

Stanislaus County Girls Juvenile Justice Initiative Evaluation Report

Caroline Glesmann and Angela Irvine



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Stanislaus County Community Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan	4
GJJ's Major Interventions	6
GJJ Task Force Drives Gender-Responsive Juvenile Justice Reform	8
Gender-Responsive Training Increases Stakeholders' Skills and Knowledge	10
Gender-Responsive Assessment System Helps Identify Girls' Risk and Needs	12
GRAD Program Provides Critical Services and Support for Justice-Involved Girls	15
GJJ Introduces Numerous Improvements to Programming and Practices for Girls	22
Conclusion	24
Appendix A: Methods	25
Appendix B: GJJ Task Force—Core Committees	28
Appendix C: JAIS™ Supervision Strategy Groups	29
Appendix D: Decisions Made Regarding Noncompliance (GRAD Participants)	31
Appendix E: References	32
Appendix F: Endnotes	33

Acknowledgements

The planning and implementation process for this evaluation was a partnership of the Stanislaus County Probation Department, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), and the Prison Law Office. The evaluation plan, in alignment with the goals of the Stanislaus County Girls Juvenile Justice Initiative Strategic Plan, was developed by lead evaluator Vanessa Patino Lydia (NCCD) in coordination with Jill Silva (Stanislaus County Probation Department), Denise Locke (Stanislaus County Probation Department), and Lynn Wu (Prison Law Office). Data collection tools for the evaluation were designed by NCCD staff Vanessa Patino Lydia, Juliette Graziano, Caroline Glesmann, and Paige Baker. NCCD gratefully acknowledges all Stanislaus County organizations and individuals that participated in data collection activities or otherwise contributed to this report.

NCCD promotes just and equitable social systems for individuals, families, and communities through research, public policy, and practice.

Introduction



Serving Girls in Stanislaus County Through the Girls Juvenile Justice Initiative

Stanislaus County is in the Central Valley of California. Like many California counties, Stanislaus has medium-sized cities, small towns, and large areas of farmland. While it is not as urban as Bay Area counties or Los Angeles County, Stanislaus faces gang violence challenges and larger system-reform concerns, such as reducing racial and ethnic disparities and addressing the needs of girls pulled into the juvenile justice system.

In 2009, Stanislaus County partnered with the Prison Law Office. At that time, in the midst of major reforms in California's juvenile justice system, the Prison Law Office published a report highlighting the need for gender-responsive services for girls¹

and sought a probation department with whom to partner to create a gender-responsive juvenile justice model for California counties. The state had passed Senate Bill 81 in 2007, realigning the juvenile justice population, which resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of youth committed to the California Youth Authority (now the Division of Juvenile Justice), the state-run system of secure post-adjudication facilities. As the courts began to sentence youth to county facilities and funding shifted from the state to county probation departments, local jurisdictions had additional resources but not necessarily the expertise to adopt new reforms to meet the needs of a growing, diverse population. Together, the Prison Law Office and Stanislaus County developed the Girls Juvenile Justice Initiative (GJJI) in order to address the county's lack of gender-responsive resources for justice-involved girls.²

From the onset, the Stanislaus County Probation Department and the Prison Law Office suspected that local girls' experiences would match national trends. Across the country, researchers have found the following.

- Justice-involved girls are disproportionately low risk and high need and often become system involved as a result of low-level offenses.³ Research shows that nationally, two thirds of arrests of girls in 2010 were for status offenses or nonviolent crimes.⁴
- The reasons for girls' system involvement are complex and often rooted in challenging family dynamics, such as family conflict or physical or sexual abuse.⁵ Justice-involved girls experience very high levels of abuse, victimization, and neglect, such as sexual assault; rape; emotional, physical, or sexual abuse; and/or exposure to community violence. Research suggests that the percentage of justice-involved girls who have experienced trauma ranges from 70% to 90%.⁶ Substantial numbers of girls in the system suffer from mental health problems associated with sexual and/or physical abuse and/or neglect.⁷
- While justice-involved girls tend to have some shared characteristics, they are not a homogenous group. Each girl's experiences inform her trajectory into, through, and ideally out of the system. A variety of factors—including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression—frame their experiences.
- Due to limited resources, many jurisdictions are not equipped with appropriate services and programs to meet girls' needs at every level of system involvement. However, without gender-responsive assessments, programs, and services, an opportunity to address the issues that lead to girls' justice involvement—and that can help deter further involvement—is missed.

Keeping these trends in mind, the GJJ developed two key goals. The GJJ would:

- Provide gender-responsive programming to keep at-risk young women from entering the juvenile justice system, reduce out-of-home placement, and increase the chance of successful reentry services for girls in the juvenile justice system, in out-of-home placements including detention, or recently released from such placements; and
- Document the GJJ's process and outcomes to identify the most effective ways to meet the needs of young women who are at risk of being involved, are currently involved, or were previously involved in the juvenile justice system.

From the GJJ's outset, it was clear that in order to accomplish these goals, the Stanislaus County Probation Department would need to engage and work closely with other county organizations and agencies. The Prison Law Office offered to help facilitate this process and use the lessons learned to create a toolkit to assist other counties in identifying and meeting the particular needs of girls in their jurisdictions.



GJJI Key Partners

In December 2009, four key organizations began collaborating to plan and implement the GJJI:

- The Stanislaus County Probation Department, headquartered in Modesto and the 17th largest probation department in California;
- The Prison Law Office, which represents individual prisoners, engages in impact litigation, educates the public about prison conditions, and collaborates with counties committed to improving the services they provide to at-risk and justice-involved youth;
- The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) Center for Girls and Young Women,⁸ which conducted research and provided technical assistance and training to improve outcomes for girls and young women in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems; and
- The Youth Justice Institute (YJI), which provided gender-specific direct services, policy advocacy, and training. While YJI closed in 2013, YJI's mentoring model, which was adapted by the GJJI for the local community, continues to be operated by the Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice, and YJI's founder/former executive director continues to consult with the GJJI.

Funders

To date, funding for various aspects of the GJJI's planning, implementation, and evaluation has been provided by the State of California's Board of State and Community Corrections, the Sierra Health Foundation, and the State Bar of California's Equal Access Fund. Additionally, the county's 2012 gender-responsive regional training was provided by the National Girls Institute, a partnership of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and NCCD, at no cost to the county.

