

# SB 678

## Incentive-Based Funding and Evidence-Based Practices Enacted by California Probation Are Associated with Lower Recidivism Rates and Improved Public Safety

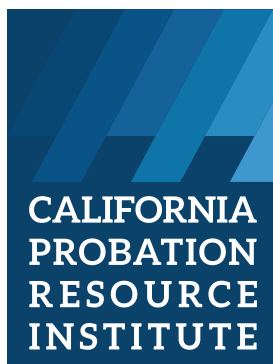
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COMMISSIONED BY



A project of the Chief Probation Officers of California, the California Probation Resource Institute is part of a long-term strategic plan to further the evolution of probation practices. The California Probation Resource Institute will provide evaluations of juvenile and adult probation by partnering with esteemed academic experts from top universities and work to build further strategic partnerships expanding the availability of related resource tools.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Corrections Performance Incentives Act of 2009 – commonly referred to as Senate Bill 678 – transformed California’s probation system and set the stage for the decade of criminal justice reforms that would follow. SB 678 established a permanent state funding source, providing resources for probation departments to reduce caseloads and invest in evidence-based supervision and treatment interventions. The legislation aligned county and state incentives toward the shared goals of maintaining public safety, reducing the size of the incarcerated population, and reducing correctional costs. The policy change also inspired greater collaboration among county level agencies and between probation departments and key state agencies, including the Judicial Council of California (JCC) and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The widespread political support and early success of SB 678 opened a door for the state to craft more substantial changes to the structure of the criminal justice system, leading to California’s 2011 Public Safety Realignment and subsequent reforms.

A decade has now passed since the passage of SB 678. This report examines the history and goals of SB 678, and assesses the impacts of this policy change on key criminal justice outcomes. We find:

## ■ SB 678 reduced prison revocations.

Relative to the baseline rate, prison revocations declined by more than 23 percent in the first year following the implementation of SB 678. By year two, the legislation had achieved more than a 30 percent reduction in revocations.

## ■ SB 678 reduced the prison population.

Within the first year, the prison population was reduced by more than 6,000 inmates and this trend continued into the second year of the program. With the implementation of Realignment, the prison population declined dramatically due to structural changes in eligibility for sentencing and revocation to prison.

## ■ SB 678 reduced state correctional expenditures.

In just the first year of implementation, SB 678 reduced state prison expenditures by an estimated \$179 million. Over the full period, the state is estimated to have saved over \$1 billion.

## ■ SB 678 increased funding for probation departments.

The legislation initially provided \$45 million in seed funding to support counties to invest in evidence-based practices. Based on the estimated savings to the state in the first year of implementation, the counties received \$87.5 million. Thus far, about \$838 million has been allocated to probation departments.

## ■ SB 678 did not lead to increases in crime rates.

In the two years following the implementation of the legislation, property and violent crime rates declined. In later years, following Realignment and Prop 47, crime rates fluctuated. By 2018, property crimes rates were substantially lower and violent crime rates were slightly lower than in 2008, the year prior to the implementation of SB 678.

## ■ SB 678 transformed the culture of probation departments and led to substantial increases in the use of evidence-based practice.

The vast majority of probation departments now use evidence-based practices, including risk and needs assessment (79%), supervision strategies (75%), collaboration with other agencies (75%), and programmatic interventions (61%). The culture of probation departments has shifted from a law-enforcement orientation to a hybrid orientation that strategically balances the priorities of enforcement and social work interventions. Program capacity has also expanded, with most probation officers reporting that there is sufficient program capacity for evidence-based practice.

Our findings also highlight opportunities for continued growth. The transition to evidence-based practice has been rapid and widespread under SB 678, but there still exist a minority of counties where this transition is incomplete. Our research does not explain the reasons why some agencies and some staff have not fully implemented evidence-based practices. Further inquiry is necessary to identify the policy choices that might result in closing the remaining gaps, which may involve technical assistance, training, funding or some combination of those. Also, training and program capacity appear limited in certain areas. In particular, probation officers report limited programmatic capacity for clients with mental health challenges or sex offense histories.

Finally, we find counties have made tremendous progress toward the adoption of an evidence-based framework for probation practice through the use of risk and needs assessments to target supervision strategies and service interventions, as well as through increased collaboration with county partners. The final stage of an evidence-based framework calls for monitoring populations and evaluating outcomes, which would empower counties to observe the effectiveness of their interventions for their own populations and to engage in continuous improvement. Our survey evidence suggests this is the area in which counties are currently most lacking in capacity. It is clear that many counties across the state could use assistance in improving data infrastructure – including data collection and integration – and better utilize data to monitor populations and evaluate outcomes.

# SB 678: 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY REPORT

The Community Corrections Performance Incentives Act of 2009 – commonly referred to as Senate Bill 678 – transformed California’s probation system and set the stage for the decade of criminal justice reforms that would follow. SB 678 established a permanent state funding source, providing resources for probation departments to reduce caseloads and invest in evidence-based supervision and treatment interventions. The legislation aligned county and state incentives toward the shared goals of maintaining public safety, reducing the size of the incarcerated population, and reducing correctional costs. The policy change also inspired greater collaboration among county level agencies and between probation departments and key state agencies, including the Judicial Council of California (JCC) and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The widespread political support and early success of SB 678 opened a door for the state to craft more substantial changes to the structure of the criminal justice system, leading to California’s 2011 Public Safety (Realignment).

A decade has now passed since the passage of SB 678. This report takes a look back at how the policy change came to be and the ways it changed California’s correctional landscape. We examine the state of California’s probation system prior to SB 678 and the motivation and intent of the legislation. We then assess the impacts of SB 678 on key outcomes, such as prison revocations, prison overcrowding, correctional expenditures, and public safety. Drawing on past survey data gathered by the JCC and Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), along with new data from a survey fielded by CPOC in 2019, we also examine the ways in which SB 678 transformed the culture and practice of probation – and the criminal justice system as a whole – in the longer-term. Based on this assessment of impacts, we conclude that SB 678 was successful at achieving its

intended policy goals and serves as a model for the change that can be achieved through incentive-based funding and effective state-local collaboration.

## The Role of Probation in California

*“Probation is a judicially imposed suspension of sentence that attempts to supervise, treat, and rehabilitate offenders while they remain in the community under the supervision of the probation department. Probation is a linchpin of the criminal justice system, closely aligned with the courts, and plays a central role in promoting public safety in California’s communities.”*

~ SB 678<sup>1</sup>

California’s probation system supervises more offenders than all other correctional systems combined. In 2018, 356,000 individuals were supervised by probation, compared with 127,000 incarcerated in state prison, 75,000 incarcerated in county jail, and 45,000 supervised by state parole (CPOC 2018). Probation departments are responsible for providing community-based supervision of adults convicted of felonies or misdemeanors either in lieu of incarceration or as a condition of release following incarceration. Probationers may be required to meet certain conditions associated with their supervision, such as reporting to probation at the start of their term, attending meetings with probation officers, drug testing, or program participation. If an individual violates the conditions of their supervision or commits a new offense, they may be revoked to serve a custody term in jail or prison. Probation supervision in the community is a relatively low cost correctional setting when compared with the costs of incarceration at the county or state level.

Over the past decade, probation departments state-wide have embraced the movement toward the use of evidence-based supervision strategies and treatment interventions. Departments have expanded their use of risk and needs assessment, improved targeting of supervision based on risk, and increased referrals to programs and services that have been shown to address criminogenic needs. Enhancing the use of evidence-based practices to reduce reoffending in the relatively low cost probation system improves public safety, while also improving the cost-effectiveness of the criminal justice system as a whole.

### Policy History and Context

*“SB 678 doesn’t happen without a perfect storm of issues and actions and their confluence: A great recession, federal court population pressures, and decades long tough on crime policies and neglect of the adult criminal justice system; a successful juvenile justice system as a model; probation chiefs with the courage to step up and take the risk; and Senators Leno and Benoit shepherding it through the legislature. Ten years later it is still paying public safety and economic dividends.”*

~ Chief Jerry Powers

State funding for California’s probation system has historically been limited and unstable. In 2009, when SB 678 was signed into law, probation departments received only about one-quarter of their funds from the state, with much of the state funding targeted at juveniles (LAO 2009). Prior to the passage of SB 678, probation departments received about two-thirds of their funding from county budgets and made up the difference with grants from the federal government or other funders.

