

San Mateo Probation

The Juvenile Assessment Center Annual Evaluation

FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019



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Build Better Communities

About the Researcher

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

Authors

Kim Carpenter, Ph.D.

Connie Chu

Casey Coneway, MPP

Marissa Jaross, MPH

Yoonyoung Kwak, Ph.D.

Graphic Design: Jenna Gallant

Locations

Bay Area:

1871 The Alameda, Suite 180
San Jose, CA 95126
tel 408-247-8319

Central Coast:

55 Penny Lane, Suite 101
Watsonville, CA 95076
tel 831-728-1356

www.appliedsurveyresearch.org

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Program Description

The Juvenile Assessment Center provides a primary point of entry for intake and assessment of youth who have come into contact with the juvenile justice system via law enforcement, including, but not limited to, youth who participate in Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funded programs. At the Assessment Center, the process begins when youth receive a multidisciplinary team risk/needs assessment, including screening for mental health, substance abuse, and other significant risk factors. Based upon the assessment findings, a recommendation that includes a balance of accountability and support/treatment services is completed and discussed with the youth's family by the assigned Deputy Probation Officer (DPO). Recommendations are also made to the Juvenile Court if release from custody is appropriate. Diversion-eligible youth can be referred to a range of programs and services including the Petty Theft Program, Juvenile Mediation Program, Victim Impact Awareness Program, and Traffic Court; youth may also be placed on short-term (3 months) or long-term (6 months) supervised Probation Diversion contracts.

While this evaluation focuses on who were youth who were assessed at the Assessment Center, the Center also provides triage services to additional youth (please see the Appendix for further details on the full complement of triage services provided by the Assessment Center). Triage services are largely intended to be brief and to link youth with appropriate community resources to avoid formal court proceedings where possible, while some immediate bridging services are available for youth in crisis in order to stabilize families and optimize chances for success. This allows the Assessment Center to focus efforts on those youth who are at higher risk to reoffend.

Programmatic Challenges in FY 2018-19

According to Juvenile Assessment Center staff, in FY 2018-19, the Center experienced strained resources due to low staffing with their county partner in the multidisciplinary team. There is currently only one Human Services Agency Community Worker in the Assessment Center. The community worker meets with youth and their families in the community (school, home, etc.) to provide them support. The community worker monitors youth compliance which includes school attendance. Additionally, the community worker attends Individualized Educational Plan meetings, and provides referrals for food, shelter, and extracurricular activities. Unfortunately, the community worker has been on sporadic leave. As a result, Juvenile Assessment Center staff reported that Deputy Probation Officers (DPO)s have been supervising their own diversion contracts.

Evaluation Methods

Programs funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation (Probation) monitor their programs and report client, service, and outcome data to the department and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect these data are described below:

Clients and Services: Grantee programs collect demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) and service data (e.g., type of services, hours of services, etc.) for individual clients. Program staff entered these data into their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.

Risk Factors: The Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) is a risk, strengths, and needs assessment tool designed to assist in effectively and efficiently supervising youth, both in institutional settings and in the community. The tool has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of a brief prescreen assessment known as the JAIS Boys Risk or JAIS Girls Risk, administered in addition to the full assessment and reassessment components. Probation has elected to administer the JAIS Risk assessments to provide an initial indicator of recidivism risk. The JAIS Girls Risk consists of eight items and the JAIS Boys Risk consists of ten items, which yield an overall risk level of low, moderate, or high.

Outcomes: JJCPA-funded programs collect data for a number of justice-related outcomes for program participants. Probation has elected to report these outcomes at 180 days post-entry; the reference group reflects the past year's cohort of program participants. In FY 2018-19, the Assessment Center collected the following outcome measures:

- Arrests
- Detentions
- Probation violations
- Probation completions
- Court-ordered restitution completion
- Court-ordered community service completion

The Assessment Center also reports the average daily population in the Juvenile Hall to track progress toward its goal of reducing the number and length of Juvenile Hall stays.