Stanislaus County Community Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan

Community Needs Assessment

In 2010, in cooperation with the Stanislaus County Probation Department, the Prison Law Office and NCCD began to develop the GJJ by conducting a community needs assessment to determine the specific needs of at-risk and justice-involved girls in Stanislaus County. This assessment included reviewing existing data sources and collecting information through surveys, focus groups, and interviews with key stakeholders in county agencies and organizations, representing areas such as juvenile justice, education, child development, public health, and mental health. It also included conducting focus groups and interviews with justice-involved girls and parents/family members of justice-involved girls. Key findings of the community needs assessment included the following.⁹

- The lived experiences of girls in Stanislaus County juvenile hall are similar to trends seen nationwide for justice-involved girls. This includes a prevalence of runaway behavior, experiences in the dependency and delinquency systems, academic disconnection and failure, high levels of substance use, and experience with commercial sexual exploitation.
- Representatives of various fields unequivocally recognized the need for gender-responsive services in the county. Additionally, most felt the needs of justice-involved girls and girls at risk of justice involvement in the county were not being adequately met.
- A number of factors increase or perpetuate girls' risk of justice involvement, including exposure to commercial sexual exploitation, substance abuse, homelessness, teen pregnancy and

parenting, gang involvement, and justice-involved family members. Also identified as factors specifically in Stanislaus County were gaps in services and information; a lack of appropriate referrals for families and girls; a need for gender-responsive staff training; and a lack of consistent collaboration by juvenile justice professionals due to budget cutbacks, personnel changes, and other issues.

GJJ's Strategic Plan

Drawing on the needs assessment data, NCCD and the Prison Law Office, working closely with the probation department, developed a strategic plan targeted at improving outcomes for at-risk and justice-involved girls in the county and designed to maximize available local resources.¹⁰ In order to establish an effective continuum of services to address girls' needs, the strategic plan guided development of the GJJ's priority goals and implementation of the work needed to accomplish these goals. The strategic plan's organizing themes included five areas, which are described below.

1. Assessing Policies and Practices That Negatively Impact Girls
2. Increasing Collaboration Between Stakeholders to Meet Girls' Needs
3. Improving Gender-Responsive and Trauma-Informed Services for Girls
4. Providing Gender-Responsive Training for Juvenile Justice Staff and Other Stakeholders
5. Implementing Assessment and Data Collection Systems to Understand Girls' Profiles and Trends

Assessing Policies and Practices That Negatively Impact Girls

During the needs assessment, stakeholders identified a number of policies and practices that were negatively impacting outcomes for justice-involved girls or girls at risk of justice involvement. These included a lack of diversion options, lack of gender-responsive probation sanctions, use of detention for technical violations of probation, lack of policies for addressing sexually exploited minors' needs, and lack of consistency by attorneys in explaining the court process. To address these issues, the strategic plan recommended the creation of a local task force composed of diverse stakeholders to identify and reexamine policies, procedures, and practices that affect girls and to develop strategies to address these areas.

Increasing Collaboration Between Stakeholders to Meet Girls' Needs

While most justice-involved girls or girls at risk of justice involvement require multiple services, girls and their families may be daunted by accessing needed services. They may not understand what services are available or how to navigate multiple systems, while community agencies may impose duplicative requirements in order to receive services. The result is a fragmented service delivery system that can negatively impact girls' outcomes. To increase collaboration, the strategic plan recommended that the new task force identify opportunities for increased collaboration and information sharing and opportunities to develop procedures and processes to facilitate girls and their families in accessing necessary services.

Improving Gender-Responsive and Trauma-Informed Services for Girls

Managers and line staff across the juvenile justice continuum reported that they did not feel equipped to meet girls' complex treatment needs, which included substance use, family conflict, incarcerated family members, weak school connections, and

mental health needs due to trauma and victimization. Strategic plan recommendations in this area included implementing a gender-responsive assessment system to identify risk level, needs, and placement recommendations; developing gender-responsive programming for girls committed to juvenile hall based on identified needs; and implementing a predisposition girls' court.

Providing Gender-Responsive Training for Juvenile Justice Staff and Other Stakeholders

Effective, research-based training that provides strategies for meeting girls' needs is critical to increasing staff satisfaction and skill mastery that will improve girls' outcomes. The core recommendation in this area was to provide stakeholders with gender-responsive training. Other recommendations included prioritizing training needs and developing a regular training calendar to ensure that new staff become familiar with gender-responsive principles soon after starting employment and that ongoing training is provided for all staff who work with girls.

Implementing Assessment and Data Collection Systems to Understand Girls' Profiles and Trends

The needs assessment indicated that justice-involved girls in the county tend to have child welfare system experience, school difficulties, and histories of abuse and neglect. At the time of this assessment, the probation department did not have a global needs assessment to aggregate girls' needs and inform program and resource planning. To fill this gap, the strategic plan recommended implementing a gender-responsive assessment system that evaluates youth risk and needs and providing staff training on using assessment data to inform placement, treatment planning, and transition goals.

GJJ's Major Interventions

Based on the strategic plan recommendations, several core interventions (listed below) were implemented during the first three years of the GJJ.

- *GJJ Task Force.* The task force is composed of key stakeholders in Stanislaus County who developed strategies and assigned responsibilities to implement strategic plan priorities.
- *Gender-responsive training.* Staff from the probation department, other county agencies, and local community-based organizations have participated in gender-responsive training sessions, which are designed to provide the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with girls.
- *Gender-responsive assessment.* The probation department has implemented the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System™ (JAIS) with all boys and girls booked into juvenile hall. JAIS™ is a gender-responsive assessment instrument that provides information about individual needs, risk level, and effective supervision strategies.
- *Gender-Responsive Alternatives to Detention (GRAD) program.* Developed by the probation department, the GRAD program was designed to divert girls on formal probation from detention and provide alternatives to detention based on individually assessed needs.

These interventions reinforce one another, creating a sustainable service infrastructure for justice-involved girls in the county. After a two-year evaluation,¹¹ NCCD found the following.

- The local task force, composed of diverse stakeholders, led the way in driving gender-responsive juvenile justice reform in Stanislaus County.

- Gender-responsive training equipped juvenile justice staff and other stakeholders with critical skills and knowledge to meet girls' needs.
- Implementation of the gender-responsive JAIS assessment improved decision making on girls' cases.
- With a gender-responsive staffing approach and program philosophy, the GRAD program met the majority of its juvenile justice goals, including a decrease in new law violations and bench warrants and a reduction in the average number of probation violations. In addition, GRAD participants reported experiencing a number of positive well-being outcomes.
- The GJJ motivated other new programming and practices, including the implementation of the Mentoring Youth (MY) Project, a gender-responsive, one-on-one mentoring program for girls, and the introduction of multiple changes in the girls' unit in juvenile hall.