The design of SB 678 – an incentive-based funding program for probation – was not entirely new to California. The state had first experimented with incentive-based funding through the Probation Subsidy Act

of 1965. This legislation provided county probation departments with \$4,000 for each offender supervised in the community rather than sent to state prison. The design relied on historical data to set a baseline relative to which the state estimated county improvements over time. The state determined this legislation effectively reduced the prison population by about 45,000 inmates. In 1978, the legislature ended this subsidy program and state support for probation ultimately shifted to a patch-work system of short-term grants. While short-lived, the Probation Subsidy Act would later serve as a precedent for and inform the design of SB 678.

In 2000, the state set up a Probation Services Task Force (PSTF), appointed by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)<sup>2</sup>, to examine the probation system and issue recommendations. The Task Force released a report in 2003 that found California was distinct from other states in the structure and funding of its probation system. Unlike California, the majority of states directly administered and funded their probation systems. Among those states with locally administered systems, all but one other state – Indiana – primarily funded probation with state dollars (PSTF 2003). In California, 50 percent of probation costs had been funded by the state in the 1970’s under the Probation Subsidy Act; by the 1990’s this share had declined to 10 percent (Congressional Research Bureau 1996). During this period, the felony probation population grew substantially.

Declines in funding for probation and increases in the probation population over time led to high ratios of probationers to sworn officers, increasing caseloads and leading a large share of cases to be “banked”.<sup>3</sup> While the American Parole and Probation Association recommended probationer-to-officer ratios of 20:1 for high-risk or specialized caseloads and 50:1 for medium-risk probationers, actual caseloads in California were at more than double the recommended levels.<sup>4</sup> The Task Force report recommended the state address this challenge by increasing and stabilizing probation funding. In addition, they recommended improved collaboration among county level agencies and increased use of evidence-based practices. The report emphasized

the importance of taking action due to growth in the size of the felony probation population, high caseloads, and limited capacity for rehabilitative interventions.

Four years later, the Little Hoover Commission (LHC) released a report that called on the state to address “California’s Correctional Crisis.” The report framed the rapid growth in the prison population, high levels of overcrowding, and high correctional costs as problems that could be addressed by better investing in community based supervision as an alternative to prison (LHC 2007). Illustrating this point, the report quoted Judge Rodger K. Warren’s written testimony to the commission, stating that “the principle reason...judges are sentencing too many non-violent offenders to prison is the absence of effective community corrections programs providing intermediate punishments and necessary and appropriate treatment and rehabilitative services.” The commission recommended the state adopt legislation similar to the Probation Subsidy Act to support and incentivize these investments at the local level.

During the decades leading up to the passage of SB 678, notions of the rehabilitative role of probation officers and efficacy of the probation system in improving reentry outcomes were evolving. An evidence-based practices literature emerged to inform decisions about ideal probation caseloads, risk-based supervision strategies, and needs-based programmatic interventions. This literature increasingly demonstrated that evidence-based community supervision had the potential to improve reentry outcomes and the cost-effectiveness of the criminal justice system as a whole through targeted interventions in the community that reduced the need for incarceration (Crime and Justice Institute 2009). However, funding for probation was so limited in California that most departments lacked the capacity to reduce case-loads, develop new supervision strategies, or invest in and manage treatment interventions.

In 2009, the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) released a report that provided additional in-depth analysis of the state of California’s probation system. The LAO reported that 40 percent of prison admissions were

due to probation revocations, identifying probation failure as a significant driver of prison overcrowding (LAO 2009). The LAO found less than half of probationers successfully completed their terms, a level 10 percentage points below the average in other states. The report highlighted the potential to reduce prison revocations through evidence-based interventions at the level of community supervision and outlined the potential state savings that could be achieved through treating more lower-level offenders at the local level with programs and services, rather than utilizing the high-cost state prison and parole systems. At the time, probation departments were supervising individuals at an average cost of \$1,250 per year, compared with \$4,500 for parole and \$49,000 for prison (LAO 2009). The LAO recommended California create a state funding mechanism to better resource probation departments and create incentives for the use of evidence-based practices to reduce probation failures that resulted in prison time and parole supervision.

Prior to the release of the LAO report, CPOC had begun working collaboratively with the Legislature, Governor’s Office, CDCR, and the AOC to develop a policy design that would address concerns about the persistent underfunding of probation and create opportunities and incentives for probation departments to transform to a culture of evidence-based practice. Those working to design the innovative new program that would become SB 678 drew on emerging models in other states – particularly a new incentive-based funding model proving successful in Arizona – along with the state’s own experience under the Probation Subsidy Act. The recent success of efforts to reform and realign the juvenile justice system, as well as the innovative efforts of some counties to move toward evidence-based practice in adult probation, paved the way for the development of groundbreaking policy change on the adult side.

From the state perspective, SB 678 represented an opportunity to reduce the prison population and correctional costs, while addressing a probation funding deficiency and leveraging improvements in community

supervision to increase the cost-effectiveness of the criminal justice system as a whole. The legislation was originally sponsored by Mark Leno, Democrat and then head of the Senate Public Safety Committee. It became a bipartisan bill when Republican Senator John Benoit added his co-sponsorship. The bill garnered widespread and seldom paralleled political support. Ultimately, SB 678 was passed by both houses without a single “no” vote. It was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in October 2009. The passage of SB 678 placed California among a small group of states at the forefront of a movement to increase evidence-based practice through incentive-based funding and to reinvest gains into continued improvement.<sup>5</sup>

### California Community Corrections Performance Incentives Act (SB 678)

*“Evidence-based practices were really beginning to take root and probation departments were demonstrating the potential to achieve better reentry outcomes. SB 678 was written in a way that still held individuals accountable and protected the public, but also recognized the real possibility for rehabilitation. It was really good public policy.”*

~ Shelley Curran

SB 678 increased and stabilized resources for probation departments, allowing them to expand staff positions, reduce caseloads, and provide improved supervision. Importantly, the legislation also incentivized counties to make greater investments in evidence-based interventions to reduce the likelihood of reoffending, rather than revoking individuals to state prison for technical violations. These mechanisms were mutually reinforcing. Without adequate and stable resources, few probation departments were in a position to make investments in improving supervision due to high caseloads and limited capacity for training. SB 678 provided the required resources to make those investments feasible, but also provided guidance and incentives to transition to evidence-based practice.

SB 678 called on county probation departments to implement a comprehensive set of evidence-based practices, which included: 1) expanding the use of risk and needs assessments; 2) utilizing intermediate and graduated sanctions; 3) providing intensive supervision for some offenders; 4) expanding targeted programmatic interventions; and 5) evaluating program fidelity and effectiveness. The legislation required probation departments to submit a set of performance measures to the AOC, including the percent of persons on felony probation who are being supervised in accordance with evidence-based programs, percent of state funds dedicated to programs that are evidence-based, and a descriptive list of all programs that are evidence-based. To monitor the adoption of evidence-based practices, the AOC - now the JCC - created the “Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices: Annual Assessment Survey,” which has been published annually since 2013.

The AOC was also responsible for receiving data from counties that would be used by the Department of Finance to determine total state savings and county funding allocations. The legislature initially allocated \$45 million in seed funding to be distributed to county probation departments over the first three years of the implementation of SB 678.<sup>6</sup> Following the initial seed funding, county probation departments would then receive funding based on their estimated contribution to state savings from reductions in revocations to prison. The funding formula was structured with tiered incentives. All counties were rewarded for reductions in prison revocations among the populations they supervised, but counties that achieved greater reductions in revocations were rewarded at a higher rate. The formula also included a high-performance bonus to reward counties with very low levels of revocations relative to statewide levels.

In its administrative role, the AOC was brought into a deeply collaborative relationship with CPOC and with probation departments across the state in efforts to produce guidance to inform implementation and continued efforts to monitor the outcomes of SB 678. The legislation also established new collaborative bodies at the county level - the Community Corrections

Partnerships (CCPs) – that were chaired by probation chiefs and brought together representatives from other criminal justice agencies, as well as public health, social services, and other stakeholder groups that serve the justice-involved population. These CCPs would ultimately serve as the collaborative infrastructure that would support the implementation of Public Safety Realignment two years later.

