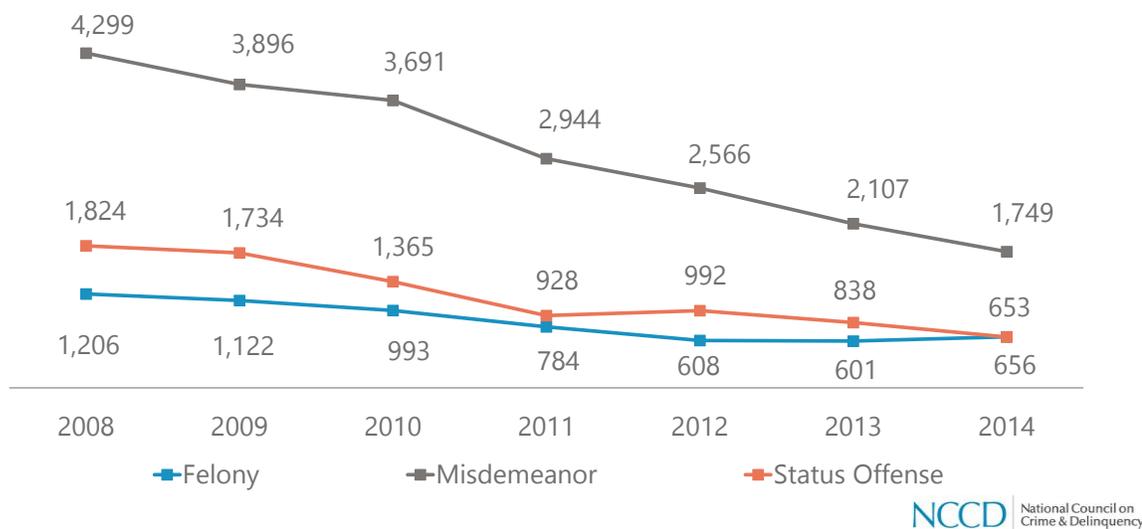
²² Ibid.

²³ Criminal Justice Statistics Center. (2017, February). *Arrests, Ventura County, 2008–2014, all juveniles*. Retrieved from <https://oag.ca.gov/crime/cjsc/stats/arrests>

Of the 3,058 total juvenile arrests in 2014, there were 656 felony arrests; 1,749 misdemeanor arrests; and 653 status offense arrests. Between 2008 and 2014, juvenile arrests for felonies, misdemeanors, and status offenses all experienced an overall downward trend. Felony arrests decreased by 46%, misdemeanor arrests by 59%, and status offense arrests by 64% (Figure 2).

Figure 2²⁴

Juvenile Arrests in Ventura County by Offense Type, 2008–2014



2. Probation Data

The overall number of youth referred to and placed on juvenile probation in the county has decreased dramatically since the 2008 plan update. The total number of youth on all types

²⁴ Ibid.

of probation dropped from 6,085 in 2008 to 2,336 in 2016, accounting for a 62% decrease. The probation types with the largest numbers of youth and the corresponding rates of decrease are as follows.

- Informal probation (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] § 654): 1,017 youth in 2016 (showed slight fluctuations and an overall drop of 59% from 2008 to 2016).
- Informal probation (WIC § 654.2): 292 youth in 2016 (declined 72% from 2008).
- Wardship: 785 youth in 2016 (declined 63% from 2008 to 2016).

In addition, there was an increase in the percentage of probationers placed on 725(a) probation without wardship from 2014 to 2016. This change is due in part to an increase in recommendations to first place youth on 725(a) (Tables 6a and 6b²⁵).

WIC Probation Type	2008		2009		2010		2011	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
654 informal*	2,481	41%	2,614	43%	2,528	47%	2,101	44%
654.1 informal	68	1%	57	0.9%	40	0.7%	41	0.9%
654.2 informal	1,051	17%	989	16%	793	15%	796	17%
725(a) probation without wardship	52	0.9%	61	1%	55	1%	32	0.7%
727 wardship without supervision	4	0.1%	5	0.1%	2	0%	1	0%
Deferred entry of judgment	301	5%	302	5%	243	4%	172	4%
Wardship	2,128	35%	1,989	33%	1,754	32%	1,603	34%
Total	6,085	100%	6,017	99%	5,415	100%	4,746	101%

Note: A youth may be counted more than once if on more than one probation type. However, a youth is placed on one type of probation at a time. Total percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

*This category reflects all different types of options for handling a citation (includes 654 informal, sole sanction, youth crisis outreach program, and youth services class).

²⁵ VCPA provided this data to NCCD for the purposes of this plan.

Table 6b										
VCPA Probation Types (2012–2016)										
Probation Type	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
654 informal*	1,195	34%	1,062	35%	1,008	38%	1,076	42%	1,017	44%
654.1 informal	25	0.7%	22	0.7%	20	0.8%	26	1%	17	0.7%
654.2 informal	745	21%	656	22%	513	19%	398	16%	292	13%
725(a) probation without wardship	50	1%	45	1%	41	2%	96	4%	124	5%
727 wardship without supervision	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Deferred entry of judgment	104	3%	102	3%	120	5%	102	4%	101	4%
Wardship	1,358	39%	1,152	38%	961	36%	855	33%	785	34%
Total	3,478	99%	3,039	100%	2,663	101%	2,553	100%	2,336	101%

Note: A youth may be counted more than once if on more than one probation type. However, a youth is placed on one type of probation at a time. Total percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. *This category reflects all different types of options for handling a citation (includes 654 informal, sole sanction, youth crisis outreach program, and youth services class).

a. One-Day Probation Snapshot

Based on a one-day snapshot (as of November 14, 2016), there were a total of 827 youth in the Ventura County probation system. An analysis by zip code shows that nearly half (44%) of youth reside in the Oxnard/Port Hueneme Area, followed by Simi Valley (11%), city of Ventura (10%), and the Fillmore/Santa Paula area (8%). In terms of age, about half (46%) of all youth were ages 18 to 20 at the time of the snapshot, 21% were age 17, 17% were age 16, and 15% were age 15 or younger.²⁶

²⁶ VCPA provided this data to NCCD for the purposes of this plan.

b. Secure Detention

The Juvenile Facilities complex includes the detention and commitment facilities. There were substantial overall decreases in detention and commitment from 2008 to 2016.

The detention numbers represent youth admitted to secure detention for new offenses, violations of probation, and return on warrants or court remands pending further court proceedings; youth "direct filed" to adult court; youth pending placement; and youth serving a short commitment, typically a few days to one week.²⁷ Between 2008 and 2016, the average daily population in the detention facility declined 60%, from 89 to 36 youth.

The commitment numbers represent youth serving a commitment of about one week or longer. Between 2008 and 2016, the average daily population in the commitment facility declined 58%, from 114 to 48 youth.

c. Discussion of Juvenile Justice Trends

As noted earlier in the plan, juvenile arrests in Ventura County declined 58% between 2008 and 2014. The proportion of probation-involved youth in the county dropped by 56% during this period, with an overall decline of 61% between 2008 and 2016. In addition, there were substantial overall decreases in both juvenile detention and commitment populations between 2008 and 2016.

²⁷ From about 2008 to about 2010, some youth remained in detention for longer periods of time due to the number of beds being used in the commitment facility.

The juvenile justice trends in Ventura County are similar to those seen nationwide and statewide. National estimates show that juvenile arrests declined 49% between 2008 and 2014.²⁸ In California, juvenile arrests decreased 62% between 2008 and 2014.²⁹ Juvenile incarceration rates are also declining substantially at the national and state levels.³⁰

While more research is needed, various explanations may partially account for the decline in juvenile justice involvement occurring at the national, state, and local levels. For example, changes could be related in part to legislative reforms at the state and national levels as well as to policy and practice changes at the local level. This could take the form of a jurisdiction choosing to prioritize diverting young people over mandating formal justice system involvement.³¹ It is also possible that population shifts may account for some of these changes, although in Ventura County, the youth population (ages 10 to 19) has remained relatively stable between 2000 and 2015 at about 14% to 15% of the county's overall population.³²

Recent trends in the county show a gradual increase in the use of informal diversion options handled through the probation department and a decrease in more restrictive approaches. For example, of all probation-involved youth per year, the percentage of youth on

²⁸ US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2015). *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*. Retrieved from <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/>

²⁹ State of California Department of Justice. (2017, March). *CJSC statistics: Arrests*. Retrieved from <https://oag.ca.gov/crime/cjsc/stats/arrests>

³⁰ Pew Charitable Trusts. (November 2015). *Juvenile commitment rate drops 53%*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/multimedia/data-visualizations/2015/juvenile-commitment-rate-drops-53-percent>

³¹ Males, M. (2016, August). *California's youth and young adult arrest rates continue a historic decline*. San Francisco, CA: Center on Criminal and Juvenile Justice; Smith, M. (2015, February 26). NCJJ report shows juvenile crime keeps falling, but reasons elusive. *Juvenile Justice Information Exchange*. Retrieved from <http://jjie.org/2015/02/26/ncjj-report-shows-juvenile-crime-keeps-falling-but-reasons-elusive/>

³² US Census Bureau. (2017, January). *2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates [Ventura County]*. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

654 informal increased from 34% in 2012 to 43% in 2016. During the same timeframe, the use of wardship probation decreased, from 39% in 2012 to 33% in 2016.