Evaluation Findings

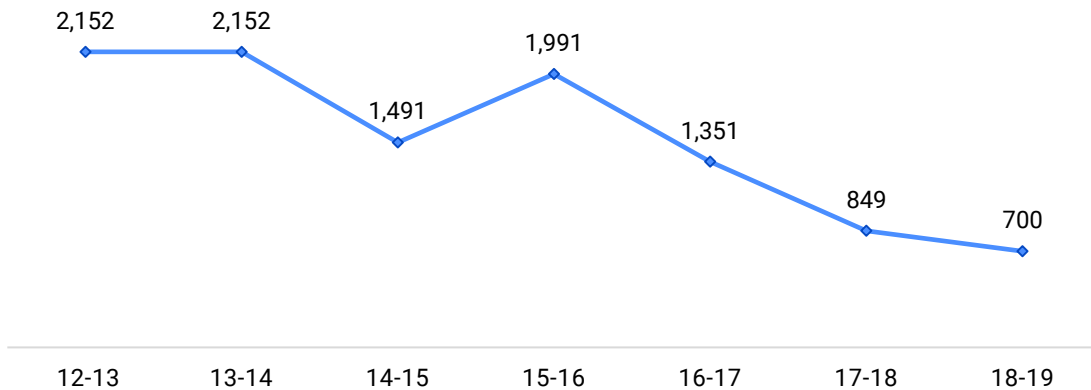
Fiscal Year 2018-19 Highlights

- The number of clients served decreased by 66% from 253 to 87.
- There was a 46% increase in the average time in the center (3.8 months).
- The Assessment Center served clients across the risk spectrum: 64% scored Low, 34% scored Moderate, and 2% scored High on the criminogenic risk spectrum.
- The number of clients presenting with a drug or alcohol problem, an attendance problem, or suspension or expulsion at entry decreased compared to the previous year.

Profile of Clients Served

In fiscal year (FY) 2018-19, the Assessment Center screened and managed approximately 700 cases, which consist of “602” youth (formal wards of the Court or those who have committed criminal law offenses) and “601” youth (those with a history of truancy, running away, or out-of-control behavior at home and/or in school). The figure below shows the total number of cases screened and managed each year, showing a clear decline in numbers served over time. For further detail on how each case was processed through the system, please see the Appendix.

Figure 1. Total Number of Cases Screened and Managed, FY 2012-13 to FY 2018-19



The Assessment Center assessed 202 youth using the pre JAIS during FY 2018-19. Since FY 2015-16, the number of clients assessed by the Center has declined in part due to the changing population in San Mateo County as well as due to changes in reporting policies at the Center.

Due to a slight change in how statistical information is being gathered within the Assessment Center in the last reporting period, the demographic, pre JAIS and outcome data reported by the Assessment reflects the status of 87 of these 202 youth. San Mateo County Probation Department and ASR will work closely together to refine the reporting process for fiscal year 2019-20.

Table 1. Client Services

CLIENT SERVICES	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Number of Clients Assessed	320	344	224	202
Average Time in the Center (Months)	2.4	2.0	2.6	3.8*

*N=87 clients with individual data.

Based on the 87 clients whose demographic, pre JAIS and other outcomes were recorded in FY 2018-19:

- Over two-thirds (68%) of clients served were male and 32% were female.
- Over half (52%) identified as Latino/Hispanic, 23% as White/Caucasian, 20% as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2% as African American/Black.
- The average age of clients was 15.8 years.
- Youth were served for an average of 3.8 months in the Assessment Center.

Risk Indicators

For each youth in their center, the Assessment Center evaluates the presence of three risk indicators upon entry: 1) drug or alcohol problem, 2) school attendance problem, and 3) suspension or expulsion from school in the past year. The findings below apply to the 87 youth described above.

- In FY 2018-19, 12% of clients had an alcohol or drug problem at entry, a decrease from 20% in FY 2017-18.
- Sixteen percent (16%) had an attendance problem upon entry, a continued decrease from FY 2016-17.
- Thirty-six percent (36%) of clients had been suspended or expelled in the past year, a slight decrease from 41% in FY 2017-18.

Table 2. Risk Indicators at Center Entry

RISK INDICATORS	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Alcohol or Drug Problem	31%	10%	20%	12%
Attendance Problem	32%	36%	20%	16%
Suspension/Expulsion in the Past Year	41%	39%	41%	36%

n=87 in FY 2018-19.

In FY 2018-19, the Assessment Center mainly served youth at the low and moderate section of the risk spectrum, with 64% scoring Low risk and 34% scoring Moderate risk. These results have proven stable over the past three years of JAIS implementation, and are expected given the nature of the Assessment Center’s programs, which center on diversion programs and informal probation.