## Impacts of SB 678

*“SB678 completely transformed the adult probation division in Santa Barbara County. Our staff had no background in evidenced practices and our graduated response only meant increasing jail time until we sent you to prison. Although we had some collaborative courts that were engaged in treatment, the vast majority of probationers had no access to any meaningful treatment. The resources that 678 brought allowed us to offer so much more and launch our Probation Report and Resource Centers, as well as our first large scale outcome evaluations. The surveying of EBP practices that also came along with it gave us some meaningful goals to strive toward. The AOC’s work ensured there were clear EBP elements for us to achieve and we made steady improvements. We are an entirely different Department as a result. It also allowed us to hit the ground running when AB 109 came along.”*

~ Chief Tanya Heitman

In the two years following the implementation of SB 678, prison revocation rates declined and with that decline came reductions in the prison population and state spending. In accordance with the incentive-based funding formula, the state transferred a share of the state savings to county probation departments. Crime rates remained low following these reductions in prison incarceration levels, and the use of evidence-based practices – as captured through survey data – increased markedly within probation departments across the state. These initial impacts demonstrate quick progress

toward achieving the legislative goals of SB 678. However, the policy environment radically shifted with the passage of California’s Public Safety Realignment (Realignment) in 2011. Realignment restructured the correctional system and directly affected the key outcomes the state monitors to assess the success of SB 678. However, Realignment was also complimentary to SB 678 in its emphasis on reducing incarceration, implementing evidence-based practices, and working collaboratively as a justice system.

## Reductions in Prison Revocations, Prison Crowding, and State Spending

Reductions in prison revocations under SB 678 were measured against a baseline rate of 7.9 percent, which was calculated using revocation rates during the period just prior to the passage of SB 678 (2006-2008). The program showed substantial success in the first year, with counties achieving a 23 percent reduction in the statewide revocation rate, from a baseline rate of 7.9 percent to a 2010 rate of 6.1 percent (JCC 2019). Prison admissions fell by more than 6,000 and, as a result, the state saved an estimated \$179 million in correctional expenditures (PEW 2012; JCC 2019). According to the incentive-based funding formula established through SB 678, a portion of the state savings—\$87.5 million dollars—was directed to county probation departments. In 2011, the revocation rate declined further to 5.5 percent, for an overall decline of more than 30 percent over the first two years of implementation. Over the full period of implementation, the state savings are estimated at over \$1 billion, and the county probation departments have received about \$838 million in funding (JCC 2019).

The interpretation of changes in revocation rates in later years is complicated by the passage and implementation of Realignment in 2011 and Proposition 47 (Prop 47) in 2014. Realignment limited the prison-eligible population, which led to structural decline in new sentences and revocations to prison. To account for this change, the state first expanded the definition of revocations to include revocations to prison or jail for FY14-15. Realignment also created two new subpopulations under probation supervision – the Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS) and 1170(h) Mandatory Supervision populations.

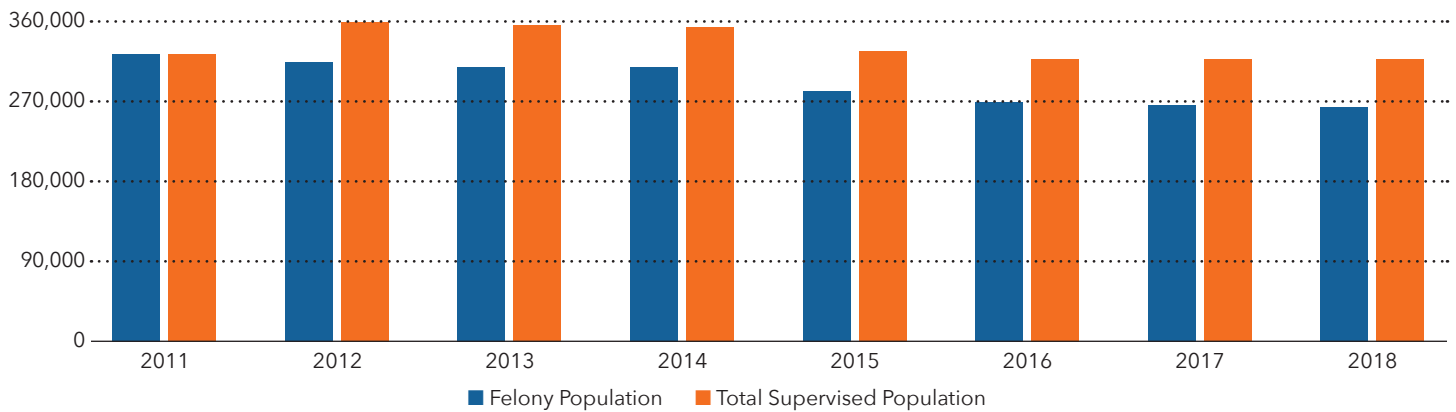


In 2015, the legislature expanded the SB 678 program to include outcomes for these two new populations. Probation performance would now be evaluated based on the outcomes of felony probation, PRCS, and Mandatory Supervision populations. It also refocused on returns to prison, either for a revocation or a new offense, as the key outcome indicator under SB 678.

For those supervised under adult felony probation and tracked consistently over time, the return to prison rate declined markedly after Realignment, from 5.5 percent

in 2011 to 2.6 percent in 2012 (JCC 2019). It remained low through this period, reaching a period low of 2.5 percent in 2015, following Prop 47. Since then, the return to prison rate ticked up to 3.1 percent in 2017 and 2018 (JCC 2019). It is difficult to draw strong conclusions about the impact of SB 678 in later years based on movement in this outcome measure due to structural changes in probationer eligibility for revocation to prison. In addition, changes to the size and – more importantly – the composition of the population supervised by probation could also affect returns to prison over time.

**Figure 1. Probation population size and composition shift through reform era**



Source: Judicial Council of California, 2019.

Note: These population counts include only individuals under supervision for felony offenses, excluding those serving misdemeanor probation terms.

Figure 1 shows a small decline in the size of the felony probation population during the early years of Realignment, but an overall increase in the supervised population due to the addition of individuals released on PRCS or Mandatory Supervision. This expansion in the SB 678 base population altered the composition of the population to include a group of relatively more serious offenders. In an analysis of risk level data provided by probation departments, the JCC found the share of the probation population classified as high risk increased from 26 percent in the year prior to realignment to 38 percent in the period following realignment (JCC 2019).

Proposition 47 (Prop 47) further complicates how we interpret the outcomes of individuals under probation supervision over the decade following the implemen-

tation of SB 678. This 2014 policy change limited the charge level to misdemeanor for a certain set of lower-level drug and property offenses for eligible offenders. As a result, new felony probation grants declined by about 25 percent following Prop 47 (JCC 2019). As shown in Figure 1, the felony probation population declined from 305,000 in 2014 to 265,000 in 2018, a decline of 40,000 individuals or 13 percent. Under Prop 47 the share of the supervised population categorized as high risk initially ticked up to 39 percent, but stabilized at 38 percent in 2018 (JCC 2019). Changes in risk level due to Realignment or Prop 47 could affect SB 678 outcomes to the extent that a more serious offender population is more likely to be returned to jail or prison (Nguyen, Grattet, and Bird 2017).

## Public Safety Outcomes

SB 678 is the first of a series of major criminal justice reforms, including Realignment and Prop 47, implemented over the past decade in California. Given these overlapping and inter-related reforms, it is challenging to attribute changes in public safety outcomes to any one policy change. When we examine trends in property and violent crime rates, we see some fluctuation over the period. Taken as a whole, property crime rates declined substantially between 2008 – the year prior to the passage of SB 678 – and 2018, and violent crime rates are at a level similar to (but slightly lower) than they were a decade prior (California Department of Justice 2019). These findings indicate that public safety levels were maintained through a period characterized by dramatic declines in incarceration levels due to this series of reform efforts.

