Probation “Off Ramps”:

Contra Costa's Prevention and Diversion Strategy

Preventing Wardship By Any Means

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DISCUSSION AGENDA:

- Defining Prevention
- Our Four Prevention Pitstops
  - Before the Merge
  - The Connector
  - The Most Efficient Route
  - The Last Stop
- Q & A

Defining Prevention:

Prevention is defined as a two-tiered approach to address individual, family, and environmental factors. **Diversion** is a third-tier approach to minimizing harm.

Primary

Focuses on long term healthy development by fostering protective measures **before risky behavior occurs.**

Secondary

Focuses on identifying, addressing and redirecting risky behaviors **before law violations occur.**

Tertiary *or diversion*

Focuses on interrupting the progression of delinquency **after law violations occur.**

Our Prevention Pitstops:

- Before the Merge: Upstream Efforts
- The Connector: Comprehensive Prevention Plan
- The Most Efficient Route: Internal Decision Making
- The Last Stop: Diversion

Before the Merge: Upstream Efforts

THE NEW CHAPTER FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

The focus and values of the juvenile justice system in Contra Costa County has shifted.

The **focus** of our juvenile justice system has shifted to a **community-based**, **equitable**, and **rehabilitative** approach.

This evolution is driven by significant **structural changes and major reinvestments** in youth programs.

Probation's guiding principle has evolved to **equity**, creating a foundational shift in **values**.

This change emphasizes **individualized support and resources** to ensure every youth has a genuine opportunity for success.

A new ecosystem of support aims to **maximize the potential for prevention**, intervention and rehabilitation at the earliest possible point.

Before the Merge: Upstream Efforts

Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Prevention Services Probation Funded in FY 25-26:

$3.5 Million

$2.5m funded by JJCPA
35% of JJCPA budget

A Step Forward	Psychotherapy
Antioch Community Foundation	Youth of Promise Fund
Antioch Unified School District	Restorative Justice Program (funded by CCC MX Funds)
Bay Area Community Resources	Juvenile Justice Prevention
Bay Area Legal Aid	Free Civil Legal Services
CCC Health Services	Functional Family Therapy
CCC Health, Housing and Homelessness	Housing for Justice Involved Youth
CCC Office of Education	Educational/Vocational Case Management
CCC Public/Alternate Defender's Office	Youth Early Intervention Program
Fresh Lifelines for Youth	Law and Leadership Program
Independent Counsel	Youth Early Intervention Program
Richmond Police Activities League	Juvenile Justice Prevention
Seneca	Wraparound Services/Family Finding
STAND	Youth Education Support Services
Talkspace	Virtual Mental Health Services

Before the Merge: Upstream Efforts

PREVENTION SPOTLIGHT: Youth of Promise Fund Mini-Grants

- The Probation Department partners with the Antioch Community Foundation, a local regional community foundation, to create the **Youth of Promise Fund**, which provides micro-grants to nonprofit organizations serving youth who are at risk of or involved in the justice system, in East and Central Contra Costa County.

- The YOP Fund supports and promotes strategies and best practices to effectively **prevent or reduce juvenile crime** while providing youth and their families with opportunities to achieve, grow, and thrive.

- The grants support programs focused on **enhancing and increasing support for primary, secondary and tertiary prevention** activities, through academic success, mentoring and tutoring, leadership development, civic engagement, social justice, youth employment, internships, resource security, and work-ready skills training.

- Today, 36 local nonprofits receive **mini-grants of up to $13,500**, for a total of $200,000 of JJCPA funding.

The Connector: Comprehensive Prevention Plan

Rewind: Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Part One:

- **2018:** FFPSA signed into federal law.
  - Shifted focus from foster care response to family prevention and support.
  - Required creation of a Comprehensive Prevention Plan for counties choosing to opt in.