NCCD's findings are described in more detail throughout this report, which illustrates the GJJ's successes, challenges, and lessons learned that are relevant to Stanislaus and other counties interested in implementing a gender-responsive approach to meeting girls' needs in their jurisdictions.

GRAD Success Story

When Veronica* enrolled in GRAD, she had low self-esteem, lacked confidence, and believed she was a burden to those around her. Although she was referred to a few programs, she did not complete them due to transportation issues and a lack of support from her guardian. The GRAD probation officer and case manager brainstormed to find programs Veronica could walk to and ways she could thrive on her own. During the summer of 2013, she was responsible for completing 20 hours of community service and attending substance abuse recovery meetings twice a week instead of programs that needed parent/guardian participation. She successfully completed both requirements and even continued volunteering with the organization where she did her community service. She also participated in a job readiness program and toured a transitional shelter, where she obtained resources from the shelter's clothes closet and food pantry. In the fall of 2013, Veronica transitioned from an alternative education setting to a mainstream high school. She is now passing all of her classes and has had no disciplinary incidents. She has gained confidence and views herself more positively.

*Name has been changed.



GJJ Task Force Drives Gender-Responsive Juvenile Justice Reform

The strategic plan recommended the creation of a local task force composed of diverse stakeholders (including representatives from probation and detention, the juvenile court system, education, child welfare, public health, public defender, district attorney, community service providers, and girls themselves) to identify and reexamine policies, procedures, and practices that negatively affect girls. This recommendation led to the creation of the GJJ Task Force, first convened in February 2011, which has successfully driven gender-responsive juvenile justice reform efforts in Stanislaus County.

The task force meets quarterly at the probation department and uses a committee structure to accomplish goals in specific areas. (See Appendix B for details about the five core task force committees.) From February 2011 through August 2013, the task force was facilitated by a staff attorney/juvenile justice policy advocate from the Prison Law Office, in collaboration with the probation department. As of February 2014, the probation department's juvenile division director now facilitates the task force, including coordinating and encouraging gender-responsive efforts by partner organizations, while the Prison Law Office has taken on a more supportive role.

The Task Force Has Recruited a Range of Stakeholders

As of July 2013, 82 individuals have participated in the task force at some point, representing 23 county agencies/departments, community-based organizations (CBO), local businesses, and elected officials, and with an average of 22 attendees per meeting. Over time, in terms of representation by various sectors:

- Of task force members, 34.4% have been from CBOs, including the Center for Human Services, Family Justice Center, Parent Resource Center, and Without Permission;

- A total of 28.1% have been from the probation department (juvenile division), representing intake, juvenile hall, supervision, placement, and other areas;
- There have been 22.9% from Stanislaus County departments/agencies other than probation, including Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Health Services Agency, Community Services Agency, and County Office of Education;
- A total of 6.3% have been from court or legal agencies, including the public defender's office, district attorney's office, and California Rural Legal Assistance; and
- There have been 8.3% from other types of organizations, including law enforcement and legislative offices.

The Task Force Has Helped Increase Collaboration and Information Sharing

One of the priorities identified in the strategic plan was to increase stakeholder collaboration to meet girls' needs. Data collected from task force participants suggest that considerable progress has been made toward achieving this goal.

- *The level of collaboration between stakeholders has increased substantially.* Less than half (45.8%) of respondents to a baseline survey (administered in 2011) felt the level of collaboration between stakeholders was sufficient or extensive. In comparison, on average, the large majority (90.6%) of respondents to an annual survey (administered to task force members in 2012 and 2013) reported that since the GJJ's implementation, the level of collaboration has been sufficient or extensive.



- *New or renewed collaborations have occurred.* On average, a substantial percentage (78.1%) of respondents to the 2012 and 2013 annual task force surveys reported that their task force committee developed new or renewed collaborations with one or more organizations as a result of the GJJI.
- *The task force has increased information sharing.* On average, more than three quarters (78.6%) of respondents to the same surveys feel the task force has been effective in helping to create and implement new policies to facilitate information sharing with other agencies.

The Task Force Has Guided Gender-Responsive Juvenile Justice Reform Efforts

The task force has propelled gender-responsive juvenile justice reform efforts in the county. As discussed in more detail later in this report, major task force accomplishments during the evaluation period include convening gender-responsive training

for juvenile justice staff and other stakeholders; implementing a gender-responsive assessment (the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System™) for all youth booked into detention; and establishing an all-girls caseload through the GRAD program. In addition, a number of other gender-responsive policy and practice changes, including implementing the MY Project, have occurred since the GJJI began.

Next Steps

In order to keep guiding gender-responsive juvenile justice reform efforts, the task force should continue to meet regularly to prioritize and implement goals and to foster continued collaboration and information sharing to improve outcomes for girls. Based on the results of the evaluation, which ended in September 2013, NCCD suggests that the next steps for the task force could include the following areas.

- Continue working to engage (or reengage) a diverse group of stakeholders for the task force. In addition to staff from relevant agencies/organizations, consider adding the voices of girls and/or family members. Alternatively, a girls and/or family advisory council could be created and an advisory council representative could participate in task force meetings.
- Update the original strategic plan to reflect the task force's current priorities and emerging issues.

Notably, the probation department is beginning to make progress on both recommendations. To date, task force participation has expanded to include a wider range of partners. As importantly, the GJJI strategic plan has been updated and implementation of new priorities has begun as of February 2014.

Gender-Responsive Training Increases Stakeholders' Skills and Knowledge

The strategic plan also recommended providing gender-responsive training for juvenile justice staff, administrators, and service providers who work directly or indirectly with justice-involved girls or those vulnerable to involvement. NCCD, the National Girls Institute,¹² and the Youth Justice Institute delivered training on the principles and strategies of gender-responsive programming, treatment, and case management strategies relevant to girls' lived experiences, as well as the importance of and techniques for developing and providing culturally responsive programming for girls.

