

# San Mateo Probation

Family Preservation Program Annual Evaluation

FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019



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## 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.

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## Program Description

The Family Preservation Program (FPP) serves youth ages 12 to 18, with a primary focus on youth who have entered the juvenile justice system under specific circumstances. These circumstances typically include recent criminal charges that resulted from behaviors related to significant emotional or mental health issues, escalating familial issues, or a high risk of being placed out-of-home. The program is also appropriate for youth charged with low-level (non-predatory, non-violent) sex offenses, substance abuse issues, or those who come from a home where domestic violence is present, families are in crisis or experiencing serious issues where the functionality of the family has been compromised. All youth in the program are at high risk for out-of-home placement.

The Probation Department's FPP unit works collaboratively with Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), Child and Family Services, schools, and other strength-based collateral agencies to provide therapeutic services for the youth and their families. Participation in the program is monitored by meeting with the youth on a weekly basis and the parents/legal guardians as often as needed to ensure compliance with counseling services and adherence to Court-orders. Court hearings occur every 90-days to update the Court on the progress made by the youth and family.

**The program's primary goal is to maintain youth in their homes by expanding the use of intensive supervision, flexible support services, and community-based resources.** Each Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) in the unit has a caseload of up to eighteen youth who experience significant family, emotional, and/or mental health issues. The program offers intensive probation case management and therapeutic interventions by mental health providers.

### Programmatic Challenges in Fiscal Year 2018-19

In fiscal year (FY) 2018-19, FPP officers reported a shortage of Spanish speaking officers which has led to an increase in waiting times for some youth.

## Evaluation Methods

FPP programs are funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation (Probation), and therefore 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 this data are described below:

**Clients and Services:** Grantee programs collected 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:** Grantee programs use the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) to provide a standard measure of risk, life functioning, and areas of need for all clients. The JAIS is a risk, strengths, and needs assessment designed to assist workers to effectively and efficiently supervise youth, both in institutional settings and in the community. The tool has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of full assessment and reassessment components differentiated by gender, which Probation has elected to administer to youth in FPP. The JAIS yields an overall criminogenic risk level of low, moderate, or high.

**Outcomes:** As a Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funded program, FPP collects 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, FPP collected the following outcome measures:

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

Additionally, FPP also tracks progress toward its goal of keeping all youth unified with their families to avoid out-of-home placements.

## Evaluation Findings

### Fiscal Year Highlights

- After a steady decline, the number of clients in the program has been stable the last two years. In FY 2018-19, 36 youth clients participated, down from a high of 136 youth in FY 2012-13.
- Nearly three out of five (59%) of clients assessed had an alcohol or drug problem at entry, a decrease from 74% in FY 2017-18.
- FPP served youth across the criminogenic risk spectrum: 27% scored Low, 45% scored Moderate, and 27% scored High on the JAIS.

### Profile of Clients Served

During FY 2018-19, FPP served 36 youth. Of these, 22 clients' demographic data was reported. Eighty-six percent (86%) of the youth served were male, and the average age at program entry was 15.5 years old. About three-quarters (76%) identified as Latino/Hispanic, with 14% identifying as White/Caucasian. Participants spent an average of 6.8 months in the program.

**Table 1. Client Services and Risk Indicators**

CLIENT SERVICES	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
<b>Number of Clients Served</b>	136	123	95	48	61	35	36
<b>Average Time in the Program (Months)</b>	6.8	7.1	5.4	6.0	10.7	13.4	6.8

## Risk Indicators

For each youth in the program, FPP evaluated risk indicators upon entry to determine whether youth experienced: 1) a drug or alcohol problem, 2) a school attendance problem, and 3) suspension or expulsion from school in the past year. In FY 2018-19, the percent of youth on all risk indicators decreased from the previous fiscal year: 59% of clients had an alcohol or drug problem at entry, a decrease from 74% in FY 2017-18. Nearly three-quarters (73%) had an attendance problem when entering, and 64% had been suspended or expelled in the past year.

**Table 2. Risk Indicators at Program Entry**

RISK INDICATORS AT PROGRAM ENTRY	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Alcohol or drug problem	52%	39%	74%	59%
Attendance problem	80%	72%	78%	73%
Suspension/expulsion in past year	73%	67%	70%	64%

*n=22 in FY 18-19.*

J AIS initial assessments were available for eleven unique clients, and J AIS reassessment data were available for eight unique clients. The results of the initial J AIS assessments showed that FPP served youth across the criminogenic risk spectrum: 27% scored Low, 45% scored Moderate, and 27% scored High. Comparison of the risk levels from initial to reassessment was not made as only one client had matching assessment and reassessment scores.

**Table 3. J AIS Risk Levels at Initial Assessment and Reassessment**

J AIS RISK LEVELS	INITIAL ASSESSMENT	REASSESSMENT
Low	27%	50%
Moderate	45%	25%
High	27%	25%

*J AIS Assessment n=11; J AIS Reassessment n=8. The percentages may not sum up to 100% due to rounding. Note: Pre-J AIS results not applicable to the FY 2018-19 report.*

## Justice Outcomes

The table below presents justice-related outcomes for the twelve youth in the FPP program whose six-month post-entry evaluation milestone occurred in FY 2018-19.<sup>1</sup> The number of youth is significantly less than the total number served because many youth are in FPP for several years and/or have not yet received their follow-up. As shown, the rate for arrests for new law violations and detentions stayed relatively stable, while probation violations decreased significantly to 50% from the previous fiscal year.