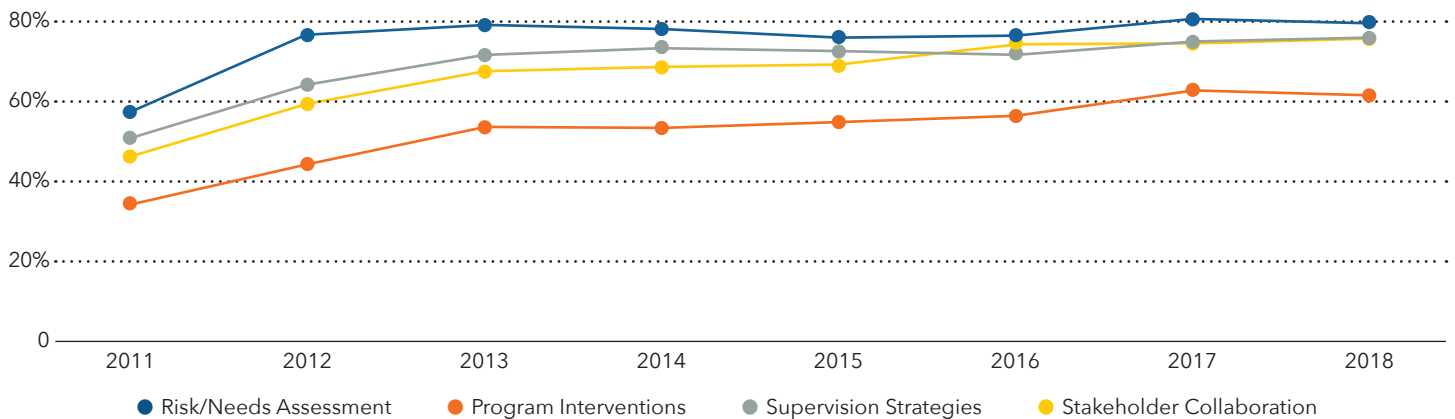
## Improvements in the Use of Evidence-Based Practices

A core goal of SB 678 is to provide resources and incentives for county probation departments to increase their use of evidence-based interventions to improve outcomes. The expansion in the use of evidence-based practices under SB 678 is tracked by the JCC and reported in an annual survey entitled “Implementation of

Evidence-Based Practices: Annual Assessment Survey.” The Annual Assessment Survey has documented increasing levels of implementation of evidence-based practices by probation departments throughout the state over the past decade. The most dramatic increase occurred in the early years following the passage of SB 678, with smaller gains occurring in later years as rates of adoption stabilized at fairly high levels.

Figure 2 provides a summary of the trends for four categories of evidence-based practice from 2011 to 2018. The use of validated risk and needs assessment increased from 57 percent of departments in 2011 – two years after the passage of SB 678 and the first year for which survey data was collected – to 79 percent in 2013, after which it remained relatively stable through 2018. The use of risk assessment to target supervision strategies and needs assessment to target services is fundamental to an evidence-based approach. These data suggest gains were rapid during the early years of SB 678 and led roughly 80 percent of counties to adopt these practices. However, in later years we do not see much gain, suggesting those counties that have not adopted these practices may face county-specific barriers.

Figure 2. Probation departments increase use of evidence-based practices following SB 678



Source: Judicial Council of California, Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices: Annual Assessment Survey, 2011-2018.

We see similar patterns in the adoption of evidence-based supervision strategies and programmatic interventions. In 2011, only half of counties reported the use of evidence-based supervision strategies, such as graduated sanctioning. Two years later, this share had increased markedly to 71 percent. In the years following, the share increased slowly to reach three-quarters of counties in 2018. Similarly, the use of evidence-based program interventions started quite low at about one-third of counties in 2011, increased dramatically to 53 percent of counties in 2013, and then increased more slowly to reach 61 percent of counties in 2018. Collaboration across stakeholders follows a similar trend. The initial gains in the uptake of these practices indicate a rapid transformation of the culture of probation departments in response to SB 678. However, slow increase since 2014 may indicate that the agencies that have not implemented evidence-based practices need additional support to fall in line with what is now a strong statewide commitment.

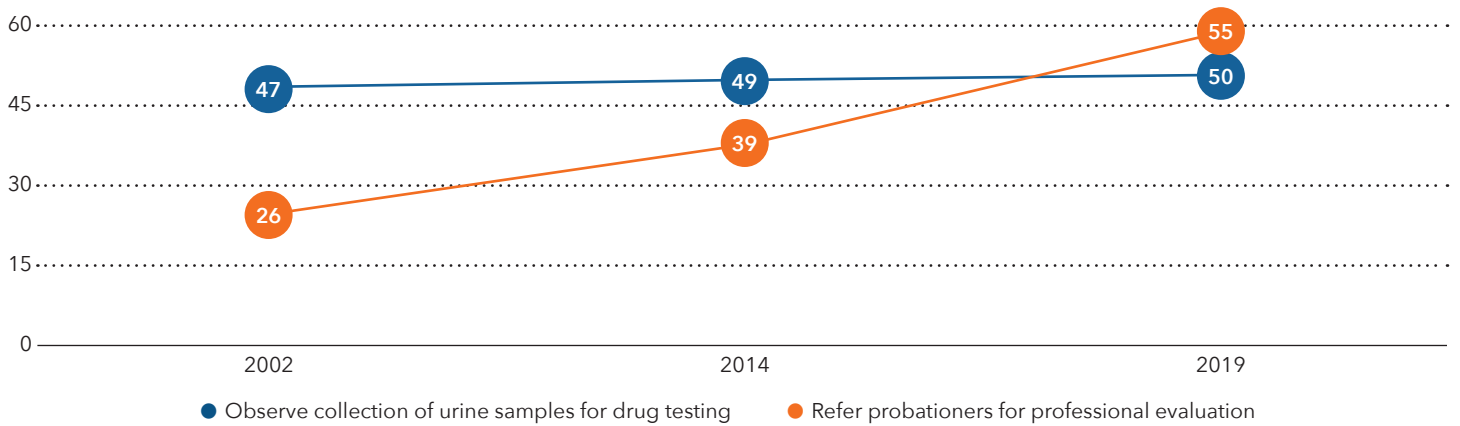
To complement the Judicial Council's agency-level Annual Assessment Survey, we conducted a statewide survey of adult probation officers and supervisors in November and December 2019 in partnership with CPOC, referred to as the Chief Probation Officers of California Probation Practices Survey. Detailed findings are provided in the Appendix. Here we summarize the highlights. A portion of the questions asked in CPOC Probation Practices Survey are modeled after previous statewide surveys conducted by the BSCC in 2002 and 2014 and allow us to assess changes in the frequency of enforcement and social work tasks among both probation supervisors and officers.

We find that, relative to the earlier surveys, in 2019 probation staff continued to increase their reported frequency of social work tasks, while largely sustaining

the frequency of enforcement aspects of the job. Questions about the social work tasks asked probation officers how frequently they refer probationers for professional evaluation; identify treatment, education, or other programs; contact treatment programs; refer probationer's family members to services; and follow-up to verify that the treatment was received. Questions about enforcement asked probation officers how often they determine whether to recommend revocation or termination of supervision; observe collection of urine samples for drug testing; execute warrants; conduct drug tests on seized items; and arrest probationers who violate the law or conditions of supervision. We find that four of the five social work tasks have increased in reported frequency from 2002 to 2019. The enforcement task frequencies have varied overtime, however, there has been no particular upward or downward trend.

Figure 3 displays the trends in a couple of the survey items that are indicative of the overall patterns with respect to social work and enforcement tasks. The figure reports probation officers responses to questions about frequency with which they perform the enforcement task of "observe collection of urine samples for drug testing" in contrast to the social work task of "referring probationers for professional evaluation." The enforcement task stays at roughly the same level<sup>7</sup> while the reported frequency of the representative social work task increases substantially and continuously from 26 percent in 2002 to 39 percent in 2014 to 55 percent in 2019. These findings replicate patterns reported in our previous work (Grattet, Nguyen, Bird, and Goss 2018), showing that probation work is continuing to change in ways that increase the importance and frequency of social work tasks while continuing to also prioritize enforcement. In effect, probation has rebalanced these functions in a manner that is consistent with a "hybrid" model of probation work.