The probation department and its partners embraced training as a critical component of the GJJI. The GJJI Task Force convened four trainings between July 2011 and September 2013, drawing a total of 234 attendees.¹³ Three trainings had about 40 participants each, and one training had more than 100 attendees and was a regional event, with staff from Stanislaus County and seven other Northern

California counties in attendance. This regional training was designed to share gender-responsive information with a broader audience as part of disseminating the GJJI's lessons and, on a practical basis, because girls may transfer between Stanislaus County and other jurisdictions.

Training Participation Increases Staff Knowledge and Skills Related to Girls' Issues and Needs

Following gender-responsive training, attendees' self-reported knowledge and competencies related to girls' issues and needs increased. Brief surveys administered immediately before and after training sessions in 2011 showed movement in a positive direction on each variable after training. For example, respondents demonstrated an increase in skills such as being able to create a safe, gender-responsive environment and feeling prepared to work with girls (Table 1).

Table 1: Gender-Responsive Training Outcomes
(Scale Range of 1 to 4; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Strongly Agree)

	Average (Pre)	N (Pre)	Average (Post)	N (Post)
Knowledge/Understanding				
Understand need for gender-responsive policies and practices	3.3	59	3.6	52
Able to define what makes a gender-responsive culture within a program setting	2.5	58	3.3	51
Knowledgeable about factors related to girls' abuse and trauma and respectful of girls' life histories	3.0	56	3.5	49
Understand importance of relationships in girls' lives and feel I am a good role model	3.3	58	3.5	52
Skills to Respond Appropriately				
Have the skills to create a safe, gender-responsive environment	2.5	59	3.3	52
Knowledgeable about self-harming behaviors and have the skills to respond appropriately	2.9	58	3.3	51
Understand girls' acting out/aggressive behaviors and have the tools to respond appropriately	2.6	57	3.3	50
Feel prepared to work with girls	2.9	57	3.4	51

While pretraining surveys were not administered at gender-responsive trainings in 2012 and 2013 due to different training formats, surveys completed after the trainings indicated that participants benefitted from attending. For example, 81.7% of survey respondents from the 2012 regional training indicated that their gender-responsive knowledge increased (this includes participants from all attending counties, some of which were resistant to the idea of gender-responsive programming), and 97.1% of respondents who attended the 2013 training reported that the training's subject matter will be helpful for their work with girls.

Interviews with the GJJ's staff and volunteers also demonstrated the impact of training. One probation department staff member said, "The beginning [of the GJJ] was changing the mindset and getting people to think about things differently. Before we started the project, there was not a lot of dialogue about the girls coming into our juvenile justice system. [After gender-responsive training,] I have a better understanding of why young women come into the system. Having that better understanding helps you want to think outside the box, because before, you are really just doing business as usual."

Next Steps

Probation staff and other stakeholders who work with justice-involved girls need appropriate, regular training in order to effectively meet girls' needs. Based on the first-year evaluation results, NCCD suggests that the probation department consider developing a training infrastructure that would ensure ongoing training.

- On an annual basis, the probation department should work with task force members to prioritize training needs and topics for the upcoming year and use this information to schedule trainings. Recommended topics include gender-

responsive principles and techniques, cultural competence, developing culturally responsive programs and services, and sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (SOGIE).

Training on these topics could be provided on a regular basis in order to reinforce acquisition and application of skills and concepts.

- Increase staff capacity by training probation and/or CBO staff to provide training in one or more area(s) identified as priorities. Implementing a training-for-trainers infrastructure in the probation department would allow for systematic training of staff who are new to the GJJ.
- For organizations/individuals that contract with the probation department to provide services for girls, add (1) completion of gender-responsive training and (2) cultural competency training to contract provisions.

Notably, the probation department is already taking steps toward implementing these suggestions. They have provided additional training for task force members on topics including how to create culturally affirming programs for girls that address race and SOGIE. As the probation department moves forward in their efforts to provide culturally affirming programming, they have adopted intake questions that will document the SOGIE of youth coming into their system and will sponsor upcoming training for probation department staff on the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. The Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Agency is also developing a curriculum on gender-responsive services that incorporates issues of race and SOGIE. The agency plans to deliver this training on an annual basis, creating a self-sustaining, gender-responsive training infrastructure in Stanislaus County.

Gender-Responsive Assessment System Helps Identify Girls' Risk and Needs



As part of improving gender-responsive and trauma-informed services, the strategic plan recommended implementation of a gender-responsive assessment system to identify risk level, intensity of need, and placement recommendations. As a result of this recommendation, probation staff and other task force members engaged in a process to explore various assessment instruments and determine which would best meet the department's needs, which led to the selection of the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System™ (JAIS). Developed by NCCD and used in many jurisdictions nationwide, JAIS™ is a validated, evidence-based instrument that generates a gender-responsive risk, strengths, and needs assessment, which identifies a supervision strategy and creates an intervention plan based on the underlying motivation for a youth's actions. (See Appendix C for an overview of JAIS supervision strategies.) JAIS was developed using statistical methods that ensure equity across gender and race. In July 2011, the probation department began administering JAIS with all youth booked into juvenile hall.¹⁴

Conducted as a semi-structured, face-to-face individual interview, JAIS measures a girl's individual level of need in areas including mental health, family relationships, social skills, peer relationships, vocational skills, value orientation, substance use, school/educational issues, and physical health. JAIS also assesses risk to public safety and includes the opportunity for reassessment (typically six months after the initial assessment), yielding updated supervision recommendations that incorporate a youth's changing circumstances.

Beginning in 2011, NCCD provided a variety of JAIS training and technical assistance (TTA) to staff from the probation department, other county agencies/ departments, and CBOs. TTA was targeted to staff who administer JAIS and/or interpret JAIS output reports. Additionally, several probation department staff completed an intensive JAIS training-for-trainers session, leading to further institutionalization of JAIS use and development of capacity among staff within the department. The training-for-trainers component

allowed participating probation department staff to fully understand JAIS, provide training to other probation department staff, and teach additional stakeholders such as attorneys, court personnel, and volunteers how to use JAIS to meet the needs of young people.

JAIS™ Implementation Has Improved Decision Making on Girls' Cases

From 2011 to 2013, NCCD administered six surveys to track JAIS training and implementation, including staff attitudes toward JAIS and its impact on the probation and court systems over time. Data from 2012 indicate that staff/stakeholder support for JAIS was moderately high, and 2013 data suggest that support continues to increase. For example, from 2012 to 2013, there was an increase (18.2% to 42.1%) in the percentage of respondents who reported that JAIS is more effective than the probation department's prior assessment and a decrease (90.1% to 68.4%) in the percentage who reported challenges with administering JAIS. These data demonstrate that satisfaction with JAIS grew over time and also suggest that a gender-responsive practice change has been institutionalized across the probation department (Figure 1).