**Table 4. Justice Outcomes**

<b>JUSTICE OUTCOMES</b>	<b>FY 15-16</b>	<b>FY 16-17</b>	<b>FY 17-18</b>	<b>FY 18-19</b>
<b>Arrests for a New Violation</b>	38%	44%	72%	75%
<b>Detentions</b>	79%	72%	76%	75%
<b>Probation Violations</b>	55%	56%	72%	50%
<b>Completed Court-Ordered Probation</b>	0%	0%	4%	0%
<b>Completed Court-Ordered Restitution</b>	14%	50%	0%	--
<b>Completed Court-Ordered Community Service</b>	33%	33%	40%	0%

*FY 18-19 Arrests for a New Law Violation n=12, Detentions n=12, Probation violations n=12, Completed court-ordered probation n=12, Completed court-ordered restitution n=0, Completed court-ordered community service n=2*

<sup>1</sup> The overall number of youth served is small, which can lead to unstable results year over year.



## Program Specific Outcomes

The central goal of FPP is to keep youth in their homes. Of the 36 youth who participated in the program during FY 2018-19, one was given an out-of-home placement order.

**Table 5. Out-of-Home Placements**

PROGRAM SPECIFIC OUTCOMES	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Out-of-home placement	2%	5%	9%	3%

*FY 2018-19 n=36*

## Client Stories

Each year, FPP staff provide a client story to help illustrate the effect of services on their clients. The following are two client stories provided by FPP for FY 2018-19.

### FPP Client Story #1

<b>Name of Client</b>	Sean (Pseudonym)
<b>Age and Gender</b>	15, male
<b>Reason for Referral</b>	Sean was ordered into the Family Preservation Program based on a sustained charge of Petty Theft. In that matter, Sean stole a bicycle from Facebook. Moreover, he was engaging in high risk behavior by not attending school, smoking marijuana at home, not following rules at home, and not completing homework or classwork.
<b>Client's Behavior, Affect, and Appearance When They First Started in the Program</b>	Sean presented as very angry when he was ordered into the program. He would get so upset when his behavior was addressed or redirected that he would shut down and not communicate. Sean insisted that he was not in need of Probation or counseling services.
<b>Activity Engagement and Consistency</b>	Sean did not participate in any pro-social activities at the onset of being placed on Probation.
<b>Client's Behavior, Affect, and Appearance Toward the End of the Program</b>	Sean is practicing for the high school football team. He attends school daily and he has consistently tested negative for marijuana. Prior to being placed on Probation, his mother complained that he smoked marijuana in the home or on her porch daily despite her asking him not to smoke.
<b>What the Client Learned as a Result of the Program</b>	Sean is learning that he is responsible for his actions and that there are consequences for his actions and that he will be acknowledged for his accomplishments and successes.

	He is also understanding that school is important to his overall existence and future independence.
<b>What the Client is Doing Differently in Their Life Now as a Result of the Program</b>	Sean is attending school and engaging in class and he has not smoked marijuana.
<b>The Value of the Program in the Client's Words</b>	When asked what the value of the Family Preservation Program has been for him, Sean said, "To focus on my goal and do what I got to do."

FPP Client Story #2

<b>Name of Client</b>	Saira (Pseudonym)
<b>Age and Gender</b>	17, female
<b>Reason for Referral</b>	Saira had difficulty managing her anger, which at times turned into physical violence against her mother. Saira was adjudged a ward of the Court and ordered to participate in the Family Preservation Program.
<b>Client's Behavior, Affect, and Appearance When They First Started in the Program</b>	Saira was in the last semester of her senior year at a continuation high school. Her attendance was poor and she was not working to her full potential academically. She was associating with negative peers who abused drugs and caved into peer pressure resulting in marijuana use. She had a strained relationship with her mother.
<b>Activity Engagement and Consistency</b>	The family was referred to Behavioral Health and Recovery Services for intensive in-home family therapy. Their meetings were consistent with the clinician once a week, for approximately 14 sessions. Saira was referred to StarVista for individual drug and alcohol counseling and anger management. She successfully completed both programs. The consistent weekly meetings and accountability from probation also helped her stay focused and on track, in addition to bi-monthly family meetings with the probation officer.
<b>Client's Behavior, Affect, and Appearance Toward the End of the Program</b>	In the spring semester of her senior year, Saira was on track to graduate high school; she was passing all her classes with a "C" or better, and her attendance improved. Saira actively sought employment and was hired at a department store at the mall, where she worked approximately 15 hours a week. In addition, she met with a guidance counselor at Skyline Community College to enroll for the fall semester of 2019. Saira's relationship with her mother improved, and Saira attributes this to their willingness to participate in services and to be open minded about family therapy.
<b>What the Client Learned as a Result of the Program</b>	I contacted Saira and she indicated the following: "I feel like family therapy was the missing link, because in therapy we

	<p>would talk about our disagreement and we both came to an agreement, unlike before, my mom would just stop talking to me. We learned to verbally communicate with one another.”</p>
<p><b>What the Client is Doing Differently in Their Life Now as a Result of the Program</b></p>	<p>Saira reported she is no longer smoking marijuana or out with her friends as she used to. Now, she goes out more with her mother, and when she does go out with her friends, she asks her mother for permission. She stated, “I feel like my mom trusts me and we understand each other.”</p>
<p><b>The Value of the Program in the Client’s Words</b></p>	<p>“Family Therapy! Every week the therapist gave us a goal to work on, and I feel like we accomplished it. For example, if I was on my cell phone for a long time, instead of my mom getting mad at me or taking it away, we agreed that I would turn it off after a couple of hours; compromising was key.”</p>