

Santa Clara County Probation Department Comprehensive Prevention Plan Addendum

UPDATED TARGET POPULATIONS, BARRIERS,
& SPENDING PLAN

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Two years after the initial submission and review of the Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP), the Santa Clara County Probation Department (SCCPD) is amending key components to align with evolving priorities and funding realities. This addendum to the Santa Clara County Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP), approved by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) in July 2023, clarifies and expands the Probation Department's participation in the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and Family First Prevention Services (FFPS) program.

This addendum provides:

1. Expanded Target Population Definition: Clarification of all probation candidates eligible for Title IV-E funded prevention services, incorporating current CDSS guidance
2. Identified Barriers and Needs: Additional detail on barriers specific to serving probation-involved youth and families, based on stakeholder feedback from Deputy Probation Officers
3. Spending Plan Rationale: Detailed justification for probation-specific spending allocations from the State Block Grant, including strategic approach and expected outcomes

This addendum builds upon and references the comprehensive needs assessment, governance structures, service array, and coordination mechanisms detailed in the original CPP. Information already documented in the CPP is not repeated here.

EXPANDED TARGET POPULATION

This section expands upon the target population described in the original CPP to provide clarity on all probation candidates eligible for Title IV-E funded prevention services. This expanded definition aligns with current CDSS guidance and maximizes the county's ability to provide prevention services to youth at serious or imminent risk of foster care placement.

Probation Candidacy Populations

Per CDSS guidance, involvement with the probation system constitutes serious or imminent risk of foster care placement. Therefore, all youth involved with the Santa Clara County Probation Department under any of the following circumstances are candidates for Title IV-E funded prevention services:

Welfare and Institutions Code Section 602 Petitions
Youth who are subject to, or possibly subject to, a WIC §602 petition for delinquent behavior. This includes youth who have had a petition filed as well as youth who are being assessed for potential petition filing.

Informal Grants of Probation (WIC §654, 654.1, 654.2)
Youth who have been granted informal probation at various levels under these code sections, representing an alternative to formal court involvement.

Probation Without Wardship (WIC §725)
Youth who are placed on probation without being declared wards of the court, allowing for supervision and services while maintaining family custody.

Deferred Entry of Judgment (WIC §790)
Youth participating in Deferred Entry of Judgment programs, which provide an opportunity to avoid formal adjudication through successful program completion.

Diversion Programs
Youth participating in diversion programs operated by or in partnership with the Probation Department, representing the earliest point of intervention in the juvenile justice continuum
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Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care
Pregnant and parenting youth who are in foster care and under probation supervision, recognizing the unique needs of this population.

Additional Candidate Populations

In addition to youth directly involved with probation, the following populations are eligible for Title IV-E funded prevention services when they meet the criteria of being at serious or imminent risk of foster care placement:

- Guardianship or adoption at risk of disruption
- Siblings in foster care or on probation
- Homeless or runaway youth
- LGBTQ+ youth
- Substance-exposed newborns
- Commercially sexually exploited youth
- Youth exposed to domestic violence
- Youth whose caregivers have substance use disorders or significant mental health conditions
- Substantiated or inconclusive child welfare dispositions without a case being opened
- Other risk factors combined with family instability or threats to child safety

Service Delivery Pathway

Santa Clara County Probation is initially implementing prevention services through the Title IV-E Agency Combined Plan Pathway. Under this pathway:

- Youth have an open probation case or ongoing involvement with probation
- Youth are receiving Title IV-E funded prevention services (evidence-based programs)
- The Probation Department develops and monitors the Family Well-Being Plan (prevention plan) in coordination with the family and evidence-based program providers
- This pathway is appropriate for all youth under WIC §602, 654, 654.1, 654.2, 725, 790, or diversion programs who are receiving case management services through probation

As implementation progresses and capacity develops, the county may expand to utilize Community Pathway and Prevention-Only Plan pathways as described in the original CPP. The initial focus on the Combined Plan pathway allows for coordinated implementation and quality improvement before expanding to additional pathways.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS AND NEEDS

Building on the comprehensive needs assessment conducted for the original CPP, probation staff—including Deputy Probation Officers working directly with families—have identified four specific barriers that impact effective service delivery to probation-involved youth and families. These barriers inform the spending plan described in the next section.

Barrier 1: Lack of Resources and Appropriate Services

Probation staff report that existing services are either insufficient in capacity or not appropriately tailored to the needs of probation-involved youth and families. Specific manifestations include:

- Waitlists for evidence-based programs: Families cannot access services in a timely manner even when appropriate programs exist
- Limited availability for specific populations: Insufficient services for commercially sexually exploited youth, LGBTQ+ youth, and non-English speaking families
- Services not trauma-informed: Programs that do not understand or accommodate the unique needs of justice-involved youth
- Workforce capacity constraints: Staffing shortages across the provider network limit program availability
- Inconsistent practice quality: Variable fidelity to evidence-based models reduces program effectiveness

Connection to Spending Plan:
The infrastructure investments in Motivational Interviewing training and Wraparound fidelity support directly address the quality and effectiveness dimensions of this barrier. By strengthening the workforce and improving fidelity across existing programs, these investments enhance the value and impact of available services.