In addition to these data and trends, there is an emerging population to consider. In November 2016, California voters approved Proposition 57 (also known as the Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016). In part, this legislation places the responsibility on juvenile court judges to decide if youth as young as 14 years old should be tried in adult courts; previously, under Proposition 21 passed in 2000, this decision (known as “direct file”) was made by prosecutors.³³ While the full implications of this act are not known yet, there may be an impact on the length of commitment to be served by certain youth and the resources they will need.

IV. WHY YOUNG PEOPLE GET INTO TROUBLE: BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Risk and Protective Factors

Researchers have identified various risk factors that can help predict youth’s potential involvement in delinquency and other problem behaviors. In other words, what are the reasons that young people may get into trouble?

Risk factors are generally categorized into one of the following domains: individual, peer, family, school, and community. Delinquency involvement tends to be the result of various interrelated risk factors, and juvenile offending can increase as the number of risk factors and

³³ California Proposition 57, parole for non-violent criminals and juvenile court trial requirements (2016). (n.d.). In *Ballotpedia*. Retrieved from [https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_57,_Parole_for_Non-Violent_Criminals_and_Juvenile_Court_Trial_Requirements_\(2016\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_57,_Parole_for_Non-Violent_Criminals_and_Juvenile_Court_Trial_Requirements_(2016))

risk factor domains increases. The risk factors listed by domain below have been identified across multiple sources.³⁴

- Individual level: Antisocial behavior such as vandalism, physical fighting, or substance use and behavioral health issues.
- Family level: Antisocial behavior or criminality/justice system involvement by parents, insufficient parental supervision, victimization or maltreatment of children, children's repeated exposure to family violence.
- Peer level: Gang involvement, association with delinquent or aggressive peers.
- School level: Youth's poor academic performance and/or low commitment to school, school climate characterized by low levels of safety and bonding with teachers.
- Community level: Crime, poverty, availability of weapons, neighborhood disorganization.

Protective factors can help safeguard against a young person's possible delinquent behavior and can aid in decreasing the negative effect of adversity or challenge on their outcomes. Protective factors are also typically organized by a series of domains.³⁵

- Individual level: High expectations and positive/resilient temperament, social competencies and problem-solving skills, commitment to community and school, religiosity/involvement in organized religious activities.
- Family level: Positive parenting, family stability, good relationship with parents/bonding and attachment to family, opportunities and rewards for prosocial bonding.

³⁴ Development Services Group. (2015). *Risk factors for delinquency*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; Wasserman, G. A., Keenan, K., Tremblay, R. E., Coie, J. D., Herrenkohl, T. I., Loeber, R., & Petechuk, D. (2003). *Risk and Protective factors of child delinquency*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; Youth.gov. (n.d.). *Risk and protective factors*. Retrieved from <http://youth.gov/youth-topics/juvenile-justice/risk-and-protective-factors>

³⁵ Development Services Group. (2015). *Protective factors against delinquency*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

- Peer level: Good relationship with peers (including having non-delinquent peers), involvement with positive peer group activities and norms, positive peer role models.
- School level: High expectations, above-average academic achievement, high-quality schools/clear standards and rules for appropriate behavior, opportunities and rewards for pro-social student bonding and involvement.
- Community level: Non-disadvantaged neighborhood and safe, supportive environment; high expectations for youth; presence and involvement of caring/supportive adults; pro-social opportunities/opportunities for participation/availability of neighborhood resources.

B. Risk, Protective, and Resiliency Factors for Hispanic/Latino Youth

Hispanic/Latino youth make up about 51% of the overall youth population (ages 10 to 19) in Ventura County and about 64% to 70% of youth entering probation in the county.³⁶ While limited research has explored risk and protective factors in relation to delinquency specifically for Hispanic/Latino young people, the available data indicate some areas for consideration. Some studies have shown that both traditional and ethnic-specific risk and protective factors can impact the delinquency of Hispanic/Latino youth. One study of a large sample of Latino/a youth indicated that gender, experiences of abuse, academic problems, and criminal history were significant predictors of delinquency. In addition, being US-born and self-reporting high levels of perceived discrimination were shown to be related to young people's delinquency.³⁷ Another study of Hispanic children and adolescents showed that factors including sensation-

³⁶ National Council on Crime and Delinquency. (2016). *Comprehensive measurement report—Fiscal year: 2014–15*. Madison, WI: Author.

³⁷ Pérez, D. M., Jennings, W. G., & Gover, A. R. (2008). Specifying general strain theory: An ethnically relevant approach. *Deviant Behavior*, 29(6), 544–578.

seeking, delinquent peers, poor school environment, and exposure to violence separated delinquent from non-delinquent youth over time.³⁸

Similarly, while there is limited data on protective factors and resilience among Hispanic/Latino youth specifically, one recent study found several common resiliency characteristics of a sample of second-generation Latino/a youth. At the individual level, these characteristics included having a long-term sense of vision and optimism, which can be an asset during periods of adversity; a strong work ethic, ambition, and perseverance; communication, social skills, and flexibility; and a high degree of empathy, self-awareness, and desire to break a negative cycle. This study also found that several family-level attributes contribute to Latino/a youth's resiliency, including vigilance and communication of traditional values (such as discipline and respect) by parents and guardians while also allowing for some of the independence and flexibility that adolescents seek. A strong sense of responsibility toward family, such as setting a good example for siblings or contributing to the family income, as well as support and solidarity from the extended family, also were seen.³⁹

Many of the risk, protective, and resilience factors drawn from the research literature are seen in the data analyzed for this plan and will be discussed in the following sections.

³⁸ Maldonado-Molina, M., Piquero, A. R., Jennings, W. G., Bird, H., & Canino, G. (2009). Trajectories of delinquency among Puerto Rican children and adolescents at two sites. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 46(2), 144–181.

³⁹ Foxen, P. (2015). *Resilient Latino youth: In their own words*. Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza.

V. IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES, ASSETS, AND NEEDS

This section describes challenges, community assets, and needs in Ventura County as they relate to youth involved in the juvenile justice system or at risk of involvement. Data in this section are drawn from individual interviews and community listening sessions conducted by NCCD in August 2016.

A. What challenges and concerns do young people in Ventura County face?

Interview and listening session respondents were asked to identify the major challenges and concerns that young people in Ventura County face. Analysis of these data often show overlapping themes and acknowledgement of structural conditions impacting youth and their families.

The challenge or concern that surfaced most frequently relates to the level of support and resources available for families in the county and some limitations were noted; this includes a need for providing information/training for parents on topics such as available resources for youth and families, understanding bullying, and learning who their children's peers are. One respondent stated, "There is a lack of resources for parents on how to help their children. Parents are always blamed for their children's actions, but we never look at what circumstances brought the minor to this stage."

A related concern, voiced by multiple respondents, is the low-income or poverty-level conditions experienced by many families in the county, coupled with limited parental involvement and supervision of children due to parents working long hours and often having multiple jobs. Several respondents also cited the lack of jobs available for youth to contribute to

the household income. Multiple respondents noted that poverty has far-reaching effects on youth, with one stating, "Poverty impacts what the young people see at home [such as] mental health issues with parents and kids; it also increases domestic violence and increases abuse and neglect."

Another concern stated by multiple respondents focuses on young people's use of drugs and alcohol. A few respondents noted that youth as well as parents turn to substances as a coping mechanism.

Several respondents described the need for more positive outlets and activities for young people. This includes positive role models and peers, as well as afterschool and other out-of-school-time activities.

Finally, smaller numbers of respondents stated that gang involvement, mental health issues, the impact of social media on youth, and young people's lack of communication skills and other social skills are also challenges facing young people. Regarding gang involvement, one respondent said, "Families struggle, parents are at work and not home, kids turn to gangs and sex to feel involved."

