

Overview

On May 6, 2014, the Kern County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to join Fresno, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz as the 4th California County to participate in the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative (Results First). The Board recognized the many benefits Results First had to offer and the local need for evidence informed policymaking.

Results First provides jurisdictions with the software and technical assistance needed to weigh the costs and benefits of programs operated within the County using county specific costs and populations data and nationally recognized program effects. This information is then provided to policymakers to help inform program funding decisions.

Since May 2014, representatives from the Kern County Probation Department, Sheriff's Office, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Department, Public Defender's Office, Superior Court, Bakersfield Police Department, Employers' Training Resource, County Administrative Office, and General Services Information Technology Services Division have developed a comprehensive program inventory, calculated a cumulative Kern County recidivism rate, determined county specific criminal justice costs to calculate the cost of recidivism, and populated the Kern County Results First Benefit-Cost Model.

Key Findings

- ❖ Kern County currently offers 11 types of programs intended to reduce recidivism (see back page for details)
- ❖ On average, 60% of Kern County probationers are reconvicted of a new crime within 6 years
- ❖ Every new conviction costs the County an average of \$37,512, including \$13,063 in direct taxpayer costs
- ❖ The average program cost per participant is \$1,347.79
- ❖ The average return on investment for Kern County programs is \$7.43 per \$1.00

Interim Successes

Through the development of the Results First project there have been a number of successes both foreseen and unexpected. The following is a highlight of these successes:

- ❖ Improved collaboration and data sharing between participating agencies
- ❖ Improved quality and quantity of data
- ❖ Development of a comprehensive list of programs offered within Kern County
- ❖ Determination of the cumulative recidivism rate
- ❖ Monetizing recidivism
- ❖ Expansion of evidence-based programs

New Services

The Sheriff's Office created a new Evidence-Based programming unit consisting of 15 employees and providing 6 Evidence-Based programs.

The Probation Department also created an Adult Programming unit consisting of 18 employees, providing 4 Evidence-Based programs, and utilizing Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS).

The Mental Health Department is utilizing a Unit Supervisor to conduct fidelity checks and monitor programs offered through the department.

Development of a Cumulative Recidivism Rate

Prior to participating in the Results First Initiative, Kern County did not have a cumulative recidivism rate for the entire population. Instead there were varying recidivism rates for different populations using different definitions of recidivism.

In order to populate the Results First model, a cumulative recidivism rate for the population had to be established. To develop this recidivism rate, individuals sentenced to felony probation supervision in FY 2007-2008 were identified and tracked for 6 years. Every new felony and misdemeanor conviction was documented from this time period.

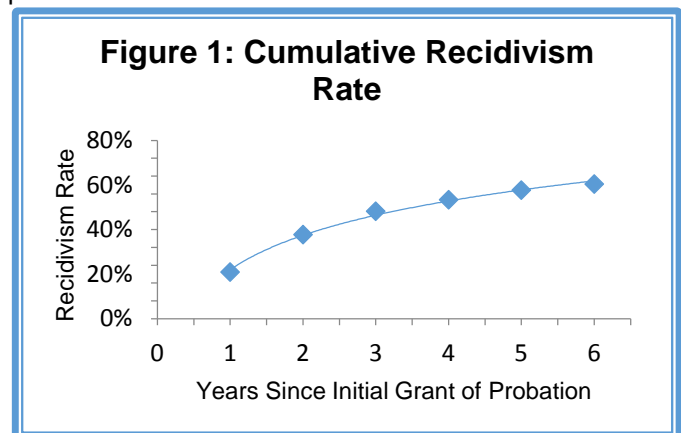


Figure 1 depicts the cumulative recidivism rate by year, with 21% of probationers reconvicted of a new crime within 1 year and 60% within 6 years. It is important to note that of these new convictions roughly 60% were misdemeanor convictions. This percentage is likely to grow with the implementation of Proposition 47. These changes in sentencing will be included in future updates of the Kern County Results First model.

Proposition 47

Proposition 47 was approved by California voters on November 4, 2014. This proposition reduced the punishment for six common non-violent property and drug crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, with exceptions for offenders previously convicted of specific violent felonies.

Results First – Kern County, CA

December 2015

Projected Cost-Effectiveness of Adult Criminal Justice Programs



*The Work Release Program has additional cost avoidance of \$9,380.35 from jail bed-days saved, reducing program costs from \$720.19 to -\$8,660.16 per participant

**Intensive Supervision has additional cost avoidance of \$13,966.84 from jail bed-days saved, reducing program costs from \$628.98 to -\$13,337.86 per participant

***The Electronic Monitoring Program-Sheriff has additional cost avoidance of \$7,591.51 from jail bed-days saved, reducing program costs from \$1,123.00 to -\$6,468.51 per participant

****Seeking Safety is more expensive than other Cognitive Behavioral Therapies due to the way in which the program is structured and implemented. Since partnering with Results First, Kern County has added a number of other Cognitive Behavioral Therapy classes that are less costly, and will reduce the cost per participant. This information will be reflected in later editions of the Kern County Results First model.

*****Day Reporting Center (DRC) has the highest projected recidivism reducing affect, by offering a number of evidence-based services simultaneously, which also results in a higher cost per participant. Currently the DRC offers Moral Recognition Therapy (MRT), Thinking for a Change (T4C), Trauma Informed Therapy, alcohol and drug testing, employment training, case management services, and daily check-ins.

Recommendations

- ❖ Continue to direct funding to evidence-based programming and ancillary services (i.e. long-term housing)
- ❖ Require program providers to demonstrate that they are achieving positive outcomes
- ❖ Increase capacity to evaluate homegrown programs lacking rigorous national evaluations
- ❖ Search out and support domestic violence programs with proven records of success

- ❖ Continue to support and improve data collection
- ❖ Consider expansion into other Results First public policy areas

Next Steps

- ❖ Use findings to inform program funding decisions
- ❖ Develop a framework for using the Kern County Results First model and national research when developing and/or expanding programs
- ❖ Update the model periodically to reflect cost, policy, and programming changes