Barrier 2: Lack of Familial Stability

Families involved with probation frequently experience multiple, compounding stressors that threaten family stability and increase risk of out-of-home placement:

- Housing instability: Families struggling to maintain stable housing or experiencing homelessness
- Financial hardship: Economic stress preventing families from meeting basic needs
- Transportation barriers: Inability to access services, employment, or school
- Parenting challenges: Parents lacking skills, support, or resources to effectively manage adolescent behavior

- Unmet basic needs: Lack of access to food security, clothing, medical care, or other concrete supports

Connection to Spending Plan:
Concrete supports needs (housing, transportation, financial assistance) exceed what can be addressed through the $464,000 probation block grant allocation. These critical needs are addressed through other county resources including Department of Family and Children Services prevention services, Behavioral Health Services (including Medi-Cal Enhanced Care Management), CalWORKs, and community-based safety-net providers. Probation staff coordinate referrals to connect families with these resources. The probation block grant focuses on enhancing the effectiveness of services families receive across all systems.

Barrier 3: Lack of Accountability

Probation staff identified challenges related to engagement and follow-through:

- Parental disengagement: Parents who are overwhelmed, have given up, or do not understand how to support their youth
- Youth resistance: Youth who do not see value in services or who disengage before meaningful progress can be made
- System coordination gaps: Lack of clear accountability across systems when youth are dually-involved or receiving services from multiple providers. As noted in the original CPP, 53% of probation youth have prior child welfare involvement, making cross-system coordination essential.
- Inconsistent service delivery: Providers who do not maintain consistent engagement with families or accountability for outcomes

Connection to Spending Plan:
Motivational Interviewing training specifically addresses engagement and motivation challenges. MI is an evidence-based approach proven to increase intrinsic motivation for change and improve service engagement. Wraparound fidelity support addresses coordination gaps by strengthening the team-based planning process that ensures accountability across multiple providers and systems.

Barrier 4: Generational System Involvement

Many probation families experience intergenerational cycles of justice system involvement, child welfare involvement, poverty, and trauma:

- Parents with their own histories of system involvement who lack models of positive parenting

- Families experiencing multi-generational trauma related to poverty, racism, and community violence
- Deep-seated mistrust of systems and service providers
- Need for comprehensive, family-centered approaches that address root causes rather than symptoms

Connection to Spending Plan:
Breaking intergenerational cycles requires building trust and engaging families in a respectful, family-driven process. Motivational Interviewing provides skills for building therapeutic relationships and engaging families who may be resistant or mistrustful. High Fidelity Wraparound is explicitly family-driven and culturally responsive, centering family voice and choice. Improved fidelity to these approaches creates more respectful, effective partnerships with families who have experienced system involvement across generations.

Summary

These four barriers—identified by frontline probation staff based on direct experience with families—provide specific rationale for the strategic investments described in the next section. The spending plan prioritizes infrastructure development that addresses practice quality, engagement, and coordination challenges rather than launching new programs that would face the same workforce and implementation challenges currently limiting effectiveness.

SPENDING PLAN AND RATIONALE

Santa Clara County Probation Department receives $464,000 from the State Block Grant for Family First Prevention Services. The current allocation is:

Category	Amount	Percentage
Motivational Interviewing Training and Implementation	$200,000	43%
High Fidelity Wraparound Support	$264,000	57%
TOTAL	**$464,000**	**100%**

Strategic Rationale

This allocation reflects a strategic decision to invest in infrastructure development—training and fidelity support—rather than launching new programs. This approach is grounded in the needs assessment findings and the four barriers identified by probation staff.

Why Infrastructure Investment?

1. Addresses root causes: Workforce capacity and quality were identified as primary barriers. Training and fidelity support address these root causes across the entire service ecosystem.
2. Sustainable impact: Training represents a one-time investment with ongoing returns. Once staff are trained in evidence-based practices, those skills continue to benefit families.
3. Broad reach: Infrastructure investments benefit ALL probation youth and families, not just those enrolled in specific programs. Improved practice quality enhances outcomes across all service interactions.
4. Supports Combined Plan pathway: Both investments directly support the Combined Plan implementation, training both probation staff and community providers who work with probation youth.
5. Maximizes other resources: By strengthening the effectiveness of existing services, this approach maximizes the value of other funding streams (Medi-Cal, county general fund, DFCS prevention services) that support direct services and concrete supports.