B. Why do these challenges and concerns exist for young people?

When interview and listening session respondents were asked why young people in the county face challenges and why they get in trouble or get arrested, several key themes emerged; in some cases, these themes aligned with the risk factor domains seen in research literature. The data also often overlap with the concerns that emerged above.

The most frequently mentioned reasons relate to limited availability of community resources. For example, multiple respondents discussed gaps in existing services such as early intervention and prevention services and out-of-school-time programs (e.g., afterschool activities). Respondents also described a lack of positive role models and peers for youth, with some mentioning the need for positive male role models in particular. In turn, these types of gaps can impact young people's substance use, gang involvement, and general disengagement or isolation, all of which were stated by multiple respondents as factors contributing to why young people get in trouble. "Youth are spending too much time alone or getting in with the wrong crowd and becoming active in gangs," said one respondent.

Families' economic circumstances also emerged as a factor, and this was pointed out by adult and youth respondents. "There is no financial support for kids to get involved [in activities] so kids are on the street," stated an adult respondent. "[This situation] is impossible to change if it's financial. What can we (youth) do to fix it? For a family of six, there's not enough money to support everyone," said a participant in the youth listening session.

In addition, some respondents described process- and practice-related reasons that youth get into trouble. The primary reasons focused on barriers posed by logistics of services—for example, timing of services/programming or lack of transportation to services—and the need for increased collaboration, communication, and information sharing across agencies.

C. What are Ventura County's existing community assets?

Interview and listening session respondents were asked to describe existing community assets in the county. The most common response to this question involved describing specific

organizations and programs that are perceived as strengths. Programs mentioned by multiple respondents included the Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Interface Children and Family Services, and the Parent Project.

Another frequent response was that coordination by agencies is an asset; furthermore, a collaborative spirit exists in the county. One respondent stated, "Agencies' willingness to work together and collaborate [is an asset]." Another said, "The county has a willingness to do what's right by kids." It also should be noted that some respondents expressed a need for increased collaboration and information sharing among organizations, as described in the previous section.

Some respondents highlighted the use of innovative practices and programming approaches as an asset. Respondents named areas such as trauma-informed care, positive youth development, restorative justice, and gender-specific approaches. One respondent also noted that the county Behavioral Health Department offers appointments after business hours during the week and is open on Saturdays in order to accommodate parents' and young people's work and school schedules.

D. What services do youth and families in Ventura County need?

In addition to identifying concerns and challenges facing youth and their families in the county, participants in interviews and listening sessions shared their suggestions for approaches, programs, and services to assist local young people. The data described in this section respond to the challenges and concerns discussed above.

A key need voiced by multiple respondents focuses on providing opportunities for youth to develop trusting and supportive relationships with positive adults. Both youth and adult respondents expressed this need in various ways, including stating that young people are seeking “someone just to be there,” “to be given attention,” and “to have someone not give up on [them].” One participant stated, “Lonely kids are coming out of the high schools, begging for relationships, going to [a community-based organization], and volunteering just to have that interaction. These very lonely kids are at risk.” Another respondent stated, “The number one intervention is having a relationship that is ongoing and trusting. The kids don’t have that now. They need a trusting relationship with sheriff and probation [department staff].” This theme of fostering strong, supportive relationships is also seen in the need for positive role models and mentors for youth noted by multiple respondents.

Another key need described by multiple respondents is counseling, therapy, and related services to help recognize and address the mental health and substance use issues that many young people are dealing with. One respondent suggested, “Have youth groups where the youth feel comfortable and where they can express their concerns and they have help and resources.” Another respondent stated, “In terms of the Oaxacan community [their needs include]: Address young people’s mental health issues. Due to lack of medical coverage, they don’t receive the help they need. The youth don’t want to be seen as indigenous, so they associate with the kids that are delinquents as a way of assimilating to life in the US.”

Multiple respondents also highlighted the need for opportunities to prepare young people for and to help them obtain internships and employment, as well as education after high school. This includes providing “more job opportunities for youth ages 16 to 18,” “internships,

apprenticeships," and "career information and exploration." A few respondents also stated the need to provide support and guidance for youth to pursue their education after high school and to provide information about a range of options, including vocational/trade schools. One respondent stated the need to "Provide options for kids to work and study at the same time, to support their family—a way for a kid to get an internship and earn money. One resource for this is Career Education Center, formerly ROP." A few respondents suggested working closely with the business community and other community stakeholders to provide opportunities for youth to gain employment experience. One respondent stated, "We live in a city where demand for employment is very competitive. Local businesses should establish internships or opportunities for youth to obtain employment."

Some respondents stated the need to improve information sharing and collaboration among agencies and with other stakeholders in order to meet the needs of young people and their families; others noted that collaboration in the county is an asset. This included the need for increased communication and coordinated service provision. One respondent stated, "[Agencies] need to be bridge builders to get kids the services they need most." Another said that having "more listening sessions like this where parents can vent their concerns" is a need.

Some respondents stated needs related to juvenile probation services. One need expressed by multiple respondents was improved communication between probation staff, youth, and families. This includes providing training to probation officers "to understand the perspective of youth and families." Another stated, "Probation officers need to take the time to explain the juvenile delinquency system. Many kids just move along the system, never really understanding the repercussions of their actions or what is expected of them while they are on

probation.” An additional need voiced by multiple respondents was in the area of processes or logistics. Examples are local service providers being prepared to serve probation-involved youth (e.g., through counseling) yet not receiving referrals to do so in a timely fashion; another is the need for some young people to have transportation to attend their appointments at VCPA.

Multiple respondents stated that drop-in centers and groups would offer a useful approach to meeting the needs of youth and their families. For serving youth, this includes having “activities and hangout places for youth,” “casual drop-in centers,” “a place for younger youth (ages 9 to 10) to go and be involved,” and “a place where youth can be helped with job searches and job placement.” For serving parents, this includes providing centers that have representatives from multiple agencies to assist parents and deter youth from becoming justice-involved. (Two participants noted that drop-in centers like this exist in the county.) Another respondent suggested providing “parenting help, especially with the different age groups [of children]—having a place where parents can go and get help and support.” One respondent said that having additional support to navigate the legal system would assist youth and families. This respondent stated, “It would be helpful if at the courthouse, there was an office or desk where the parents and youth could go if they did not understand the court proceedings. Many times, court proceedings happen so quickly that the parent and youth did not understand what happened. It could be several hearings before they have an understanding of what is going on and what is expected of them.”

It is notable that several respondents specifically described the need for social workers to assist youth and families, including a need for school-based social workers. One respondent stated this need as, “Have a social worker at all schools, to bridge gaps that teachers can’t. This

includes providing help with food and other basic needs and to help foster youth with transitions.” One respondent said that a social worker who can check in and spend regular one-on-one time with children is a need, while another noted that parents need the ability to contact a social worker to obtain information and assistance with their child, particularly for a child “on the verge.” In addition to those respondents who highlighted the need for social workers, another respondent said that school-based advocates are a need.

Other areas noted as needs by smaller numbers of respondents include needs for early identification and intervention services; additional resources for families, community-based organizations, and isolated communities; life and social skills classes for youth; gang prevention and intervention services; and peer-to-peer opportunities for youth.

VI. SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH

The 2008 plan provided information about services for young people available across the juvenile justice continuum in Ventura County. As part of the current update to the plan, NCCD reviewed the services included in the 2008 plan. This review was based on consulting 211 Ventura County (<http://www.211ventura.org/>) and other online resources and on conversations with probation staff.

NCCD’s review of these services found that, as of 2016, most remained operational and available for local youth. In some cases, programs were no longer functioning for various reasons, including funding limitations. In addition, there are some services available as of this review that were not included in the 2008 plan. Services currently available in the county include

a range of mental health services, substance use treatment, educational activities, recreational activities, employment services, etc. (See appendix for services list.)

VII. PROCESS EVALUATION AND DATA MEASUREMENT REPORT: RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Process Evaluation

As noted earlier, NCCD conducted a process evaluation, completed in March 2016, of the four programs funded by the county's JJCPA grant: the Repeat Offender Prevention Program (ROPP), Truancy Habits Reduced Increases Vital Education (THRIVE) program, Juvenile Drug Court (JDC), and Recovery Classroom. Process evaluations help to provide context and an explanatory framework for understanding a program's quantitative outcomes. For this evaluation, NCCD conducted interviews and focus groups with JJCPA program staff and youth participants and their families, conducted an online survey of program partners, and reviewed program documents provided by VCPA. NCCD's evaluation examined the JJCPA programs' efficacy, strengths, and weaknesses; explored perceived gaps in services; and highlighted areas that are working and those that need improvement. The process evaluation produced several key findings for each JJCPA-funded program.