Figure 3. Percent of respondents reporting tasks are completed more than once per week

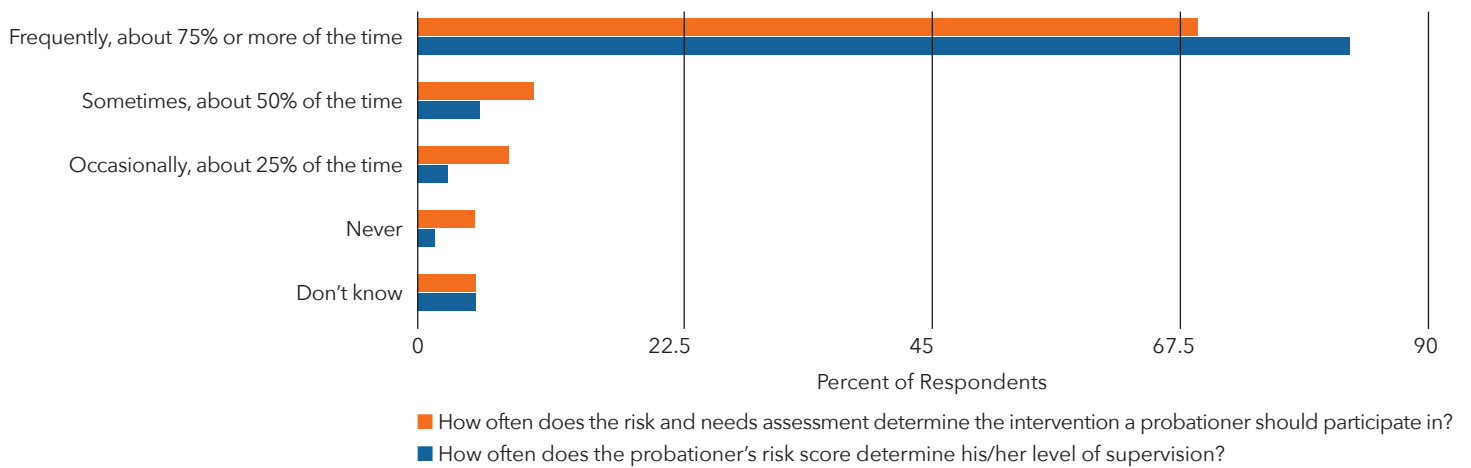


Source: 2002 and 2014 data are from the BSCC Survey (Grattet, Nguyen, Bird, and Goss 2018). 2019 data are from the CPOC Probation Practices Survey.

Moreover, both probation officers and supervisors also increased their performance of new features of probation work, including risk-based supervision, case planning, and data and outcomes tracking. The survey asked whether probation officers participated in an activity several times a week or more. Between 2014 and 2019, the percentage who said they “determine the frequency of contact needed during supervision utilizing risk assessment” increased from 40 percent to 48 percent, and the percentage who said they “assess, monitor, and update an individual’s progress with their case plan” increased from 36 percent to 44 percent. With respect to tasks related to data and outcomes, the percentage of respondents who said they “gather data for statistical reports” increased from 20 percent to 24 percent and the percentage who said they “work with data to measure program outcomes” increased from 6 percent to 16 percent. These findings show progress in each of the areas of risk-based supervision, case planning, and data and outcome tracking. However, levels of participation in these tasks are fairly low and suggest there may be room for further growth. This is particularly true with respect to data and outcomes tracking.

*The CPOC Probation Practices Survey* also probed respondents experience with training in evidence-based practices, whether their agencies have policies regarding evidence-based practices, how frequently evidence-based practices are used, and how supportive probation staff are of principles of evidence-based practice. These questions were first asked in the 2019 survey and do not permit an analysis of trends like above. The findings showed that a high percentage of probation staff report having been trained in core evidence-based practices, including risk and needs assessment (68%), cognitive behavioral treatment (99%), and motivational interviewing (96%). Figure 4 provides more details related to the use of risk and needs assessment. We find 83 percent of respondents report that they use the probationer’s risk score “about 75 percent of the time or more” to determine the probationer’s level of supervision. Sixty-nine percent of respondents report that they use the risk and needs assessment information “about 75 percent of the time or more” to determine which community-based intervention a probationer should participate in. In contrast, a very small share report never using needs or risk assessments to determine supervision level or program interventions.

**Figure 4. Frequency of the use of risk and needs assessments**

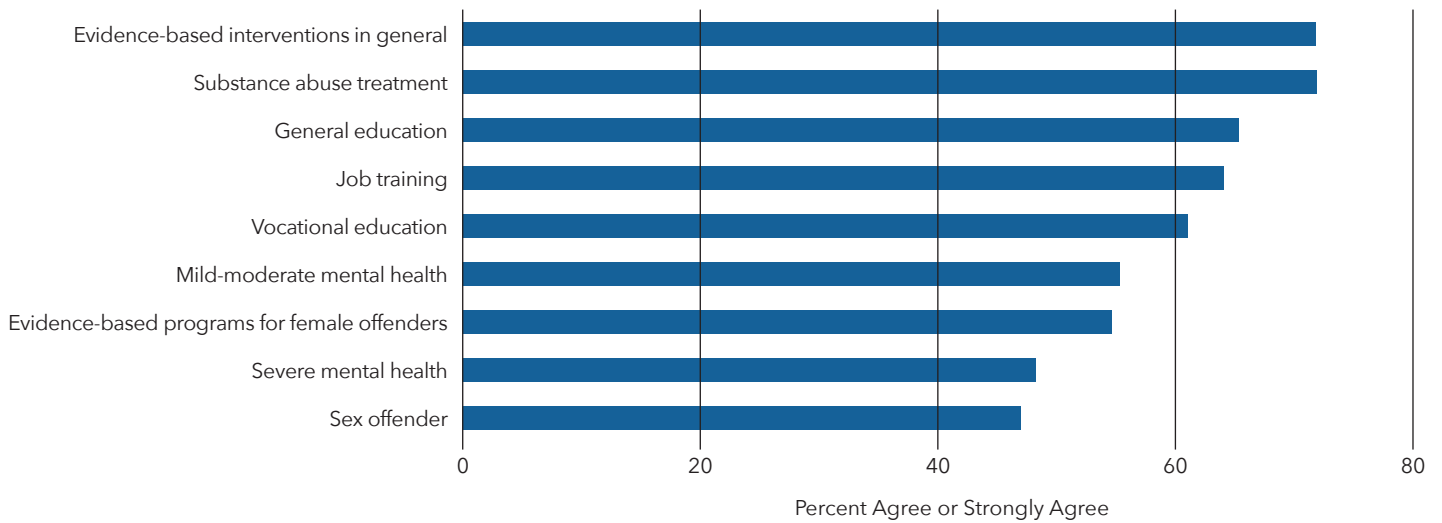


Source: CPOC Probation Practices Survey, 2019.

In terms of evidence-based policies, the vast majority of respondents report that their agencies have adopted policies and procedures associated with evidence-based practices. Eighty-three percent report that their department has a policy or procedure in place that requires the development of a case plan; 69 percent of respondents say that their department has established a graduated sanctions matrix; and 77 percent of respondents report that their department has developed guidelines for rewarding probationers (e.g. reduced supervision, vouchers, gift certificates, special recognition).

Questions probing respondents' awareness of and support for evidence-based practice show that most probation staff are familiar with and have embraced the core principles. In response to the statement "I am familiar with the concepts of Evidence-Based Practices," 92 percent of respondents indicated that they agree or strongly agree. With respect to risk and needs assessment, three-quarters of respondents agree or strongly agree that "using risk/needs assessment scores to inform decision-making increases the odds of reducing recidivism" and more than four-fifths expressed agreement or strong agreement with the statement that "probation officers should focus on criminogenic needs to reduce offender risk of recidivism." In addition, three-quarters agree or strongly agree that "cognitive behavioral therapies support reduced recidivism" and that "graduated sanctions applied with 'swiftness and certainty' can deter re-offending." These findings demonstrate strong support for the use of core evidence-based practices among survey respondents.

Figure 5. Is the available program capacity sufficient?



Source: CPOC Probation Practices Survey, 2019.

The CPOC Probation Practices Survey also inquired about the adequacy of service capacity, opportunities to train with county behavior health specialists, and the use of data and outcome tracking. Respondents were asked whether the capacity in their county is adequate for a set of common interventions. Figure 5 shows that a majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that evidence-based interventions in general, substance abuse treatment, general education, job training, vocational education, mild to moderate mental health

treatment, and evidence based programs for female offenders are adequate. However, a majority of respondents reported that the current capacity for sex offenders and people with severe mentally illness is not adequate. Less than half the respondents (46%) report that their department cross-trains with county behavioral health to increase understanding of criminogenic needs, treatment needs for probationers with serious mental health disorders, and effective mental health and substance use treatments for the probation population.

## Conclusions

SB 678 serves as a model for the kind of change that can be achieved through effective state-local collaboration in defining shared goals and aligning incentives to those goals. The legislation addressed persistent shortfalls in funding, providing resources for probation departments to invest in evidence-based supervision strategies and treatment interventions. Probation departments rose to this opportunity to innovate, transform the culture toward evidence-based practice, and improve outcomes for individuals under supervision. The policy change reduced revocations to prison, reduced correctional costs, and allowed for the reinvestment of those state savings.