Investment 1: Motivational Interviewing Training ($200,000)

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is an evidence-based counseling approach that enhances intrinsic motivation for behavior change and increases engagement in services. MI has been identified by CDSS as both a standalone evidence-based program (for substance use) and a cross-cutting practice applicable across multiple service settings.

How MI Addresses Identified Barriers:
Barrier 3 (Lack of Accountability): MI directly addresses engagement and motivation challenges. When parents are disengaged or youth are resistant, MI provides specific skills for building motivation and increasing participation.

Barrier 1 (Lack of Appropriate Services): MI training improves the quality of existing services. MI skills benefit probation officers, case managers, therapists, and any staff who interact with families, enhancing effectiveness across the service array.

Barrier 4 (Generational System Involvement): Families with deep mistrust of systems require a different approach. MI provides respectful, non-confrontational engagement strategies that build trust and partnership rather than resistance.

Planned Activities:

- Initial MI training for probation staff and community providers
- MI booster sessions to reinforce skills and address implementation challenges
- Fidelity assessment and coaching to ensure MI is being practiced with fidelity
- Integration of MI principles into case consultation and supervision
- Training specific to MI for substance use (an IV-E eligible evidence-based program)

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased family engagement in services
- Reduced drop-out rates from evidence-based programs
- Improved provider-family relationships and trust
- Enhanced effectiveness of all prevention services through better engagement
- Measurable improvement in MI fidelity scores

Investment 2: High Fidelity Wraparound Support ($264,000)

High Fidelity Wraparound is an evidence-supported practice widely used in Santa Clara County for youth with complex, multi-system needs. Wraparound is a team-based, family-driven planning process that coordinates services across multiple providers and systems.

How Wraparound Addresses Identified Barriers:

Barrier 3 (Lack of Accountability): Wraparound provides a structured process for coordination when youth are involved with multiple systems. Given that 53% of probation youth have child welfare involvement, this coordination is essential. High fidelity wraparound ensures clear accountability across providers.

Barrier 1 (Lack of Appropriate Services): Wraparound providers have specifically requested support to improve fidelity. Better fidelity means better coordination, which helps families access and remain engaged with the services they need.

Barrier 4 (Generational System Involvement): High Fidelity Wraparound is explicitly family-driven, centering family voice and choice. This approach is particularly important for families who have experienced system involvement across generations and need to be genuine partners in planning.

Planned Activities:

- Technical assistance to wraparound providers to improve model fidelity
- Training and coaching for wraparound facilitators
- Fidelity assessment using standardized tools (Wraparound Fidelity Index)
- Development of quality improvement processes based on fidelity data
- Cross-system coordination to align wraparound practices across probation, child welfare, and behavioral health

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved fidelity scores on standardized wraparound assessments
- Better coordination of services for youth with multi-system involvement
- Increased family satisfaction with the wraparound process
- Reduced out-of-home placements for youth receiving wraparound services

Sustainability and Future Adjustments

Sustainability:
MI training is largely a one-time investment with ongoing returns. Periodic booster training maintains skills. As the workforce reaches saturation, training funds may be reduced and redirected. Wraparound fidelity support requires ongoing investment, though the level of external technical assistance needed may decrease as providers build internal capacity.

Future Flexibility:
The Comprehensive Prevention Plan is a living document. Santa Clara County Probation remains committed to monitoring effectiveness through continuous quality improvement and adjusting allocations based on implementation learning. Future plan updates may shift resources toward direct service expansion, pilot programs, administration costs, or other priorities as needs and capacity evolve.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Probation prevention services are monitored through the county-wide CQI framework described in the original CPP. Probation-specific metrics include:

- Number of probation youth receiving Title IV-E funded prevention services
- Service completion rates
- MI fidelity scores for probation staff and providers
- Wraparound Fidelity Index scores
- Prevention of foster care placement for probation candidates

Data is reported quarterly to the Interagency Leadership Team and used to inform practice improvements and plan adjustments.

CONCLUSION

This addendum clarifies and expands Santa Clara County Probation Department's participation in the Family First Prevention Services program. Key elements include:

- Expanded Eligibility: All probation-involved youth are eligible for prevention services, across the full continuum from diversion through formal wardship, plus additional priority populations.
- Strategic Infrastructure Investment: Spending focuses on training and fidelity support that address identified barriers and create sustainable improvements in service quality and effectiveness.
- Combined Plan Focus: Initial implementation through the Title IV-E Agency Combined Plan pathway allows for coordinated, quality-focused rollout.
- Flexibility and Learning: Allocations are monitored through the County's CQI framework and adjusted through future plan updates as needs and capacity evolve.

This addendum builds upon the strong foundation established in the original Comprehensive Prevention Plan, which details governance structures, comprehensive needs assessment, service coordination mechanisms, and countywide implementation strategies.

Santa Clara County Probation Department looks forward to implementing these prevention services in partnership with families, community providers, and county partners.