- ROPP is an intensive multidisciplinary program that provides early identification and services for first-time probation youth (age 15 1/2 or younger) who are potential repeat offenders. The evaluation found that ROPP's strengths include small caseload sizes; allowing probation officers to work closely with ROPP participants; and strong partnerships with community organizations, including the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme, which operates the Evening Reporting Center for probation-involved youth. Areas suggested for improvement relate to family engagement (including increasing engagement of and communication with participants' families) and behavioral health (including

providing training for staff to improve their ability to recognize symptoms of mental illness and the need for local residential treatment programs for youth).

- The THRIVE program, which is a collaboration between the Ventura County district attorney, VCPA, and School Attendance Review Board (SARB), operates in school districts throughout Ventura County and works to improve attendance through reducing and preventing habitual truancy. A habitual truant is defined in WIC § 601 as a minor who has four or more trancies in one school year. THRIVE incorporates parental involvement, meaningful incentives, and ongoing prevention services and programs with firm sanctions for truancy and noncompliance. Students and their parents cited for habitual truancy are routinely given the opportunity to earn a dismissal of the citation by showing proof of perfect attendance for the period between when the citation is issued and the court date. If that evidence is presented at court, then the district attorney's office dismisses the citation. Program strengths include collaboration among multiple agencies to accomplish the program's goals, including connecting youth to services that can help increase school attendance. Areas to consider for improvement include increasing family engagement and addressing substance use and mental health issues for youth and families.⁴⁰
- JDC—which included participation by the court, the district attorney, the public defender, VCPA, the county Behavioral Health Department, and nonprofit organizations—served youth whose primary reason for juvenile justice system involvement was substance abuse issues. Services included intensive substance abuse treatment. While the evaluation found that stakeholders generally felt JDC services were useful, challenges related to adherence to program fidelity, limited collaboration and trust among program partners, and use of confinement for violations of probation (due to in part to lack of in-patient drug and alcohol treatment and psychiatric facilities) emerged as well. (Note: This program ended on June 30, 2016.)
- The Recovery Classroom was located at Gateway Community School, a continuation school in Camarillo, and was a multi-agency collaboration between VCPA, the Ventura County Office of Education, the county Behavioral Health Department, and the county Public Health Department. It was designed for delinquency court referrals of youth with substance abuse issues who have

⁴⁰ The district attorney's office reported to NCCD that for THRIVE in FY 2014–15, 1,023 students and 424 parents were issued citations. Of these, 301 student and 144 parent citations were dismissed due to proof of perfect attendance. This equates to a 31% dismissal rate. In FY 2015–16, 882 students and 447 parents were issued citations. Of these, 309 student and 208 parent citations were dismissed. This correlates to a 39% dismissal rate, which is considered a successful resolution of the truancy issues for these students and parents. Before THRIVE, students were attending school at a rate of 79%. After THRIVE intervention, attendance jumped to 86%. The unexcused absences dropped substantially after THRIVE intervention, from 16% to 10%. Both educational outcomes demonstrate the impact of the THRIVE program.

demonstrated risk behaviors and negative school histories. Strengths of the program included a one-stop approach to addressing youth’s educational and behavioral health needs. As with JDC, challenges included limited collaboration and trust among partners and over-reliance on confinement; other challenges included consistent engagement with families. (Note: This program ended on June 30, 2016).

In addition to examining the four JJCPA programs, NCCD also collected survey data about where stakeholders see serious challenges and gaps in the county’s services for youth. The primary gaps that emerged were for residential drug treatment (cited by 76% of respondents) and mental health services other than drug treatment (66%). Other gaps included gang prevention and intervention services (19%); lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) services (15%); and trauma-informed services (15%; Table 7).

Table 7		
Ventura County Challenges and Gaps		
Survey of Probation Staff and Partners (January/February 2016)		
	%	N
Serious Challenges		
Appropriate treatment for youth with mental health issues (other than substance use)	65%	80
Appropriate treatment for youth with substance use issues	63%	80
Appropriate gang prevention and intervention services	35%	80
Staffing for probation or other partners	33%	80
Collaboration among program partners	15%	80
Use of evidence-based programming and practice	8%	79
Appropriate language capacity	6%	80
Culturally appropriate services	5%	80
Serious Gaps		
Residential drug treatment	76%	79
Mental health services (other than drug treatment)	66%	80
Gang prevention and intervention services	19%	79
LGBT services	15%	80

Table 7		
Ventura County Challenges and Gaps		
Survey of Probation Staff and Partners (January/February 2016)		
	%	N
Trauma-informed services	15%	79
Gender-responsive services	6%	80
Bicultural/bilingual services	1%	79

Based on the process evaluation findings, NCCD developed several recommendations for VCPA to consider. The majority of recommendations focused on issues pertaining to the two specialty court programs, JDC and Recovery Classroom, and included determining whether to continue these programs as a means of serving youth with histories of drug abuse, and if so, provided suggestions for maintaining model fidelity, addressing relationships among program partners, and reducing dependency on confinement. In addition, NCCD recommended decriminalizing truancy through the THRIVE program (for example, supporting increasing school attendance but avoiding dispensing criminal sanctions for noncriminal infractions and status offenses) to reduce net-widening. Other recommendations focused on continuing to increase family engagement strategies and the use of positive youth development principles in JJCPA programming.

B. Data Measurement Report

In partnership with VCPA, NCCD completed a comprehensive data measurement report in August 2016. This report provides an overview of the case management process for youth served by VCPA for the 2014–2015 fiscal year, using data drawn from the Ventura County Integrated Justice Information System (VCIJIS) and with a focus on JJCPA programs. The report

also provides a template with metrics and benchmarks that can be routinely replicated and examined by county leadership as part of internal continuous quality improvement efforts.

The analysis focused on a five-year period, ending in fiscal year (FY) 2014–15, and found that over the last five fiscal years, there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of probation entries, the number of distinct youth entering probation, and the number of first entries to probation. Of the distinct youth who entered probation during the analysis period, the majority were Hispanic/Latino (about 64–70%); male (about 75%); and age 15 or older (about 75%).

Regarding entries to probation, the five-year trends reveal a decrease in entries to informal probation. The percentage of entries to formal/wardship probation also decreased slightly. There was an increase in the percentage of entries to probation without wardship and deferred entry of judgment.

All probation entries had at least one filed offense. The vast majority of probation entries (90%) had at least one misdemeanor offense filed, and roughly 40% of the probation entries had a sustained misdemeanor offense. About one-quarter of probation entries had a filed felony offense, and between 11% and 19% of probation entries had a sustained felony offense.

When NCCD looked at JJCPA program trends specifically, analysis showed that the number of entries into each JJCPA program has fluctuated over the last five fiscal years. In the two most recent fiscal years, Drug Court and Recovery Classroom entries decreased. Over the last fiscal year, the number of ROPP entries increased substantially.

Outcomes including new offenses, new misdemeanor offenses, new felony offenses, violation of probation/violation home supervision, warrants, positive alcohol or drug tests, and

completion of formal community service and restitution were examined and compared for youth in JJCPA programs to an overall cohort of youth involved in probation during FY 14–15. This analysis found that youth involved in JJCPA programs had lower rates of subsequent offenses (misdemeanor and felony) than the overall cohort of youth involved in probation. However, youth involved in JJCPA programs generally had higher outcome rates related to violations, warrants, and positive alcohol/drug tests, as compared to the overall pool of youth involved in probation.⁴¹ The higher rates observed may be due in part to the fact that youth who participate in JJCPA programs tend to receive greater scrutiny than youth on the general supervision caseload.

The THRIVE program was examined separately from the other JJCPA programs. This analysis found that during FY 2014–15, there were 2,075 SARB events involving 1,877 unique youth. The analysis used the youth's first SARB during the FY 2014–15 (if more than one existed) to describe general demographic trends. Most youth (90%) had only one SARB event during FY 2014–15. Of the 1,877 unique youth: slightly more than half were male; one-fifth were age 12 or under and the largest proportion of youth (22%) were age 16; and 5% were involved in probation at the time of their first SARB event for FY 2014–15. In addition, during FY 2014–15, there were 1,023 THRIVE violations resulting in youth citations and 424 THRIVE violations resulting in parent citations.