We find evidence of widespread adoption of evidence-based practices under SB 678. However, it is also important to acknowledge that even in instances where support for and use of evidence-based practices is strong, there remain some respondents who have not been trained in, do not rely upon, or do not embrace evidence-based practice. Our research does not parse the reasons for these gaps. Instead, we think it will be critical to consider technical assistance, training, or other resources that might be needed to support or incentivize counties in overcoming remaining barriers.

Our findings also highlight opportunities for growth in two specific areas. First, while we find strong programmatic capacity for evidence-based interventions in general, we also find programmatic resources appear limited for the severely mentally ill and sex offender populations. Less than 50 percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed their county had sufficient program capacity in these areas. Program capacity for less severe mental health challenges was also rated fairly low, with less than 60 percent of respondents stating they agree or strongly agree capacity is sufficient.

Second, we find opportunities for growth in data collection and performance assessment via measurement of recidivism outcomes, both of which require additional investment in training, staff technical capability, and information technology – which for many agencies entails substantial costs. Survey data reflect limited collection and use of data to monitor and evaluate outcomes on-the-ground. Less than half of respondents report that they collect performance data on programs (45%), collect and discuss outcome data (36%), or that their department provides them with recidivism statistics (45%). These findings are not surprising, as data collection, outcome monitoring, and evaluation often come at a later stage once a county has first adopted practices based on available evidence within the broader literature (National Center for State Courts 2018). However, reaching this stage represents the full implementation of a strategic framework for evidence-based practice, allowing probation departments to determine the extent to which interventions are effective for their populations, empowering practitioners to innovate and explore changes to program models or target populations to achieve better outcomes over time.

## Appendix A. Informational Interviews

Our research process included informational interviews with individuals involved with the passage, implementation, and evaluation of SB 678. These interviews were conducted in January and February of 2020. The list of individuals we spoke with is included below. We appreciate the time participants took to speak with us and the valuable insights they shared. Any errors in this report should be attributed to the authors.

**Alison Anderson**

*former Chief Counsel,  
Senate Public Safety Committee*

**Jerry Powers**

*former Chief of Probation,  
Los Angeles County and  
Stanislaus County*

**Shelley Curran**

*Director, Criminal Justice Services,  
Judicial Council of California*

**Bob Ochs**

*former Chief of Probation,  
Sonoma County and Mendocino County*

**Mary Butler**

*former Chief of Probation,  
Napa County*

**Stephanie James**

*Chief of Probation,  
San Joaquin County*

**Brian Brown**

*Legislative Analyst's Office*

**Philip Kader**

*former Chief of Probation,  
Contra Costa County*

**Tanya Heitman**

*Chief of Probation,  
Santa Barbara County*

**Isabelle Voit**

*former Chief of Probation, Solano County*

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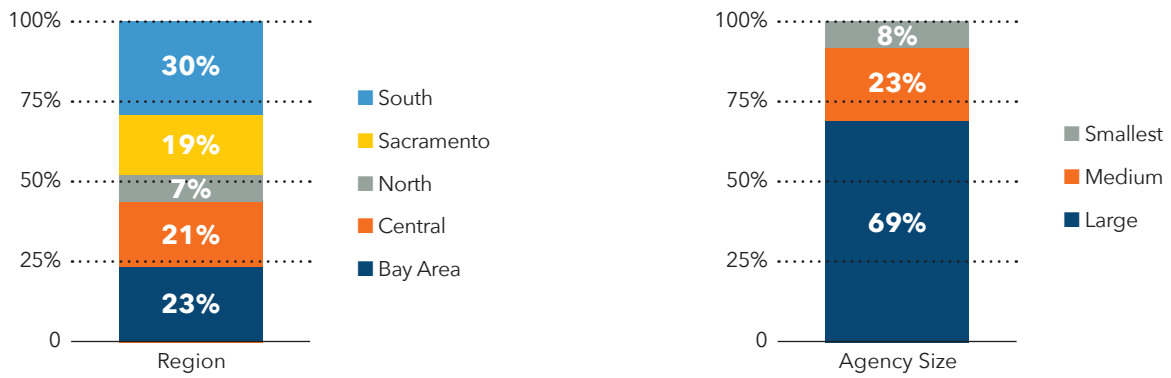
## Appendix B. CPOC Probation Practices Survey Methodology and Detailed Findings

After consultation with CPOC's Executive Director and the members of the Adult Services Committee we designed a survey to provide an up-to-date portrait of probation practices in the state of California. In November and December of 2019 we fielded an online survey to adult probation officers and supervisors in all 58 counties in California. The survey yielded 1,099 responses. All regions, counties, and agency sizes were represented, although not in equal proportions to their probation staff sizes. The respondents were diverse in terms of gender, race, and experience. We posed two kinds of questions. The first group of questions were drawn directly from previous Board of State and

Community Corrections Job Analysis surveys undertaken in 2002 and 2014. Linking questions to these surveys allows us to track changes in probation task importance, as rated by supervisors, and task frequency, as rated by both supervisors and front-line probation officers. The second set of questions are unique to this survey and focus on various aspects of evidence based practices (EBP), which have been central to SB 678 and subsequent reforms, as well as the evolving national professional discussions of probation practice. These latter questions focus on training, use, departmental policies, availability of EBP, and the degree to which probation staff embrace EBP as a central part of their work.



Figure B1. Survey respondents represented all regions and agency sizes.<sup>8</sup>



Source: CPOC Probation Practices Survey, 2019.

### Research Literature: Hybrid Supervision

Probation work has been understood by researchers to include enforcement and social work aspects (Whetzel et al. 2011). The former role emphasizes rule enforcement, offender compliance, and the protection of public safety, whereas the latter emphasizes providing assistance to offenders receive treatment and rehabilitative services. Studies of probation work use terms like “surveillance” versus “treatment” (Clear & Latessa 1993) or “control” versus “care” (Skeem & Manchak 2008), but the meaning is essentially the same. Some studies have been concerned with the “role conflict” such divergent responsibilities would inevitably produce; however, later work has shown that such conflicts are not particularly pronounced, as probation officers manage to balance the different roles and expectations in practice (Clear & Latessa 1993), creating synthetic (Klockars 1972) or hybrid (Skeem & Manchak 2008) approaches. Miller’s (2015)

recent study of federal probation officers shows that the hybrid model in which both enforcement and social work parts of the job exist side-by-side is now dominant, at least at the federal level. Work by Skeem and Manchak (2008) reviews support for the hybrid model and finds it is a more effective supervision practice than enforcement or social work approaches alone. Our own work (Grattet, Nguyen, Bird, & Goss 2018) documented a growth in the importance and frequency of social work tasks during the recent period of correctional reform in California, but also some discordance between probation officers and supervisors in the importance and frequency of enforcement tasks. Moreover, we showed how California’s hybrid form of supervision has expanded beyond social work and enforcement tasks to include risk-based supervision practices, case management, data collection, and research (Grattet, Nguyen, Bird, & Goss 2018).

## Summary of Findings

Comparison with previous surveys shows that probation staff are continuing to increase the social work aspects of probation work while sustaining the place of enforcement aspects of the job. Probation staff also increased their performance of new features of probation work, including risk-based supervision, data and outcome tracking, and case planning. A high percentage of probation staff report having been trained in EBP (including risk/needs assessment, cognitive behavioral treatment, and motivational interviewing), using risk/needs assessment and case planning as well as having agency policies that support EBP. Questions probing respondents support for EBP show that most probation staff have embraced the core principles of EBP. While most respondents report that services are sufficiently available, there are sizeable segments that report gaps in service capacity. There are also particular services that a majority report are not sufficiently available, specifically services for severely mentally ill probationers and sex offenders. Overall, these findings suggest that changes

in probation work are in sync with the motivations of reformers to move probation toward an even greater emphasis on rehabilitation and evidence-based practices. However, it is important to acknowledge that even in instances where support for and use of EBP is strong, there remain some respondents who have not been trained, do not rely upon, or do not embrace EBP. Beyond continued progress on implementation of EBP, two areas stand out for further consideration. The aspect of EBP that is perhaps least well-implemented is data collection and performance assessment via measurement of recidivism outcomes, both of which require additional investment in training, staff technical capability, and information technology – which for many agencies entail substantial costs. A second area for improvement is interagency training and collaboration within county behavioral health organizations. A minority of respondents reported interagency training with behavioral health, but what was perhaps more surprising, nearly one quarter of respondents reported that they did not know whether such collaborative exercises occur.