- **2021:** California implemented FFPS with dedicated state funding through SB 153.
  - State Block Grant funds became available to counties for implementation in 2023.
  - Expanded Title IV-E prevention services to keep youth safely at home.
  - Supports transformation to a child and family well-being system.

- **As of 2026:** 47 California probation departments, including Contra Costa, have opted in.

The Connector: Comprehensive Prevention Plan

Contra Costa's CCP Overview:

- Five-year, cross-sector initiative to strengthen upstream supports for children, youth, and families
- Aligned with California's FFPSA; focuses on reducing child maltreatment, preventing entry into child welfare/probation, and expanding equitable, community-based pathways to family wellbeing
- Reviewed 22 needs assessments; identified Antioch (East County) as highest-need community
- Launched Antioch C.A.R.E.S. pilot program for comprehensive prevention services, using Motivational Interviewing (MI) as evidence-based practice
- Expanding resources and accessibility in East County

The Connector: Comprehensive Prevention Plan

CPP Team Structure

- Formed in Fall 2021
- Two teams:
  - **Small Team:** Analyst (CFS), Probation Manager (Juvenile Specialty Services), two consultants (former CFS staff)
  - **Large Team:** Members from Community-Based Organizations, schools, county agencies, and residents with lived experience

Team Functions

- Small team synthesizes state/federal guidelines, informs large team, seeks feedback/support for CPP actions
- Large team meets bi-monthly for prevention-focused presentations and to celebrate CPP/community accomplishments
- Annual countywide convening focused on prevention, with a day dedicated to Contra Costa efforts

The Connector: Comprehensive Prevention Plan

Probation's Role in the CPP:

- Advances FFPSA prevention framework by addressing early risk factors (school disengagement, bullying, unmet family needs)
- Strengthens partnerships with schools for early identification/intervention
- Develops voluntary Community Pathways for accessible, non-court-involved services
- Connects youth to countywide prevention resources and evidence-based practices
- Shifts system from reactive, court-based responses to early, community-driven prevention

The Connector: Comprehensive Prevention Plan

Teen Truancy Court

- Judge requested Probation's active participation to address uptick in youth absenteeism and underlying causes
- Common issues: School disengagement, bullying, unmet family needs, late-night cell phone use, anger management, lack of motivation
- Common Needs: Behavioral Health/therapy for anxiety, depression, self-image concerns; IEP assessments



Probation Community Associates (PCA) Role

- PCA: New, non-sworn position with LE supporting community engagement and truancy court
- PCA assigned to truancy court, gradually replacing DPO
- PCAs connect youth/families to resources, increased communication with families & collaborate with CBOs and families to address barriers



Upstream Engagement Goals

- Targeting top referring districts to engage in early intervention efforts
- Creating consistency in documents and process to address root causes and improve attendance before petitions are filed



The Most Efficient Route: Internal Decision Making

Per WIC 653.5(a)

- "Upon Probation's receipt of a police affidavit alleging a minor committed an offense described in W&I 602, the probation officer **shall immediately investigate and determine** whether proceedings in the juvenile court shall be commenced."

Per WIC 653.5(c)

- The probation officer <u>shall forward the following allegations to the DA within 48 hours:</u>
  - Felony WIC 707 (b)(2) (d) or (e)
  - Minor is under 14, but referred for *second* felony
  - Minor is 14 or older and referred for any felony
  - Sale or possession for sale of certain controlled substances
  - Certain substance, assault or weapons related offenses at a school
  - Knowingly & willfully participating in a criminal street gang
  - Offenses in which restitution exceeds $1000

The Most Efficient Route: Internal Decision Making

THE PREVIOUS APPROACH:

- Multiple DPOs were “investigation and determining” responses to out-of-custody referrals across the county
- The DA received all (F) referrals directly from police agencies for filing consideration, bypassing WIC 653(c)

THE ISSUES:

- Excessive involvement in referral screening causing inconsistency, fragmented processes, and inadequate tracking
- DA making filing decisions without input or assessment from Probation
- Prevention and diversion efforts were underused
- Limited awareness of trends and community needs
- Inability to identify problems, address them effectively, or take proactive measures