⁴¹ There was one exception noted to this trend: Recovery Classroom youth were less likely to experience a positive alcohol/drug test than youth involved with probation as a whole.

VIII. CHANGES MADE BY VCPA BASED ON PROCESS EVALUATION AND OTHER FACTORS

A. JJCPA Programming

VCPA implemented several key changes to its JJCPA programming in 2016, following NCCD's process evaluation and drawing on evidence-based practices in the field. Significant changes included closing two JJCPA programs—Juvenile Drug Court and Recovery Classroom—due to low enrollment and substantial deviation from the original goals of the programs. Both were terminated in June 2016 at the end of FY 2015–16. With these programs closing, VCPA subsequently developed a process for recruiting and contracting with a service provider that would allow the county to reinvest funds and cover local gaps in residential treatment programs for youth with severe mental health and alcohol/drug issues.

The county issued a request for proposals (RFP) for this need, with a specific interest in contracting with an organization that could provide services within the county. When the RFP was initially issued, no local vendors applied. When the process was opened to vendors outside of the county, several proposals were submitted from out-of-county providers. VCPA selected Phoenix House Academy, located in Lake View Terrace, to provide services; VCPA's goal is for service provision to begin in February/March 2017. Phoenix House is located about an hour's drive east of VCPA's central location/headquarters. Although this provider is not based in Ventura County as VCPA initially desired, Phoenix House will provide transportation to and from the site for participating Ventura County youth under its probation contract.

Furthermore, with the cost savings realized from closing JDC and Recovery Classroom, VCPA began making improvements to the remaining JJCPA programs. ROPP added a youth

advocate for the East County division of the program, a marriage/family therapist position, and a half-time senior deputy probation officer.

In addition, the Evening Reporting Center became a standalone JJCPA program and will eventually have three locations countywide. The Center will continue at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme, with the capacity to serve 75 participants annually. VCPA also plans to open two additional centers, based on analysis of age and zip code data of probation-involved youth, in the Highway 126 corridor (serving youth in Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru) and in Simi Valley (serving youth in the east county area); these centers will each serve 25 probation-involved youth per year. As of February 2017, a committee is reviewing the proposals submitted for these centers. The additional centers are expected to open later in FY 2016–17.

For THRIVE, a public health nurse was added to the team in FY 2016–17 in order to facilitate access by THRIVE youth and their families to medical services, including physical health and mental health. The public health nurse attends SARB meetings, collaborates with the SARB team on behalf of the youth, and provides intensive home visitation to the family with the goal of addressing barriers related to school attendance. The nurse started working with THRIVE in September 2016 and has received 33 referrals through THRIVE as of February 2017; of these referrals, 13 families were receiving intensive services. The county is currently considering expanding THRIVE services through the addition of a second public health nurse and a half-time deputy public defender.

Other recent changes to THRIVE include the establishment in 2016 of a SARB ad hoc subcommittee, chaired by the Ventura County Office of Education's deputy superintendent of

student services. This subcommittee meets regularly to review best practices in truancy prevention programs and standardize the countywide SARB process. In addition, the subcommittee has organized trainings on building a culture of attendance and introducing new standardized forms and procedures for the SARB process, with all agencies involved in the SARB process (including school districts, probation, district attorney, and public defender) invited to attend these trainings.

B. Other Programming

During FY 2015–16, VCPA received a community recidivism reduction grant from the state. VCPA used its grant funding to address gaps in the areas of mentoring, family engagement, job skills training, and job training. VCPA contracted with four community-based organizations—Women of Substance, Men of Honor; One Step a la Vez; Big Brothers Big Sisters; and City Impact—to provide these services in areas of the county that have demonstrated gaps in services for youth.

As of early 2017, VCPA is developing a day reporting center for youth, located at the Williams Center and funded through a Youth Offender Block Grant. The center will be open to all probation-involved youth ages 17 to 21. It will serve as an addition to the probation agency's alternatives to incarceration for youth who violate their probation. The center will provide opportunities for youth to gain job skills training, including construction trades preparation. Job placement is another component. Other planned components include having guest speakers, hiring a youth advocate to help with transportation and mentoring (similar to the model used in ROPP), incorporating the use of incentives throughout the process, and providing a certificate of

completion. Ongoing counseling will be offered, and dinner will be served to participants weekly.

Youth on probation were surveyed about what they would like to see offered at the day reporting center; this feedback is being incorporated into curriculum development. VCPA is also seeking youth input into the name of the program in order to increase youth buy-in. VCPA is exploring the possibility of reconfiguring the Williams Center building so participants will have their own entrance, rather than having to enter through the probation reception area. The committee developing the day reporting center is implementing it in phases, with initial implementation currently slated for June 2017. VPCA is working with various partners on this center, including Oxnard Community College and the Ventura County Workforce Development Board.

IX. SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary

Youth involvement in Ventura County's juvenile justice system has declined substantially since the local Juvenile Justice Plan was last updated in 2008. For example, youth arrests decreased 58% from 2008 to 2014, and the overall number of youth on probation declined 62% from 2008 to 2016.

While significant gains have been made in recent years, youth in some parts of the county continue to face significant challenges and risk factors that may increase their likelihood of juvenile justice system involvement. In Oxnard, which combined with Port Hueneme accounts for 44% of the probation population, 25% of youth under age 18 live below the federal poverty

line. The Oxnard Union High School District has the county's highest rates of truancy and expulsion and second-highest rate of suspension. Students in this district report relatively low levels of school connectedness and of the presence of caring adult relationships at school.

Data collected through interviews and listening sessions conducted by NCCD indicate that these and other challenges impact young people in the county and can contribute to why they may get in trouble. These factors include limited support and resources available for families; low-income or poverty-level conditions experienced by many families; limited parental involvement and supervision of children due to parents working long hours and/or having multiple jobs; and lack of jobs available for youth. Other challenges include substance use by youth; a lack of positive peers, role models, and activities for young people; gang involvement by youth; and general disengagement or isolation of youth.

Interview and listening session data revealed several important community assets. Assets include specific organizations and programs; programs mentioned by multiple respondents included the Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Interface Children and Family Services, and the Parent Project. Others are coordination by agencies and a collaborative spirit to help children, as well as the use of innovative practices and programming approaches (e.g., trauma-informed care, positive youth development, restorative justice, and gender-specific approaches).

Key needs of young people in the county, as expressed by interview and listening session respondents, are for youth to have opportunities to develop trusting and supportive relationships with positive adults; access to counseling, therapy, and related services to help address mental health and substance use issues; and opportunities to prepare for and obtain internships and employment, as well as to pursue education after high school. Other needs

include improving information sharing and collaboration among agencies and with other stakeholders and needs related to juvenile probation services. Drop-in centers and groups were described as a useful approach to meeting the needs of youth and their families; in addition, the increased need for social workers was highlighted.

A review of available services in Ventura County shows that most of the services available at the time of the 2008 plan continue to be offered in the county. Moreover, services not included in the 2008 plan are also available or have been started since that time. Services currently available in the county include a range of mental health services, substance use treatment, educational activities, recreational activities, employment services, etc. (See appendix.)

VCPA and its partners recently have taken numerous steps to continue using data-informed decisions to be responsive to changing needs of youth in the county. For example, two JJCPA programs—Recovery Classroom and JDC—were closed as of June 30, 2016, due to declining enrollment and substantial deviation from the original goals of the programs. The county subsequently focused on meeting the need for residential drug treatment and expanding its Evening Reporting Center model, with a focus on positive youth development programming. Changes to THRIVE included adding a dedicated public health nurse to the THRIVE team and establishing a SARB ad hoc subcommittee to review best practices in truancy prevention programs and standardize the countywide SARB process.

VCPA's data-driven efforts to update and enhance services also extend beyond JJCPA-funded programming. With a FY 2015–16 community recidivism reduction grant from the state, VCPA contracted with four community-based organizations to address gaps in the areas

of mentoring, family engagement, job skills training, and job training. VCPA is also in the process of developing and implementing a day reporting center for youth, located at the Williams Center, which will add to the probation agency's alternatives to incarceration.

B. Recommendations

NCCD has developed several recommendations for Ventura County to consider.

Recommendations are based on key themes that emerged during the collection and analysis of primary and secondary data.

1. Programming Approaches and Types

a. Intersectional Approaches

Programming for probation-involved youth, provided by VCPA and other organizations, should acknowledge and address the local juvenile population's intersectional factors. Data from the last five fiscal years (FY 2010–11 to FY 2014–15) show that the majority of youth who entered Ventura County probation during this period were Hispanic/Latino (about 64% to 70%), male (about 75%), and age 15 or older (about 75%). While other groups served by probation should also be taken into account, the data show that current approaches and programming should in many cases be targeted to Latino male youth. At the same time, practices and policies should also continue to address the disproportionality of this group's system involvement.