Table 3. JAIS Risk Level

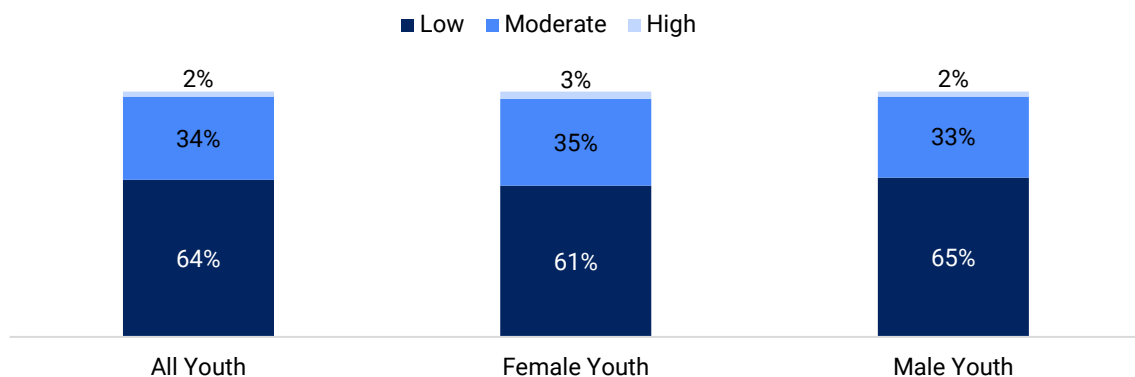
JAIS RISK LEVEL	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Low	65%	62%	66%	64%
Moderate	29%	30%	30%	34%
High	6%	8%	3%	2%

n=85 in FY 2018-19.

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

When disaggregated by sex, the majority of both boys and girls had Low and Moderate criminogenic risk levels (see Figure below).

Figure 2. Criminogenic Risk Level by Sex



All Youth n=85; Female Youth n=31; Male Youth n=54

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Justice Outcomes

The table below presents justice-related outcomes for 75 youth whose six-month post-entry evaluation milestone occurred in FY 2018-19. Of note:

- The percentage of youth arrested for a new law violation dropped to 3% from 18% in FY 2017-18
- The percentage of youth detained during their time in the center also dropped from 8% to 4%.

Table 4. Justice Outcomes

JUSTICE OUTCOMES	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Arrests (For a New Law Violation)	21%	18%	18%	3%
Detentions	20%	22%	8%	4%
Probation Violations	33%	22%	27%	0%
Completed Court-Ordered Probation	0%	0%	13%	0%
Completed Court-Ordered Restitution	0%	--	--	--
Completed Court-Ordered Community Service	0%	--	0%	--

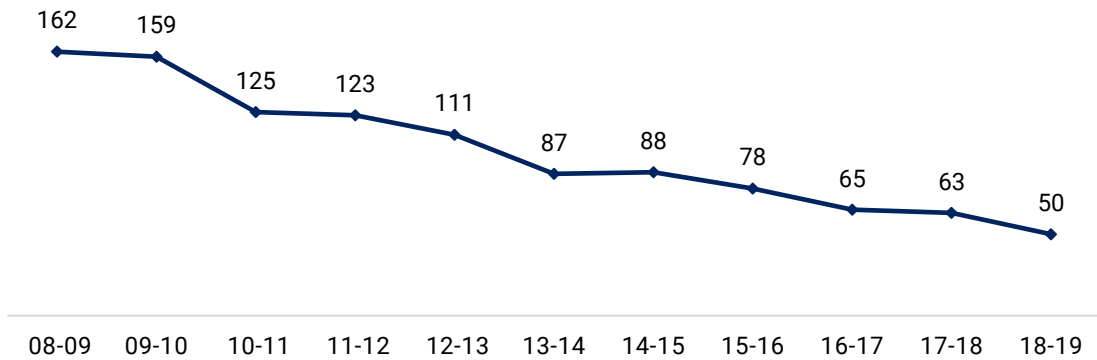
FY 18-19 Arrests for a New Law Violation n=75, Detentions n=75, Probation violations n=1, Completed court-ordered probation n=1, Completed court-ordered restitution n=0, Completed court-ordered community service n=0

Program Specific Outcomes

One of the goals of the Assessment Center is to reduce the number of Juvenile Hall stays by diverting youth away from detention. Between FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19, the average number of youth in Juvenile Hall declined by 21% from 63 to 50 total youth. Between FY 2008-09 and FY 2018-19, the average daily population decreased 69%.

A number of factors seem to be influencing this trend, such as a decrease in crime overall, and fewer bookings for non-violent and less serious offenses. However, the Assessment Center is unable to say with certainty which factor is most influential. Though fewer youth are being served, staff report that the needs of youth entering Juvenile Hall are complex and require a significant amount of resources and supervision.

Figure 3. Average Daily Population, FY 2008-09 through 2018-19



Client Success Story

Each year, staff at funded JJCPA programs provide a client story to help illustrate the effect of services on their clients. The following is the client story provided by the Assessment Center for FY 2018-19.