The Most Efficient Route: Internal Decision Making

Reformed Filing Process

- Reestablished Probation as the first POC for all referrals from police
- Ensured the new CMS supported a seamless communication flow between agencies

Manager Realignment

- Added Intake to the Juvenile Specialty Field Services Manager assignment
- Connected three closely related responsibilities: Intake, Investigations & Placement

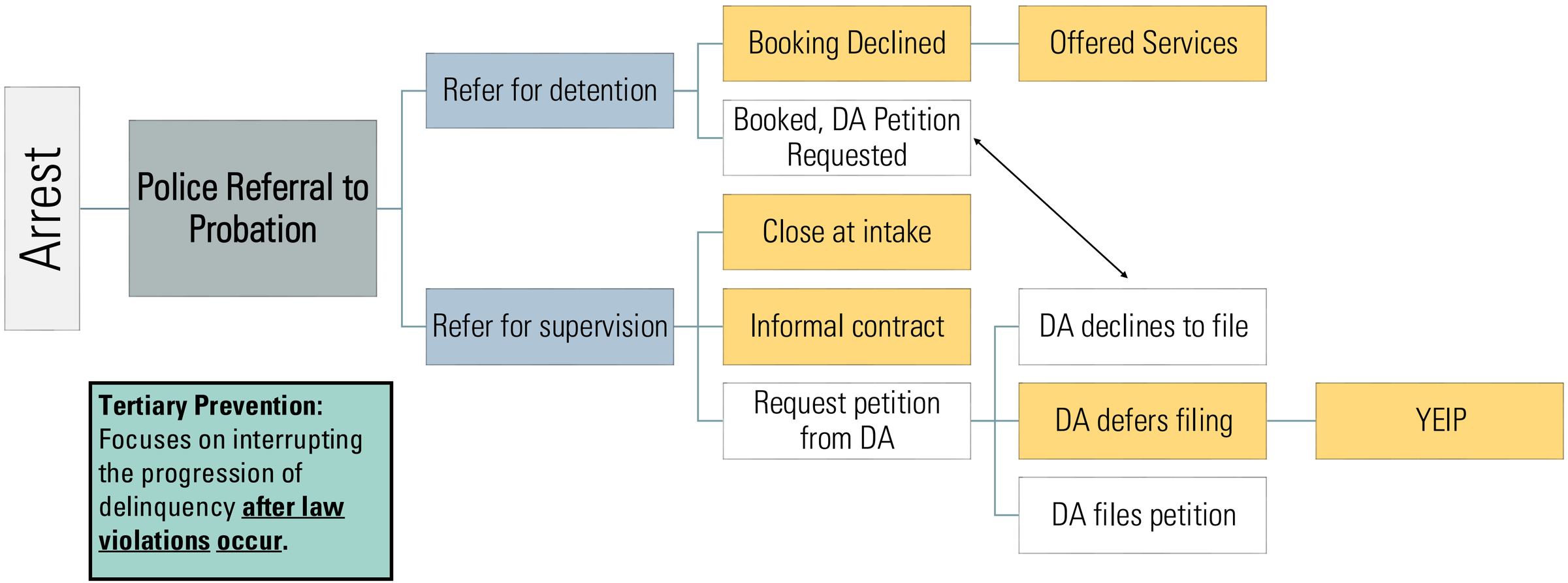
Dedicated DPO

- Single screener of out of custody referrals
- Reformed tracking and response practices
- Expanded disposition options

Next Steps

- Adding PCA to prevention team to engage youth
- Connecting with youth who were referred for detention, but denied

Police Referral Decision Making



Tertiary Prevention:
Focuses on interrupting the progression of delinquency **after law violations occur**.