Culturally based approaches should inform programming provided for probation-involved youth and their families. One example that VCPA and its partners could consider is an effort led by the National Compadres Network, which advocates meeting the needs of Latino/a

youth through a “healing-informed, culturally specific approach ... rooted in long-overlooked indigenous principles and practices.” The network’s “La Cultura Cura/Healing Generations” program for Latino boys and men provides a structure and approach that focuses on fostering strengths and developing resilience. The curriculum for La Cultura Cura emphasizes restoring an individual’s cultural identity as the foundation of personal, family, and community well-being. In recent years, the network has provided training on La Cultura Cura to professionals in 20 cities in California (as well as in locations in 13 other states); the training is appropriate for all levels of personnel working in the educational, criminal justice, mental health, and social services fields.⁴²

b. Positive Youth Development

VCPA and its partners currently incorporate principles of positive youth development in some programming for probation-involved youth. Positive youth development is a strengths-based approach to working with young people that emphasizes youth’s assets; development of pro-social skills; and connections with supportive, positive peers and adults. It reframes youth from being seen as victims or villains—or focusing on deficits—to being assets and resources in their own development. The expansion of the Evening Reporting Center model is a good example of further implementation of positive youth development programming in the county.

VCPA and its partners could continue to explore opportunities to provide meaningful activities and services that use positive youth development with a framework customized for justice-involved youth. This framework—known as positive youth justice—draws on protective

⁴² National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute. (2012). *Lifting Latinos up by their “rootstraps”: Moving beyond trauma through a healing-informed model to engage Latino boys and men*. San Jose, CA: National Compadres Network. Retrieved from <http://files.www.cmhnetwork.org/news/latino/liftinglatinosup.pdf>

factors and emphasizes learning/doing and attaching/belonging in the contexts of work, education, relationships, community, health, and creativity. For example, related to work, positive youth justice focuses on connecting youth with meaningful, age-appropriate, and structured opportunities to gain useful skills and to develop pro-social bonds in the workplace.⁴³

c. *Mentoring*

The data collected and reviewed for this plan indicate that youth are seeking additional opportunities to develop trusting, supportive relationships with positive adults. Youth need consistent acknowledgement, understanding, and guidance from an adult they respect and trust. VCPA currently incorporates mentoring into some of its programs and services (including ROPP), as well as the recently implemented community recidivism reduction grant that included mentoring as a focus area. Given the importance of building and maintaining pro-social connections with positive peers and adults, VPCA and its partners could consider adding mentoring components to other probation programs, using principles of evidence-based mentoring to guide these efforts.

Recent research on resiliency among second-generation Latino/a adolescents (US-born children of immigrants) in urban areas, conducted by the National Council of La Raza, found that community-based programs and, in particular, mentors from these programs frequently were instrumental in promoting youth resilience and in providing valuable support for parents and

⁴³ Butts, J. A., Bazemore, G., & Meroe, A. S. (2010). *Positive youth justice: Framing justice interventions using the concepts of positive youth development*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice; Butts, J. A. (2014). *Strengthening youth justice practices with developmental knowledge and principles*. Briefing paper prepared for the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

youth. For example, this study found that mentors and community programs can serve as a bridge between immigrant parents and their children, teach young people skills and knowledge, and assist youth by providing emotional and psychosocial support to them.⁴⁴

The Southwest Key Programs Youth Mentoring Model is an example of an evidence-based mentoring program for justice system-involved youth or youth at risk of involvement; it also has developed best practices for mentoring Latino/a youth. In 2016, through an OJJDP grant, this program provided structured individual and group mentoring services to 182 young people (ages 10 to 17) at five mentoring sites nationwide (Atlanta, Georgia; Austin, Texas; Buffalo, New York; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and San Jose, California); one third (32%) of mentees were justice system-involved and the others were at risk or high risk for system involvement. At program exit, most (87%) youth participants did not have a new offense; in addition, more than three quarters (78%) of participants maintained or increased their school attendance. Southwest Key is now building on its mentoring model, including incorporating parent trainings and support to increase engagement of families/caregivers and developing a toolkit to guide mentoring of at-risk girls.⁴⁵

d. Mental Health/Substance Use Treatment

An additional programming area for consideration is to expand the provision of counseling, therapy, and related services to help address young people's mental health and

⁴⁴ Foxen, P. (2015). *Resilient Latino youth: In their own words*. Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza.

⁴⁵ National Mentoring Resource Center. (n.d.). *Southwest Key mentoring works to improve outcomes for youth in five states*. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/ojjdp-mentoring/featured-grantees.html?layout=edit&id=239>

substance use issues. VCPA recently contracted with a provider to offer residential substance use treatment, which was a need expressed by many respondents during data collection for this plan. It is likely that additional opportunities remain for meeting young people’s mental health needs. For example, respondents described the need for youth to have trusted adults they can talk to and the need to provide safe spaces for youth to share their feelings and concerns.

A recent report found that implementation of specific strategies, which center on a using a trauma-informed approach that acknowledges the events, experiences, and impacts of trauma, can strengthen the quality of mental health services provided to Latino/a youth. This approach also involves an emphasis on the following.

- Safety, trust, collaboration, choice, and healing.
- Cultural, historical, and gendered aspects of trauma.
- Access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services during all phases of service provision (outreach, assessment, and treatment).
- Integration of cultural values, beliefs, practices, sayings, and stories into interventions (e.g., music therapy, gardening therapy, and other interventions “that can bridge cultural gaps and foster more positive environments and more productive services”).
- Monitoring of youth for signs of stress related to cultural integration, particularly in terms of the youth’s dynamics with family.⁴⁶

This model, or aspects of it, could help to inform or augment mental health services provided by VCPA and its partners for at-risk and system-involved youth and their families in the county.

⁴⁶ Foxen, P. (2016). *Mental health services for Latino youth: Bridging culture and evidence*. Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza. Retrieved from <http://www.nlbha.org/PDFs/NCLRMentalHealthServices1219.pdf>

e. *Employment Services*

Another programming area for consideration, based on the data collected, is to provide additional opportunities to prepare young people for and help them obtain internships and employment. VCPA and its partners currently provide job skills training to probation-involved youth through some of its programming, including the community recidivism reduction grant. VCPA and its partners could consider expanding programming and developing additional partnerships that help equip youth with job-related skills and provide work experience, including paid internships and jobs. These efforts could include expanding relationships with the local business community (for example, through developing a small advisory board of local business owners and other employers) and with the county's Workforce Development Board to develop and subsequently place young people in paid work opportunities and to provide ongoing job retention services to youth and employers. As part of this process, staff may wish to assist in youth job retention through regular counseling and support opportunities and to address potential barriers that may impact retention; for example, programs could provide youth with rides to and from work and give them a prepared meal to eat during lunchtime.

2. Continue and Expand Collaborative Approach

Efforts to serve young people who are involved in the juvenile justice system or at risk of involvement in Ventura County should continue to incorporate a collaborative process, involving VCPA and other relevant organizations and agencies in the county that serve young people. While probation can help to facilitate and coordinate efforts, in some cases another local agency will likely possess the expertise to effectively address a particular need or challenge that young

people face. Working consistently as a coordinated group of agencies to problem solve around the issues and needs described in this plan will benefit at-risk and system-involved youth and their families.

As a related recommendation, agencies could increase communication and information-sharing efforts across multiple stakeholder groups, including providers and families. For example, during the community listening sessions, it became clear that some participants knew that resources such as drop-in centers for parents exist in the community, while others were unaware of them. VCPA and its agency partners could increase outreach and build greater awareness of existing community offerings.

3. Continue to Use Data and Evaluation to Address Needs of Juvenile Population

VCPA has engaged in an intentional, long-term, and multi-pronged effort to use data to inform programming, practices, and funding decisions regarding its juvenile population. This includes being a JDAI site for many years; examining and addressing disparities through DMC and RED initiatives; and using data on age, zip code, and other factors to continue to be responsive to the youth it serves. VCPA should continue to emphasize data-driven decision making.