Other findings show that using JAIS data has helped staff better understand the risks, needs, and strengths of girls and make more appropriate referrals for services (Figure 2). Using JAIS also has positively affected how staff write case plans (not shown). JAIS case planning uses a strengths-based, problem-solving approach that focuses on helping girls define goals and develop realistic strategies for meeting them. This technique aligns well with a gender-responsive approach to working with girls.

Findings regarding JAIS implementation—including the variation over time—may be attributed in part to various factors that occurred during the evaluation period. For example, when JAIS was first implemented in the county, an intake officer conducted the initial JAIS assessment when a youth was booked into juvenile hall. These assessment results were shared with the probation officer to whom the youth was assigned; an officer then worked with the youth to develop a case plan based on JAIS recommendations.

However, this approach did not prove an optimal method for administering JAIS in practice due to limited time available during intake to conduct JAIS, a shortage of intake staff stemming from reduced

Figure 1: JAIS™ Outcomes Increased Satisfaction Post-Implementation

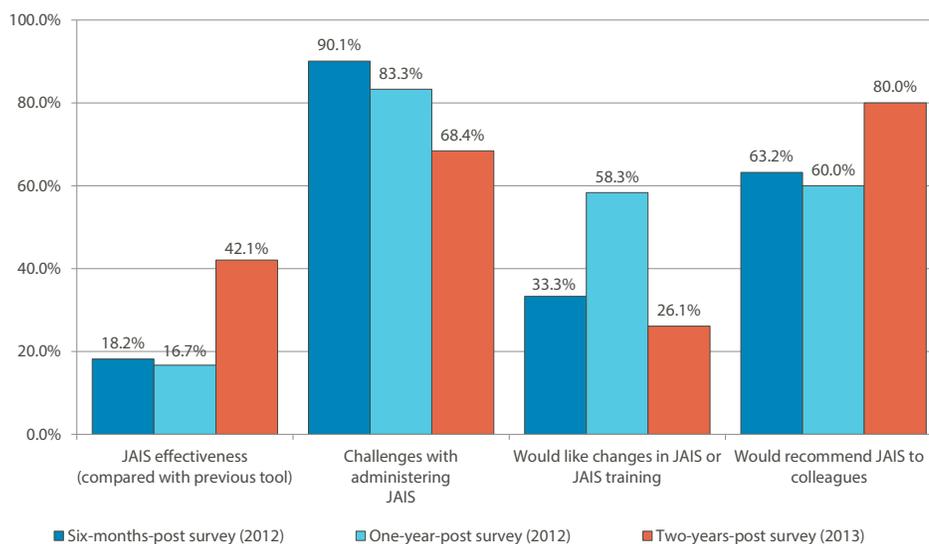
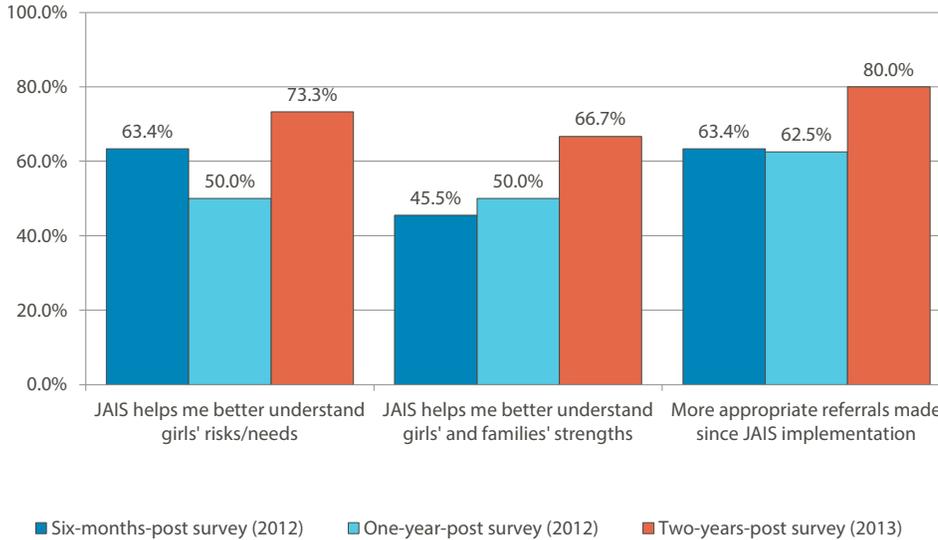


Figure 2: JAIS™ Outcomes
What Has Been Learned Post-Implementation?



fiscal resources, and the amount of youth disclosure required to develop a case plan responsive to a youth's individual needs. It should be noted that for girls referred to the GRAD program, JAIS was conducted by GRAD staff from the outset.

After using JAIS for a little more than a year, the probation department made two important practice changes: as of October 2012, JAIS is administered for girls in GRAD by the GRAD case manager instead of the GRAD probation officer, and as of January 2013, JAIS is conducted by the probation officer to whom a youth is assigned, rather than an intake officer. In addition to these practice changes, other factors that may have contributed to an increase in staff satisfaction with JAIS include developing staff capacity to provide onsite assistance with administering and interpreting JAIS, additional training provided by NCCD and the probation department, or simply the adjustment to a major practice change approximately two years after implementation.

Next Steps

Because JAIS implementation represents one of the GJJ's most far-reaching impacts in terms of the number of youth affected, the probation department should regularly assess staff attitudes, needs, and

challenges regarding JAIS administration in order to maintain and enhance this significant practice change. This can include the following.

- Periodically survey probation department staff about JAIS administration and interpretation. Data could be gathered on a quarterly or biannual basis. As part of this work, continue to monitor staff challenges with JAIS administration and application, as data on challenges trended fairly high on the 2013 survey.
- Use information gathered from surveys (or other sources) to tailor JAIS training and coaching sessions.

Since the evaluation was completed in September 2013, the probation department has continued to closely monitor JAIS implementation progress. For example, trained probation staff provide training and coaching for other probation staff and individuals outside the department who work with justice-involved youth to increase their understanding of JAIS reports and how to use them to meet young people's needs. Additionally, probation staff conduct regular audits of probationers' case files to ensure adherence with JAIS practices and standards.