## Changes from 2002, 2014, to 2019

*Survey respondents (and presumably the corps of probation officers and supervisors the respondents they reflect) are diverse and experienced.*

Probation supervisors were 36% women in the 2002 sample, 30% women in 2014 sample, 41% women in 2019 sample. Probation officers were 53% women in the 2002 sample, 50% women in the 2014 sample, and 54% women of the 2019 sample. Whites were 66% of supervisors in the 2002 sample, 55% of the 2014 sample, and 47% of the 2019 sample. Of the probation officers, 52% were white in 2002, 43% in 2014, and 35%

in 2019. Latinx supervisors and probation officers gained the most. Latinx comprised 13% of supervisors and 21% of probation officers sampled in 2002, 22% of supervisors and 28% of probation officers in the 2014 sample, and 27% of supervisors and 37% of probation officers in the 2019 sample. A majority of respondents in each sample have five or more years of experience. 98% of the supervisors sampled in 2002 had five or more years of experience. That percentage dropped in 2014 survey to 59%, but then returned to 97% in the 2019 sample.<sup>9</sup> 59% of the probation officers sampled in 2002 had five or more years of service. That percentage increased to 82% in the 2014 sample, but declined to 70% in the 2019 sample.

**Table B1.** Percent of Probation Supervisors by responses to various questions about the importance of supervision tasks.

Percent of supervisors who said the following tasks are "very important" or higher.	2002	2014	2019
<b>ENFORCEMENT</b>			
Determine whether to recommend revocation, modification, or termination of probation	67%	71%	75%
Observe collection of urine samples for drug testing; submit samples while maintaining chain of evidence	66%	62%	41%
Execute probationer warrants	31%	57%	38%
Conduct presumptive drug tests on seized items suspected to be controlled substances	22%	48%	15%
Arrest probationers who violate the law or conditions of probation	58%	53%	56%
<b>SOCIAL WORK</b>			
Refer probationer for professional evaluation (e.g., medical, psychological, alcohol, or drug evaluation)	49%	65%	75%
Identify treatment, education, employment or other program (e.g., alcohol, drug.)	59%	63%	74%
Contact treatment, educational, training, or employment program, or other community agency	35%	54%	56%
Refer members of the probationer's family, victim(s) or others to counseling and/or other appropriate program or agency	30%	47%	24%
Follow up to verify that probationer or other individual received service and to evaluate success of referral	47%	59%	59%

*Changes in probation supervisors' ratings of the importance of different enforcement tasks have been mixed over time, with some tasks increasing in importance while others decreasing.*

As reported in Table B1, one noteworthy pattern is the increasing importance of sanctioning (e.g., as measured via a question asking supervisors to rate the importance of "determining when to revoke, modify, or terminate probation supervision"). From 67% of probation supervisors saying the task was "very important or higher" in 2002 to 71% in 2014 and 75% in 2019. Supervisors attitudes toward the importance of arresting probationers who violate conditions of probation has been fairly stable, with 58% saying the task was "very important or higher" in 2002 to 53% in 2014 and 56% in 2019. Supervisors' assessment of the importance of drug testing has decreased slightly from 66% saying the task was "very important or higher" to 62% in 2014 and 61% in 2019.

*Changes in probation supervisors' ratings of the importance different social work tasks have been more consistently upward.*

When asked about referring probationers for professional evaluation; identifying treatment, education, or other programs; and contacting treatment programs, a greater percentage of supervisors rated these tasks "very important or higher" in each of the three surveys. In 2002, 49% of supervisors' rated referring probationers for professional evaluation as "very important or higher," in 2014 it was 65% and in 2019 it was 75%. Supervisors' rating of the importance of identifying treatment programs as "very important or higher" was 59% in 2002, 63% in 2014, and 74% in 2019. Their rating of the importance of contacting treatment other rehabilitative programs as "very important or higher" was 35% in 2002, 54% in 2014, and 56% in 2019. Finally, supervisors' rating as "very important or higher" of following up to verify that the probationer received the service was 47% in 2002,

and 59% in both 2014 and 2019. Only one measure of social work tasks was rated less important in 2019 than in the other years – referring probationer's family members or others to counseling or other services.

*Changes in probation officers reported task frequency of different enforcement tasks have varied somewhat over time with no particular trend.*

As reported in Table B2, in 2019, 48% of probation officers reported that they "Determine whether to recommend revocation, modification, or termination of probation" once a week or more, compared with 32% in 2014 and 51% in 2002. The only measure that showed a trend was the question about the frequency of executing probation warrants. In 2002, 6% of probation officers reported that they execute warrants once a week or more. By 2014, the percentage was 10% and by 2019 it was 18%.

*Changes in probation officers reported task frequency of different social work tasks have increased substantially over time for four of five measures.*

When asked how often they refer probationers for professional evaluation, 26% of probation officers in 2002 responded "once a week or more"; by 2014 the percentage rose to 39%, and in 2019 it was 55% – more than doubling the earliest percentage. Moreover, 63% of probation officers reported that they identified treatment and rehabilitation programs once a week or more in 2019, compared with 44% in 2002 and 36% in 2014. Treatment, educational, or employment programs were contacted more than once a week by 63% of probation officers in 2019, compared with 26% in 2002 and 28% in 2014. 58% of probation officers reported following up to determine that the probationer received services once a week or more in 2019, compared with 35% in 2002 and 34% in 2014. Only one measure, "referring members of the probationer's family or others to services" remained unchanged.

**Table B2.** Percent of Probation Officers by response to various task frequency questions.

Percent of respondents who reported that they perform a given task "about once a week or more"	2002	2014	2019
<b>ENFORCEMENT</b>			
Determine whether to recommend revocation, modification, or termination of probation	51%	32%	48%
Observe collection of urine samples for drug testing; submit samples while maintaining chain of evidence	47%	49%	50%
Execute probationer warrants	6%	10%	18%
Conduct presumptive drug tests on seized items suspected to be controlled substances	7%	21%	6%
Arrest probationers who violate the law or conditions of probation	12%	9%	17%
<b>SOCIAL WORK</b>			
Refer probationer for professional evaluation (e.g., medical, psychological, alcohol, or drug evaluation)	26%	39%	55%
Identify treatment, education, employment or other program (e.g., alcohol, drug.)	44%	36%	63%
Contact treatment, educational, training, or employment program, or other community agency	26%	28%	63%
Refer members of the probationer's family, victim(s) or others to counseling and/or other appropriate program or agency	19%	15%	17%
Follow up to verify that probationer or other individual received service and to evaluate success of referral	35%	34%	58%

*Some questions were asked for the first time in 2014. These questions related to some "new" aspects of probation work, focusing on aspects of case planning, risk-based supervision, and use of data on outcomes of probation supervision. Respondents (both supervisors and incumbents) report doing more of these activities in 2019 than in 2014.*

As reported in Table B3, between 2014 and 2019 the percentage of respondents who said the probation officers "assess, monitor, and update individual's progress with their case plan" several times a week or more" increased from 36% to 44%; the percentage of respondents that said that probation officers "gather information, prepare, develop and review individualized case plans" several

times a week or more increased from 36 to 42%. The percentage of respondents that said that probation officers "monitor individuals at high risk (e.g, mental health, substance abuse issues) and refer as necessary" several times a week or more increased from 35 to 57%; the percentage that said they "determine the frequency of contact needed during supervision utilizing risk assessment" increased from 40 to 48%. With respect to tasks related to data and outcomes, the percentage of respondents that said they "gather data for statistical reports" several times a week or more increased from 20 to 24% and the percentage that said they "work with data to measure program outcomes" several times a week or more increased from 6 to 16%.