In addition to current efforts, VCPA could consider monitoring populations that may represent or emerge as a larger segment of the at-risk or system-involved population, such as youth served by both the dependency and delinquency systems (also known as crossover or dually involved youth); youth who are victims of labor or sex trafficking, including commercially sexually exploited children; and LGBT youth. National estimates suggest that LGBT youth

constitute about 13% to 15% of youth in the juvenile justice system, compared with 5% to 7% of the general youth population. Research has found that LGBT youth are, compared to their heterosexual peers, at a greater risk of being bullied at school, rejected or abused by their parents/guardians (which can lead to youth running away), and arrested and detained for status offenses and other nonviolent offenses. In fact, there is often considerable overlap in the juvenile justice population among youth who are dually involved, youth who are trafficked, and LGBT youth; for example, LGBT youth may be more vulnerable to human trafficking and to child welfare system involvement.⁴⁷ Exploring these populations in more detail as they relate to juvenile justice-involved youth in Ventura County could provide opportunities in areas such as data/information sharing, program development or enhancement, and staff training. For example, VCPA and the county child welfare department may wish to work together to develop data sharing protocols.

Another emerging population to consider is youth impacted by Proposition 57, which was approved by California voters in November 2016. Under Proposition 57, juvenile court judges, rather than prosecutors, will decide whether youth as young as 14 years old should be tried in adult courts; this legislation may impact the length of commitment to be served by certain youth and the resources they will need. VCPA could collect data on youth affected by Proposition 57 and use this information to help guide decisions related to services, housing, and other areas for these youth.

⁴⁷ Development Services Group. (2014). *LGBTQ youths in the juvenile justice system*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/LGBTQYouthsInTheJuvenileJusticeSystem.pdf>

VCPA could also consider evaluating new or pending practices and programming in the county, including the graduated sanctions and incentives matrix, recently selected residential treatment provider, day reporting center, and the expansion of the Evening Reporting Center model. Another area for consideration is conducting research to understand reasons for recent decreases in the county's rates of juvenile arrest and probation involvement, including how programming and practice may relate to these shifts.

Appendix

Services Available for Youth in Ventura County

The 2008 plan provided information about services for young people available across the juvenile justice continuum in Ventura County. As part of the current update to the plan, NCCD reviewed the services included in the 2008 plan. This review was based on consulting 211 Ventura County (<http://www.211ventura.org/>) and other online resources and on having conversations with probation staff.

NCCD’s review of these services found that, as of late 2016, most remained operational and available for local youth. In some cases, programs were no longer functioning for various reasons, including funding limitations. In addition, some services are available as of this review that were not included in the 2008 plan.

This list is designed in part to respond to the needs that emerged in the plan update; it is not intended to be an endorsement of any services listed here or to serve as a fully comprehensive list of all available services for Ventura County youth involved in the juvenile justice system, at risk of involvement, or transitioning from the system.

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
211 Referral Line	Operated by Interface Children and Family Services, with links to family, social, and health services.	http://www.211ventura.org/
Action	Provides parent and teen services, including support groups for teens with substance abuse and related problems and a hotline for parents and teens in crisis.	http://actionvc.org/
AEGIS Treatment Centers	Offers drug treatment programs. General eligibility: patients over age 18 who have a minimum of one year of opiate abuse.	http://www.aegistreatmentcenters.com/
American Job Center	Serves as a direct link to resources that help adult and youth job seekers choose and pursue careers. Locations in Oxnard and Simi Valley.	http://www.workforceventuracounty.org Youth website: http://www.vcjobswithafuture.org/
Aspira Counseling	Offers counseling and consulting to individuals or families with concerns related to substance use.	http://www.aspiracounseling.com/

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
Behavioral Health Advisory Board Transitional Age Youth Committee	Advocates for the mental health, wellness, and recovery of youth ages 16 to 25. An advisory committee of the Ventura County Health Care Agency.	http://www.vchca.org/bhab-transitional-age-youth-tay-committee
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ventura County	Provides mentoring and other support services for youth.	http://bbsvc.org
Boy Scouts of America, Ventura County Council	Adult volunteers provide boys and girls with opportunities for character development, citizenship training, and physical fitness in an outdoor setting.	http://www.vccbsa.org/
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme	Provides pro-social activities, vocational options, and other counseling and support. Offers Evening Reporting Center for probation-involved youth.	https://bgcop.org/
Boys and Girls Club of Simi Valley	Offers a variety of recreational, instructional, and social activities.	http://www.bgcsimi.com/
California Conservation Corps	Provides job training and skills to youth ages 18 to 25, serving all of Ventura County. Youth sign up for a year of working outdoors to improve California's natural resources and also assist with emergency response.	www.ccc.ca.gov/locations/Camarillo/Pages/Camarillo.aspx
California Lutheran University	Offers therapy for individuals, couples, families, and adolescents, with a specialization in child abuse counseling. Provides in-depth mental health services for adult and child survivors of domestic violence.	https://www.callutheran.edu/
Camarillo Family YMCA	Provides healthy, educational, and recreational activities for children and their families, including camps, family time, and sports.	http://www.ciyymca.org/camarillo/
Casa Pacifica Shelter	In Ventura County, provides therapeutic behavioral services and wraparound services for youth.	https://www.casapacifica.org

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
Center for Employment Training (CET)	CET is designed to meet the needs of people over age 17 1/2 who want to learn a skill and find a job. Locations nationwide including in Oxnard. Training programs in Oxnard include business office administration, construction skills, and medical assisting.	http://cetweb.org
Circle of Care	A collaborative of service providers, nonprofits, service clubs, governmental agencies, churches, and interested individuals. Coordinated by One Step A La Vez. Meets monthly to identify and address community needs.	http://www.myonestep.org/about-us/circle-of-care-community-resource-page
City Impact	Community-based organization offering counseling, student support groups, afterschool program, violence prevention and intervention services, and other services for youth in the juvenile justice system or at risk of involvement.	http://www.cityimpact.com
City of Fillmore: Parks and Recreation Department	Offers art instruction and dance classes and supports youth sports programs including aquatics and basketball.	http://www.fillmoreca.com/
City of Moorpark: Parks and Recreation	Includes programs for teens and youth sports leagues.	http://www.moorparkca.gov
City of Ojai: Recreation Department	Promotes a variety of youth social programs which can include art instruction, gardening, pottery making, music, and dance classes.	http://www.ojaicity.org/
City of Oxnard: Oxnard Police Activities League	Provides a citywide afterschool youth crime prevention program by engaging youth in sports, recreational activities, educational activities, cultural programs, and nutritional programs as a positive alternative to gangs.	https://www.oxnardpal.org/

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
City of Santa Paula: Community and Recreation Services	Provides recreation services, including arts and crafts, basketball, and soccer programs as well as swimming activities.	http://www.ci.santa-paula.ca.us/Aboutus.htm
City of Simi Valley: Community Recreation Programs	Offers before- and afterschool recreation club, which includes afterschool and day camps, swimming, safety classes, sports programs, and community activities.	http://www.simivalley.org/
City of Simi Valley: Teen Assistance and Resources	Provides information for teens in crisis.	http://www.simivalley.org/index.aspx?page=149
Clinicas Del Camino Real	Helps patients find solutions for their mental health issues. Provides counseling settings for individuals and youth.	http://www.clinicas.org/
Coalition for Family Harmony	Provides a 24-hour rape crisis intervention program, which includes advocacy, accompaniment, information, and referral for victims of sexual assault/abuse and their families. Services also include specialized counseling for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and general counseling to individuals who identify as LGBT. Also provides Batterer's Intervention Support Program including a group for male teens (18 years and younger).	http://thecoalition.org/
Community Action of Ventura County	Provides life skills classes for youth.	http://www.ca-vc.org
Conejo Recreation and Park District: Thousand Oaks Teen Center	Offers drop-in activities which include game and activity room, gymnasium, music room, computer lab, and classrooms.	http://www.crpdc.org/

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
Conejo Recreation and Park District: Youth Outreach Program	Outreach workers seek out and address the needs of youth who are non-involved and hard-to-reach. Includes truancy prevention, recreational programming, and crisis intervention.	http://www.crpd.org/
Cornerstone Counseling Center	Offers personal therapeutic sessions in which the therapist works on a one-to-one basis with clients to help them resolve their mental, emotional, or social problems, as well as marriage and youth counseling.	http://www.cornerstonesv.com/
El Centrito Family Learning Centers	Helps increase access to stimulating and explorative educational opportunities, build literacy skills, and form a pipeline of opportunities for Oxnard's low-income and immigrant children and families.	http://www.elcentrito.org
El Concilio Family Services	Offers workshops for at-risk youth in youth leadership, personal growth, and teen pregnancy prevention at area high schools and collaborating agencies. Promotes responsible behavior, higher education, and raising self-esteem and strengthening communication skills between parents and their children.	http://www.elconciliofs.org/
First 5 child study team	Seeks viable interventions for at-risk children and families.	http://www.first5ventura.org/
Forever Found	Offers anti-trafficking services with a focus on child victims and survivors. Services include awareness, prevention, and training.	http://www.foreverfound.org
Free Clinic of Simi Valley	Provides marriage, family, and youth counseling services.	http://www.freeclinicsv.com/
Future Leaders of America, Ventura County Chapter	Community-based organization providing services using "peer-to-peer" mentorship, where all programs and services are led by youth. Program supports two countywide clubs.	http://www.futureleadersnow.org/