GRAD Program Provides Critical Services and Support for Justice-Involved Girls

The strategic plan recommended the development of gender-responsive services in Stanislaus County. This led to the July 2011 implementation of the Gender-Responsive Alternatives to Detention (GRAD) program, an intensive program for girls on formal probation.

The GRAD program introduced a variety of practice and programming changes that benefited participants. This included using the gender-responsive JAIS to identify specific needs and appropriate supervision strategies; providing a coordinated, supportive case management approach through a small caseload staffed by the GRAD probation officer, case manager, and clinician; and addressing noncompliance with gender-responsive alternatives to detention. Together, these approaches contributed to reports of numerous positive well-being outcomes for girls.

An important feature of GRAD is its small caseload, allowing for personalized case management and counseling. GRAD has a caseload of 25 to 30 girls, with an average caseload size of 26. This average is considerably smaller than the probation department's general supervision caseload of 80 to 90 youth.

Through September 2013, GRAD was staffed by one full-time probation officer, one full-time case manager, and one 25% time clinician, all of whom attended one or more gender-responsive trainings convened by the GJJJ. The probation department contracted with the Center for Human Services, a Modesto-based nonprofit organization offering programs in areas such as shelter, juvenile justice services, and mental health counseling for the case manager and clinician positions.¹⁵ Based at the probation department, the GRAD probation officer and case manager work collaboratively to manage the GRAD caseload, including conducting a weekly case review,

attending court appearances, and providing gender-responsive alternatives to detention for girls who are noncompliant.

GRAD staff work individually with each participant to determine her needs, as informed by JAIS, and refer her to individualized services. While there are no mandatory program components, most girls participate in a few common classes and services, such as an assessment conducted by Behavioral Health and Recovery Services to determine the need for individual counseling, handling anger appropriately, and/or substance use counseling. Additionally, many girls attend a class offered by the Center for Human Services that is designed to improve communication and support among family members. Other services GRAD participants may be referred to include relationship guidance, education to prevent teen pregnancy, financial literacy, and job search help. Customized services are available for specific populations, including girls who have been commercially sexually exploited and girls who are pregnant or parenting.

Decisions to recommend exits from the GRAD program are based on regular monitoring by GRAD staff of a participant's behavior and progress, as well as discussions with the participant's parent/guardian and relevant agencies. To graduate from GRAD, a participant must complete all court-ordered programs, counseling, and community service (as applicable); demonstrate good school attendance; earn passing grades; have no new law violations filed; have good home behavior; and have engaged in services to which she was referred. Upon graduation, probation wardship is dismissed. Reasons a girl may not graduate include lack of consistent participation in services, a persistent increase in substance use,

committing more serious and/or violent crimes, and ongoing gang involvement. Girls who repeatedly demonstrate this behavior may be referred to juvenile drug court, transferred to another probation unit with a higher level of supervision, ordered into placement, or sent to juvenile hall. Recommendations for these types of exit outcomes do not occur until all other options have been exhausted and little evidence of positive changes in behavior or attitude has been demonstrated by the GRAD participant.

Evaluating GRAD Outcomes

NCCD collected system and program data to measure outcomes for girls in the GRAD program. During the evaluation period, 69 girls received GRAD services. The two primary racial/ethnic groups represented in GRAD are Hispanic/Latina (61.4%) and White (26.3%). According to a 2013 estimate by the US Census, 43% of the general Stanislaus County population is Hispanic/Latino.¹⁶ This suggests that Hispanics/Latinas are overrepresented in the GRAD program, likely as a result of their overrepresentation in the juvenile justice population overall.

Mixed Quantitative Outcomes for GRAD Participants

NCCD first analyzed data to determine whether girls showed improvement in the following juvenile justice outcomes: (1) a decrease in arrests; (2) a decrease in new law violations; (3) a decrease in probation violations; (4) a decrease in the number of failures to appear (FTA); (5) a decrease in time spent in juvenile hall; and (6) a decrease in the number of bench warrants issued.

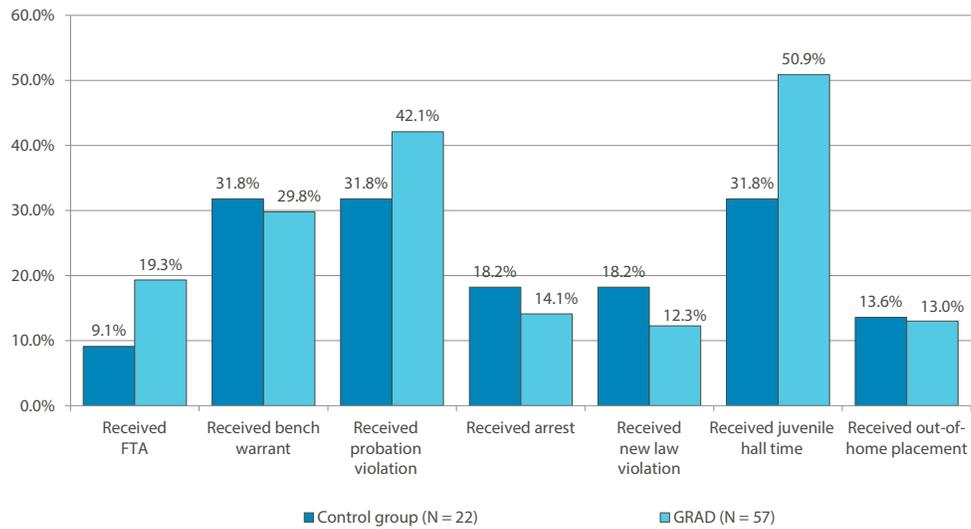
To conduct this analysis, NCCD compared 57 GRAD participants who completed six months of programming with a historical control group of 22

girls who had similar criminal justice histories, were not participants in drug court, and had completed six months of their probation terms before the GRAD program was created.¹⁷