Name of Client	Jason (pseudonym)
Age and Gender	16, male
Reason for Referral	Jason was arrested for assault and battery. During an argument with his stepfather, Jason shoved his stepfather and attempted to kick him.
Client’s Behavior, Affect, and Appearance When They First Started in the Program	Jason, his mother and maternal grandmother participated in an assessment with a deputy probation officer and a Behavioral Health and Recovery Services clinician. The process began by meeting together, at which time the deputy probation officer explained the process, which included the police referral. Soon thereafter, the youth left with the clinician and the parent(s)/guardian(s) remained with the deputy probation officer to continue the respective interview processes. Jason was cooperative and forthcoming throughout the process. He admitted to using cannabis on “five” occasions over the past year but denied regular use of the drug. Jason reported one past suspension for a fight that he insisted he did not participate in (he only defended himself) and stated he behaves well otherwise, though he sometimes gets reprimanded for talking too much in class. He admitted he is occasionally tardy for classes but denied ever being truant. He reported he was involved in several school activities (badminton club, gaming club and computer club). He performed well academically in middle school but indicated he was behind approximately 20 credits toward graduation since entering high school.
Activity Engagement and Consistency	<p>During the assessment with Jason and his mother, it was revealed that Jason had a lengthy history of symptoms of both Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD). Jason indicated he also experienced a moderate bout of depression that resolved two months before the assessment, and he disclosed two incidents of brief suicidal ideation during that time with no intent or plan to harm himself. It was reported that Jason engaged in family therapy with his stepfather when he was eight years old but found the sessions unconstructive citing the clinician determined he and his stepfather had “no problems” in their relationship (he reported no other encounters with counseling or psychotherapy).</p> <p>After the assessment and completion of Probation and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services tools (Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS), Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT),</p>

	Biopsychosocial Intake Assessment), the youth was deemed eligible for a 90-Intervention Contract.
Client’s Behavior, Affect, and Appearance Toward the End of the Program	Soon after the assessment, Jason’s placement was determined to be his maternal grandmother’s (caregiver) residence. Jason actively participated in counseling sessions with a psychiatric social worker from the Human Services Agency, which was a requirement of the intervention contract. He arrived on time and ready to engage during weekly sessions. He collaborated with his assigned psychiatric social worker and grandmother in process of developing treatment plan goals. Towards the end of treatment, Jason was able to articulate more effectively how to use learned coping skills to manage his distractibility and increase his frustration tolerance.
What the Client Learned as a Result of the Program	During Jason’s time in counseling, he appeared to learn how to use assertive communication to articulate feelings associated with being easily distracted and not being able to follow through with tasks at home and school.
What the Client is Doing Differently in Their Life Now as a Result of the Program	Upon termination of treatment, Jason learned how to increase attention and focus by implementing use of mindfulness tools and being mindful of when to use coping skills to manage his frustration. Jason’s grandmother was open to learn these tools and agreed to continue encouraging Jason to use them as needed in the future.
The Value of the Program in the Client’s Words	Jason stated that participating in counseling has helped increase his awareness of how his behaviors have an effect on others and his overall ability to complete important tasks in various areas in his life such as home and school.

Appendix: Case Triage Dispositions

	FY 12-13		FY 13-14		FY 14-15		FY 15-16		FY 16-17		FY 17-18		FY 18-19	
Mandatory court cases	455	21%	307	14%	325	22%	348	17%	13	21%	353	42%	410	59%
Booked into secure custody	322	15%	217	10%	235	16%	213	11%	247	18%	176	21%	223	32%
Placed in Petty Theft Program	110	5%	97	5%	143	10%	73	4%	51	4%	19	2%	12	2%
Placed in Juvenile Mediation/Victim Impact Awareness Program	239	11%	89	4%	116	8%	102	5%	130	10%	38	4%	1	<1%
Screened and referred to Traffic Court	234	11%	137	6%	60	4%	75	4%	86	6%	61	7%	74	11%
Referred to youth's county of residence	41	2%	52	2%	85	6%	52	3%	53	4%	72	8%	57	8%
Youth Outreach Pilot Program families served	129	6%	180	8%	240	16%	225	11%	10	0%	N/A		13	2%
Criminal background checks	321	15%	221	10%	221	15%	225	11%	236	17%	243	29%	283	40%
Alcohol and Drug assessment	93	4%	37	2%	8	1%	25	1%	30	2%	23	3%	22	3%
Received letter of reprimand	32	1%	71	3%	41	3%	32	2%	57	4%	15	2%	36	5%
Juvenile record sealing application evaluated for submission to the Court	138	6%	131	6%	113	8%	86	4%	88	7%	88	10%	60	9%
Assessed and placed on diversion contracts	91	4%	68	3%	115	8%	40	2%	38	3%	35	4%	26	4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intervention (90 day contract) 	Data not collected in prior fiscal years										23	3%	17	2%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informal diversion (6 month contract) 											12	1%	8	1%
Total Cases Screened and Managed	2,152		2,152		1,491		1,991		1,351		849		700	