

# KERN COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council

**DATE:** November 13, 2019

**FROM:** TR Merickel  
Chief Probation Officer

**SUBJECT:** Request for Proposal for Youth Services Utilizing FY 18/19 JJCPA Growth Funds

There continues to be a significant need for supplemental services for youth involved, or at-risk of being involved, in the Juvenile Justice System. Increasing the use of best practices, such as evidence-based treatment, mentoring, diversion, educational services or other proven effective methods, would help further reduce recidivism in our community. The Probation Department and other allied agencies have shown a commitment to these practices; however, it would be beneficial to enhance the involvement of community-based organizations (CBOs) in the delivery of these types of services. The target population would be youth in-custody, youth on probation status or youth suitable for diversion, including those youth under 12 who are no longer eligible to enter the Juvenile Justice System as a result of SB 439.

Furthermore, there has been an increased interest by the State Legislature, and others, to ensure that CBOs are a part of a wholistic approach to Juvenile Justice. It would behoove the County to take notice of this trend to ensure continued State funding. It is noted the CBO program for the criminal justice system, funded in part by AB 109 Growth funds via the Community Corrections Partnership, has been a successful model providing supplemental services to adult offenders.

It is, therefore, recommended the JJCC approve authorizing the Probation Department to open a Request for Proposal (RFP) to provide such services as detailed utilizing recently received FY 18/19 JJCPA Growth Funds in the amount of \$1,363,374.15. It is further recommended this RFP be for a three-year period (mirroring the CCP CBO program model).

# Kern 2019-2020 JJCPA Plan Modification

## JJCPA Funded Program, Strategy and/or System Enhancement

**Program Name:** Juvenile Programming Unit

**Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:** Providing evidence-based treatment (EBT) to juvenile probationers from custodial to community-based sites is an effective way to target criminogenic needs and reduce recidivism. The mission of the Kern County Probation Department is to reduce the incidence and impact of criminal behavior in those we supervise. The Department has a long history of implementing policies and programs to achieve this goal. Conducting research and reviewing national best practices in the area of community corrections is vital to ensure the Department is on the cutting edge of offering the best services to the residents of Kern County. Providing evidence-based treatment (EBT) to probationers is a proven and effective way to reduce recidivism.

**Description:** Using funding from JJCPA, a stand-alone Juvenile Programming Unit (JPU) will be created. It will consist of a Probation Supervisor, a Deputy Probation Officer III, a Deputy Probation Officer and eight Probation Program Specialists. The JPU will provide evidence-based programs with the goal of decreasing recidivism in our community. Staff members have been trained in various cognitive behavioral programs and techniques including Aggression Replacement Training (ART), Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Substance Abuse (CBI-SA), Thinking for a Change (T4C), Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS), Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Ending The Game (ETG). Staff are equipped to provide services proven to reduce recidivism to youth supervised by the Department while in-custody at our detention and commitment facilities and on site at the Juvenile Treatment Center.

The unit will receive their referrals from Probation Officers based upon what program the Court has ordered them to complete or needs identified by their supervision officer via an evidence-based assessment. The JPU is designed to work rotating shifts to better meet the needs of youth. JPU staff will ideally carry a caseload of 20 youth and be required to meet with assigned youth using the EPICS model. Staff will facilitate cognitive behavioral programs, ensure accurate and timely documentation, provide consistent responses to violations of the program, and strive to meet the individual needs of the youth in the program.

## **Kern 2019-2020 JJCPA Plan Modification**

### **JJCPA Funded Program, Strategy and/or System Enhancement**

**Program Name:** Gang Intervention and Suppression Team/High Risk Supervision

**Description:** This program will no longer be funded with JJCPA dollars. See JJCPA Plan Modification: Juvenile Programming Unit for more information.

The Department will continue to focus on gang issues in Kern County by effectively targeting and providing intervention to probationers involved in gang activity and those youth released from DJJ (Department of Juvenile Justice). However, this will now be accomplished through a bolstering of staffing resources and focused orientation of both the Juvenile Aftercare Unit and the Adult High Risk Unit. This new approach will allow for greater collaboration between the Adult and Juvenile Divisions in dealing with this population. This is important because most gang members are in the transitional age category with a majority being over 18 years old. The Department believes this will be a successful model and more aligned with best practices in the field of community corrections.