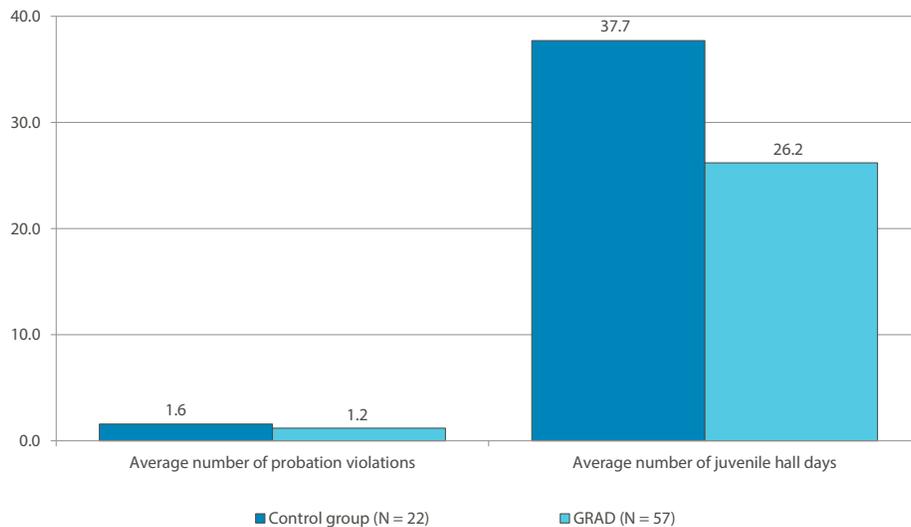
Analysis of data comparing GRAD participants to this control group did not uncover any statistically significant results.¹⁸ In order to provide some guidance on future steps, a number of descriptive statistics appear below to show trends in the data that exist so far.

- The GRAD program shows promising results for three outcome measures. Compared with the historical control group of girls, a lower percentage of GRAD participants were arrested, had sustained new law violations, or were issued bench warrants (Figure 3).¹⁹
- Other outcomes were more mixed. While the average number of sustained probation violations decreased (Figure 4), a higher percentage of GRAD participants had sustained probation violations than control group members (Figure 3). Similarly, while GRAD participants had a lower average number of days in juvenile hall (Figure 4), a higher percentage of GRAD participants were detained (Figure 3).²⁰ Also, a higher percentage of GRAD participants had an FTA compared with control group members (Figure 3).
- Finally, data for the evaluation period showed no significant change in referrals to out-of-home placement. Approximately 13% of GRAD participants and control group members were referred for out-of-home placement (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Juvenile Justice Outcomes
Control Group and GRAD**



**Figure 4: Probation Violations and Juvenile Hall Days
Control Group and GRAD**



Some of these mixed results may be due to the risk levels of girls in the GRAD program. Through JAIS, about 11% of girls were assessed to be at low risk of reoffending, 55% were assessed to be at moderate risk, and about one third (34%) were high risk. Risk levels for the control group differed from GRAD participants. The distribution of risk for the control group was 38% low risk, 43% moderate risk, and 19% high risk. Notably, it is difficult to compare the groups because different validated risk assessments were

used for control group girls and for GRAD participants. Nonetheless, there are a few observations worth noting.

Some of the differences in outcomes may be due to the fact that the control group has a higher proportion of low-risk girls—a group that should have fewer arrests, new offenses, probation violations, and stays in detention than moderate- and high-risk girls.

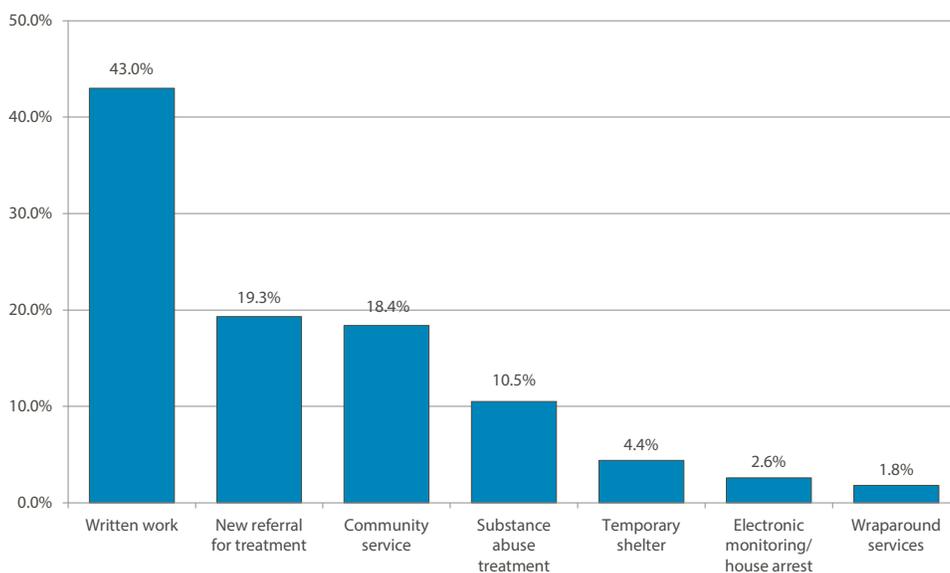
The GRAD participant group may still have too many low-risk girls to be effective. Best practice suggests that intensive interventions, such as GRAD, for youth involved in the juvenile justice system should focus on moderate- to high-risk probationers.²¹ Research has found that intensive programs increase recidivism for low-risk populations. The distribution of risk levels for GRAD participants indicate that the probation department is very close to the best practice with regard to risk levels: the program is serving very few low-risk girls, allowing for their needs to be more appropriately met in other community-based services. The probation department could nonetheless further improve the proportion they serve by making low-risk girls ineligible for the GRAD program and intentionally referring a higher proportion of high-risk girls, who are best served in intensive programs, to GRAD.

The department has made other structural changes that reflect promising practices in the field. It is important to note that girls were able to graduate

from GRAD even if they received an FTA, a probation violation, or some other sanction. About 20% of GRAD graduates spent time in juvenile hall, and 6.7% of girls who graduated from GRAD had an FTA, bench warrant, probation violation, and/or new law violation within the first six months of program entry.

Finally, although the analysis revealed mixed findings regarding the imposition of probation violations, probation department staff have changed to practices that promise to improve girls' outcomes over time. From January 2012 through September 2013, 70% of all options used for GRAD participants' technical violations of probation were noncustodial. Of these, the most common sanctions were written work such as completing an essay, doing a mini project, or developing goals and plans; a new referral for treatment; or community service (see Figure 5 for noncustodial options; for details about all options used for technical violations, see Appendix D).²²

Figure 5: Use of Noncustodial Options for Technical Violations of Probation



Positive Well-Being Outcomes for GRAD Participants

In addition to focusing on juvenile justice outcomes such as reduced arrests and probation violations, GRAD seeks to improve participants' well-being outcomes in several areas: (1) increased understanding of community resources and the court process, (2) improvements in school attendance and academic performance, and (3) improvements in family relationships.