The Most Efficient Route: Internal Decision Making

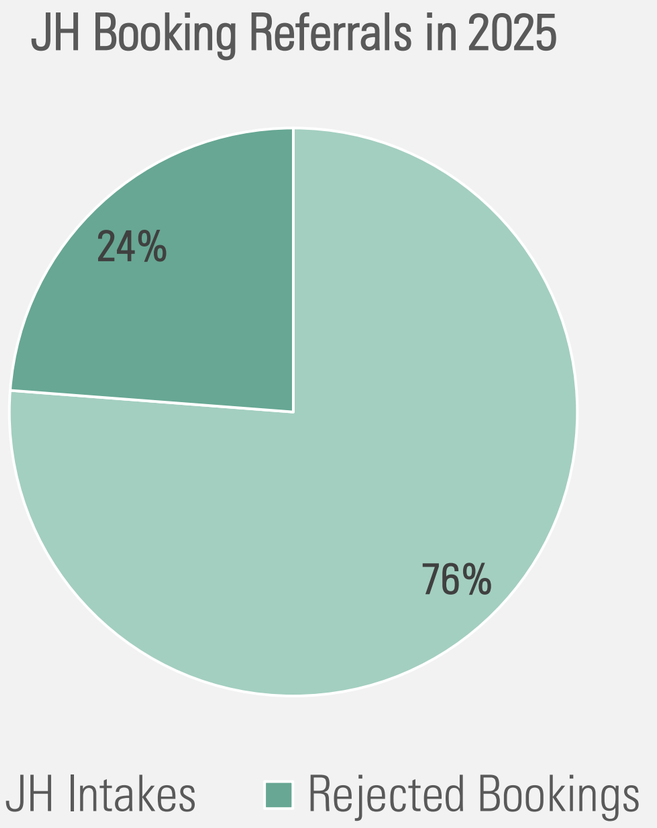
THE ISSUE: 40% JH rejections for several consistent years

- Potential lack of awareness about JH booking guidelines, detention risk assessment, overall reform efforts
- LEA's still defaulting to JH as option 1 for intervention

THE SOLUTION: Outreach and Education

- Presentations about juvenile processes, prevention and reform to local organizations, partners, and justice councils/committees
- Strengthened messaging and networking about prevention/diversion resources
- Trainings aimed at justice partners, including DA and local LEA's

NEXT STEPS: Engaging "rejected" youth in prevention services



The Last Stop: Diversion

DIVERSION SPOTLIGHT: Youth Early Intervention Program (YEIP)

- Since 2021, the Probation Department and Public Defender's Office have worked together to address **root causes of system involvement**, in coordination with the District Attorney's Office and Office of Education. In 2025, the partnership broadened to include the Alternate Defender's Office and conflict panel attorneys.

- YEIP seeks to **prevent or reduce system involvement** among youth at risk by expanding prevention efforts, improving access to services before formal processing, and offering less restrictive options than formal arrest and filing.

- Law enforcement, attorneys, educators, parents, and CBOs may refer youth **exhibiting risky behaviors**, such as school attendance or behavioral concerns, difficulty following rules at home, negative peer associations, or behavioral health needs.

- To identify appropriate diversion supports, the **intake assessment** considers family circumstances, housing, education, behavioral health, ACEs scores, and individual strengths.

- Support services accompany case management and legal consultation to **address a range of stability-related needs**.

The Last Stop: Diversion

DIVERSION SPOTLIGHT: Youth Early Intervention Program (YEIP)

FY 25–26 | YEIP IMPACT

286
YOUTH PARTICIPATED
via CCC Public Defender's Office

WHO YEIP SERVED

85%
YOUTH OF COLOR

70%
MALE

47%
AGE 15 OR YOUNGER

PROGRAM REACH & PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

249
REFERRALS TO COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

268
IMPROVED OR MAINTAINED GOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

270
REDUCED OR ELIMINATED THE BEHAVIOR THAT LED TO YEIP

278
AVOIDED FORMAL SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

QUESTIONS?

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Thank you!