**Table B3.** Responses to case plan, risk assessment, and research and data questions.

Percent of respondents who reported that they perform a given task "several times a week or more"	2014	2019
Assess, monitor and update individual's progress with case plan.	36%	44%
Gather information, prepare, develop and review individualized case plan.	36%	42%
Monitor individuals at high risk (e.g., mental health issues, substance abuse) and refer as necessary.	35%	57%
Determine the frequency of contact needed during supervision utilizing risk assessment.	40%	48%
Gather data for statistical reports.	20%	24%
Work with data to measure program outcomes.	6%	16%

### EBP Training, Policies, Use and Attitudes

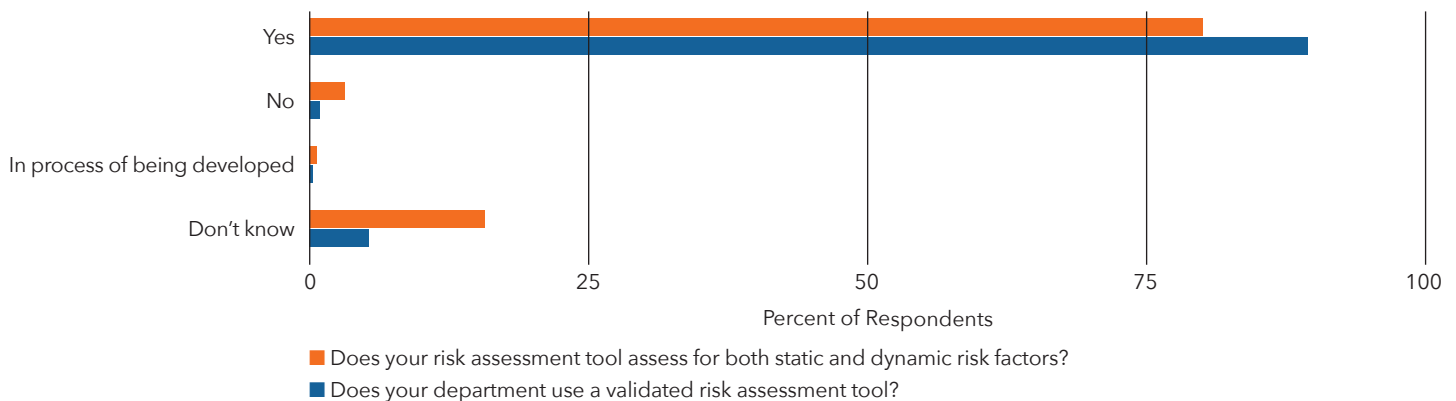
A majority of respondents report that they have been trained in Risk and Needs Assessment, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Motivational Interviewing.

68% received training (including "booster" sessions) on Risk and Needs Assessment with the previous three years. 96% reported that they received training on Motivational Interviewing or other constructive communication techniques. 66% reported that they have been trained in cognitive behavioral therapy techniques.

A minority of respondents report cross-training with other county behavioral health agencies.

46% of respondents said that their department cross-trains with county behavioral health to increase understanding of criminogenic needs, treatment needs for probationers with serious mental health disorders, and effective mental health and substance use treatments for the probation population. However, 22% of respondents acknowledged that they didn't know whether their agency cross-trains with other county agencies.

**Figure B2.** Reported use of risk assessment.



*A large majority of respondents report that they frequently use a Risk and Needs Assessment tool to determine a probationer's supervision level and to determine which community-based program a probationer should receive.*

As Figure B2 shows, 93% of respondents reported that their agency uses a validated risk assessment tool (5% reported that they "Don't know") and 80% of respondents reported that the risk assessment assesses for both static and dynamic risk factors (14% said they "Don't know"). As we discussed in the main body of our report, 83% of respondents report that they use the probationer's risk score "about 75% of the time or more" to determine the probationer's level of supervision. 69% of respondents report that they use the risk and needs assessment information "about 75% of the time or more" to determine which community-based intervention a probationer should participate in.

*Although a majority of respondents agree that the capacity of most types of services available in their county are sufficient, sizeable percentages of respondents disagree about whether there is sufficient capacity.*

For example, 70% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the capacity of evidence-based interventions in general are sufficient, but 11% disagree or strongly disagree that such capacity is sufficient. 55% agree or strongly agree that evidence-based programs for female offenders are sufficient, but 19% disagree or strongly disagree. 72% agree or strongly agree that substance abuse treatment programs are sufficient but 15% disagree or strongly disagree. 64% agree or strongly agree that job training programs are sufficient, but 14% disagree or strongly disagree. 66% agree or strongly agree that general education programs are sufficient, but 11% disagree or strongly disagree. 61% agree or strongly agree that vocational education programs are sufficient, 15% disagree or strongly disagree. 55% agree or strongly agree that services for probationers with mild

to moderate mental health issues are sufficient, but 22% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When presented with the statement "My department has developed a list of community-based interventions available for probationer referral and it is updated at least every 2 years" 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

*The largest concern about the adequacy of service capacity was expressed with respect to programs for sex offenders and probationers with severe mental health issues.*

Only 47% agree or strongly agree that programs for sex offenders are sufficient, 15% disagree or strongly disagree that such capacity is sufficient and 21% said they "don't know" if capacity is sufficient. Similarly, 48% of respondents agree or strongly agree that services for severely mentally ill probationers are sufficient, but 32% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

*A minority of respondents report that their agency uses data to assess quality of their programs.*

Only 45% collect performance data on programs and practices and 35% collect and discuss outcome data. 45% of respondents reported that their department provides them with recidivism outcomes.

*A majority of respondents report that their agencies have adopted policies and procedures associated with evidence-based practices.*

83% of respondents report that their department has a policy or procedures in place that require the development of a case plan. 69% of respondents report that their department has established graduated sanctions matrix that is department policy. 77% of respondents reported that their department has developed guidelines for rewarding probationers (e.g. reduced supervision, vouchers, gift certificates, special recognition).

Respondents express a high degree of agreement with Evidence-based Practices.

In response to the statement "I am familiar with the concepts of Evidence-Based Practices" 92% of respondents indicated that they agree or strongly agree. Table B4 reports respondent's attitudes about specific aspects of evidence-based practices. Some highlights include, 74% agree or strongly agree with the statement "Using risk/needs assessment scores to

inform decision-making increases the odds of reducing recidivism." 76% of respondents indicated that they agree or strongly agree with the statement "Cognitive behavioral therapies support reduced recidivism." 84% of respondents reported that agree or strongly agree with the statement "probation officers should focus on criminogenic needs to reduce offender risk of recidivism." 72% agree or strongly agree that "graduated sanctions applied with "swiftness and certainty" can deter re-offending."

**Table B4.** Respondents have generally favorable views of evidence-based practices.

Evidence-based practice	Percent agree or strongly agree
Using risk/needs assessment scores to inform decision-making increases the odds of reducing recidivism.	74%
Using a risk and needs assessment tool is more accurate than personal judgement to determine a probationer's risk of reoffending.	61%
Risk and needs assessment tools should be combined with professional judgment to most accurately predict behavior.	85%
Cognitive behavioral therapies support reduced recidivism.	76%
Probation officers should focus on criminogenic needs to reduce offender risk of recidivism.	84%
Case planning helps focus supervision on important criminogenic needs, such as mental health and health, while giving priority to criminogenic need areas.	76%
Graduated sanctions applied with "swiftness and certainty" can deter re-offending.	72%



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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Pen. Code, § 1228(c)

<sup>2</sup> Note, the Administrative Office of the Courts transitioned to the Judicial Council of California after the passage and implementation of SB 678.

<sup>3</sup> “Banked” caseloads are caseloads that are minimally supervised.

<sup>4</sup> In 2009, the Legislative Analyst’s Office conducted a survey of probation departments and found about 30 percent of probationers were classified as high-risk and placed on specialized caseloads where the ratio of officer to probationer was about 70:1. About 50 percent of probationers were minimally-supervised on banked caseloads. The remaining 20 percent of probationers were on caseloads ranging from 100 to 200 probationers per officer.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to California and Arizona, seven other states – Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas – initiated similar reforms during this period (Vera 2012). Reform efforts like these would underlie a growing and broader “justice reinvestment” movement to improve evidence-based interventions and then channel correctional savings into continued improvement efforts.

<sup>6</sup> These funds were made available through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program funding, which was provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

<sup>7</sup> The Appendix shows that some differences in the measures of enforcement across time periods, with no consistent pattern of growth or decline.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to feedback from CPOC’s Executive Director and Adult Services Committee, Kevin O’Connell provided extensive feedback and assistance to the researchers on the design and execution of the survey. We greatly appreciate his contributions.

<sup>9</sup> If these samples are reflective of changes in the profession then there would likely have been a growth of corps of probation officers in the period immediately after 2011 Realignment, which would on balance reduce the experience level. By 2019, most of the people hired during the post-realignment period would now have more than five years experience in the job, which could be why the percentage increase to closer to the 2002 level.