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast	Provides opportunities for girls (kindergarten to 12th grade) and adult volunteers to discover and develop their fullest potential through informal educational experiences.	http://www.girlscoutsgccc.org/
Graffiti removal programs	Efforts by multiple cities to remove graffiti from the community.	http://www.ventura.org/environment/graffiti-removal
Grizzly Youth Academy	Offers GED preparation, job skills development, military drill and ceremony experience, and community college experience.	http://www.grizzlyyouthacademy.org/
Interagency Case Management Council	An interagency collaborative that partners in decision making about dependent (WIC § 300) and delinquent (WIC § 600) youth facing and/or in placement.	http://www.ventura.org/vcaaa/case-management
Interface Children and Family Services	Provides counseling, treatment, advocacy, and referrals for at-risk children and youth. Also provides juvenile probation early intervention services and gang intervention services, including Triple R Project for youth ages 15 to 24. Offers 24/7 "Youth Rescue" hotline. Has family resource centers in Oxnard and Santa Paula.	http://www.icfs.org/
Job and career centers of Ventura County	List of job and career centers on the county website.	http://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/online-resource-for-job-seekers
Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative	An ongoing effort to maintain booking criteria, expedite booking/processing, ensure diversion of appropriate offenders from custody, and use alternatives to detention for appropriate youth.	http://www.aecf.org/work/juvenile-justice/jdai/
Kids and Families Together	Provides services to youth and families to help families become and remain self-sustaining.	http://www.kidsandfamilies.org/

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
Kinship Support Services Programs	Provided by Ventura County Human Services Agency, Children and Family Services. Offers preventive, community-based family support services to relatives caring for dependent and non-dependent kin, including those under legal guardianship and adoption. Foster care prevention services include mentorship, legal assistance, transportation help, food vouchers, tutoring, housing (one-time financial assistance), and case management.	http://www.kidsandfamilies.org/clinical-services/support-services-programs/
Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project	Unites indigenous leaders and allies to strengthen the Mixtec and indigenous immigrant community of Ventura County. Tequio Youth Group develops the leadership skills of indigenous Mexican youth to promote indigenous pride, encourage academic achievement, and advocate against bullying of indigenous young people.	http://mixteco.org
Nan Tolbert Nurturing Center	Provides play groups, peer support, and parent education, nurturing secure beginnings in early family relationships.	http://www.nantolbert.org/
Narcotics Anonymous (NA)	Offers a self-help, 12-step program adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous that teaches people how to live without drugs.	http://www.gcana.org/
Naval Base Ventura County: Fleet and Family Support Center	Provides services to all active duty service members (all branches) and their families, veterans, and Department of Defense civilians.	http://navylifesw.com/ventura/families/ffsc/
Neighborhoods for Learning	Provides early childhood education and readiness for learning.	http://www.first5ventura.org/how-we-work/neighborhoods-for-learning
New Beginnings Center for Counseling and Integrative Health	Offers a wide array of therapeutic services to help clients, including children and youth, to cope with anxiety, depression, trauma, addiction, and body image issues. Includes Young Adult Recovery Group.	http://www.thenewbeginningscenter.com

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
One Step A La Vez	Provides an afterschool site/teen drop-in center for homework, tutoring, snacks, and classes as well as youth advocacy groups to improve the local communities.	http://www.myonestep.org/
Oxnard City Corps	Hosts experiential service learning projects and youth mentoring (ages 12 to 24).	https://www.oxnard.org/recreation/citycorps
Pacific Clinics	Includes center in Oxnard for transitional age youth recovering from mental illness or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse.	http://www.pacificclinics.org/
Palmer Drug Abuse Program	Provides substance abuse programs and groups for youth.	http://www.pdapofventura.com/
Parent Project	Provides parenting education and support for parents.	http://www.vcsd.org/co-parent-project.php
PathPoint (Ventura County division)	Provides comprehensive employment services and other services to individuals with disabilities or disadvantages including economic disadvantages.	http://www.pathpoint.org/locations/ventura/
Police Activities League (Ventura)	Offers athletic and other pro-social activities for youth.	http://venturapal.org
ROPP	Funded through JJCPA, this is VCPA's comprehensive multi-disciplinary program that provides intensive services for first time wards, age 15 1/2 or younger, with at least three of the four risk factors related to difficulties with family, school, substance abuse, and other delinquent behaviors.	http://public.venturaprobatation.org/index.php/services/juvenile-services/juvenile-specialty-services
School on Wheels	Provides educational support for children and youth living in homeless situations.	https://www.schoolonwheels.org/
Special Education Local Plan Area (Ventura County)	Provides educational advocacy and monitoring; services are available to youth throughout the continuum.	http://www.vcselpa.org/
Simi Valley Family YMCA	Provides youth and family activities including youth fitness, aerobics (water and land), aquatics, day camp, yoga, swim team, and a fitness center.	http://www.sevymca.org/simivalley/

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
Simi Valley Samaritan Center	Provides showers, breakfast, clean clothing, and case management for homeless individuals.	http://thesamaritancenterofsimivalley.org/
Suicide Prevention Center	Operates an accredited, 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, suicide prevention crisis line, which includes crisis intervention and stabilization, counseling, and case management referrals.	http://www.didihirsch.org/spc
Taskforce on Heroin Prevention	Collaborative effort of the City of Simi Valley, Simi Valley Unified School District, and Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District to develop a focused, aggressive community action plan to help prevent the use of heroin in Simi Valley.	http://www.simivalley.org/index.aspx?page=591
Teen Line—Teens Helping Teens	Offers a confidential toll-free telephone helpline, emailing, and texting service for teens.	https://teenlineonline.org/
The Trevor Project	Operates the only nationwide, confidential suicide prevention and crisis intervention helpline for LGBT youth.	http://www.thetrevorproject.org/
THRIVE	Funded through JJCPA and other sources, provides truancy reduction services and interventions.	http://public.venturaprobatation.org/index.php/services/juvenile-services/juvenile-specialty-services
Trans Lifeline	Provides a warm line that is primarily for transgender people experiencing a crisis.	http://www.translifeline.org
Transitional Age Youth Tunnel	One-stop center in Oxnard for transitional age youth, age 18 to 25, recovering from mental illness or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse.	http://www.pacificclinics.org/files/docs/brochures/brochure_tay-tunnel.pdf
United Parents	Offers parenting education and support for parents.	http://www.unitedparents.org
Ventura Counseling Center	Offers general counseling for youth and adults from licensed therapists, from a Christian perspective.	https://www.venturacounselingcenter.com/

Table A		
Services Available for Youth in Ventura County		
Organization/ Program	Services Provided	Website
Ventura County Behavioral Health, Alcohol and Drug Programs for Youth	Provides services for alcohol and drug-related problems. Includes prevention services, assessment, treatment, crisis intervention and referral services to youth and families. Programs are countywide, with clinics located in Oxnard, Ventura, Simi Valley, Fillmore, and Thousand Oaks.	www.venturacountylimits.org/en/treatment/youth-services
Ventura County Rainbow Alliance	Provides HIV/AIDS peer education and prevention for youth ages 13 to 24; free HIV testing and counseling, street outreach, cyber outreach, and one-on-one risk reduction counseling.	https://teenlineonline.org/yyp/ventura-county-rainbow-alliance
Ventura YMCA	Provides exercise opportunities through camps, physical education programs, community programs, and volunteer opportunities.	http://www.ciyymca.org/ventura/
Vista Del Mar Hospital: Adolescent Program	Offers acute, inpatient psychiatric unit for adolescents, providing short, intensive hospital stays designed for stabilization and safety, as well as aid in the treatment of emotional, behavioral, and psychiatric disorders.	http://www.vistadelmarhospital.com
Volunteers in Probation	Serves as a cadre of approximately 100 volunteers who help with programming in the commitment and detention units in the juvenile facility.	http://venturaprobation.org/index.php/careers/volunteers-in-probation