GRAD's dedicated staff were positively received by participants. Data indicated that participants tended to appreciate the guidance and support offered by GRAD staff—particularly their relationship with the case manager (perhaps in contrast to their probation officer's law enforcement-oriented approach, which they acknowledged was the officer's role). One girl said, "[GRAD staff] really helped me a lot by putting me in services and helping me stay on the path and make better choices. I've learned so much, and I want to continue being the way I am now."

In exit surveys, girls reported numerous positive well-being measures. For example, since participating in probation activities, 61.8% said they had learned more about community resources that could help them, and 71.9% felt able to locate and use community

resources. Girls also increased their knowledge of the courts, with 79.4% reporting they understood the court process better and 70.6% knowing where to get answers about court hearings or procedures. Girls also reported improvement in areas of personal skills and growth, such as earning better grades in school (70.6%), having improved school attendance (76.4%), and having skills to make better decisions (82.4%).

Girls had good relationships with GRAD staff. They tended to feel comfortable contacting their GRAD probation officer/case manager when they had a question or needed help (67.6%) and felt staff listened and communicated well (82.4%). About two thirds felt GRAD staff understood their personal background and trusted these staff (67.6% for both). Finally, 81.8% felt GRAD staff referred them to helpful services and resources.

Staff believe this approach improved outcomes for participants. For example, interviewees said this strategy leads to girls feeling supported and building increased rapport with staff. The presence of GRAD staff in court allows the judge to have additional information about a particular case and to take staff input into consideration when making decisions, which may contribute to the judge giving girls in GRAD more chances to change their behavior. Some



staff also said that GRAD's philosophy represented an important change for girls accustomed to a more traditional law enforcement approach. "There were a number of girls in GRAD that were successful because we thought differently and handled things differently," said one interviewee. "The girls thought, 'If I am going to get in trouble, I am going to go to juvenile hall,' and then we provided them with alternatives instead. It built rapport. It helped them feel safer with disclosing more to GRAD staff. And it gave them hope."

GRAD Outcomes and Feedback: Differences by Race/Ethnicity

GRAD data were examined by race/ethnicity to determine any noticeable differences among participants. This kind of analysis is critical because not all system-involved girls are alike. Many girls experience multiple forms of oppression based on race/ethnicity; sexual orientation, gender identity/expression (SOGIE); income level; and immigration status. These factors are equally as important as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in framing behavior. Accordingly, for programs to truly address justice-involved girls' needs, programs and services must be culturally relevant, tailored to respond to the population's explicit experiences and characteristics, and designed to acknowledge and address the multiple layers of trauma and oppression that many face.²³

As discussed above, the two primary racial/ethnic groups represented in GRAD are Hispanic/Latina (61.4%) and White (26.3%). In general, Hispanic/Latina girls tended to have lower percentages of negative juvenile justice outcomes than White girls. For example, 37.1% of Hispanic/Latina girls had a probation violation and 8.6% had a new law violation, compared with 53.3% and 13.3%, respectively, of White girls.

GRAD exit survey data also indicated some differences by race/ethnicity. For instance, White girls' responses suggested they felt more knowledgeable about community resources and comfortable locating and

using resources, compared with Hispanic/Latina girls' responses. Most (80.0%) White girls felt they learned more about community resources and 100.0% felt able to locate and use community resources, compared with 44.4% and 52.9%, respectively, of Hispanic/Latina girls. This disparity identifies a need for additional culturally responsive service providers with bilingual and bicultural staff trained to work with and refer justice-involved girls and families to culturally responsive services.

The probation department recently embarked on a system-wide effort to address racial and ethnic disparities. In September 2014, the probation department received funding from the California Board of State and Community Corrections to support the elimination of racial and ethnic disparities across the juvenile justice continuum. With this funding, the probation department will convene cross-sector partners to identify and address decision-making points that drive inequalities in the juvenile justice system.

Next Steps

Overall, GRAD has led to some positive changes for girls in the juvenile justice system. The probation department has also implemented some important structural changes. Based on GRAD's preliminary results, NCCD suggests that the probation department continues to serve girls on formal probation through this program. At the same time, some of the results around the risk level of girls being served, exits from the program due to substance abuse problems, the lack of placement alternatives, probation violations, and the percentage of participants held in detention require ongoing program monitoring to ensure that outcomes continue to improve. The probation department might consider the following.

- The probation department could further tailor the GRAD program based on participant risk level, with a greater focus on high-risk girls. As many girls who enter the juvenile justice system are low risk but high needs,

the probation department should divert more of these girls out of the system.

- Due to the intensive supervision that participants receive through GRAD, which can, in turn, lead to increased sanctions due to the level of scrutiny, the probation department could consider revising their probation violation response grid so that risk levels are included in sanction considerations.
- The department could develop a nonintensive yet gender-responsive caseload for low-risk girls and hire or assign an officer to manage this caseload. This officer could coordinate with GRAD staff to discuss common challenges and brainstorm solutions.
- The probation department should stay committed to ongoing data-driven decision

making around their programs, particularly as the number of GRAD participants increases. Analysis should consider subgroups of girls for whom the program is or is not working. This can include looking at JAIS data, surveys completed by girls, dispositions, and GRAD exit data. Data can be examined in the aggregate and disaggregated by areas including race/ethnicity, SOGIE, JAIS supervision strategy, and GRAD exit status to understand differences among participants. Data also can be examined by year of program entry to track improvement over time and can continue to be compared with a historical comparison group. These analyses can help to modify GRAD, find additional providers, train staff and providers, assign cases to staff, and seek additional funding.

GRAD Success Story

Tricia,* a GRAD participant, often ran away and had a hard time following the rules in her home. She engaged in risky behavior and associated with a negative peer group. After being in juvenile hall for a probation violation, she transitioned to a shelter before going home. During this time, Tricia decided she wanted to turn her life around. She told GRAD staff that she realized she was getting older and did not want to be on the streets at age 18. Through GRAD, she completed an aggression replacement therapy program where she was the only participant with perfect attendance. Additionally, she successfully finished summer school, which included taking classes at two different high schools. When high school resumed in the fall, she signed up for an additional class so she would be on track to graduate with her class. She was prepared to graduate in May 2014 and had no issues in school or at home.

*Name has been changed.

GJJJ Introduces Numerous Improvements to Programming and Practices for Girls

In addition to the interventions discussed in previous sections, a variety of practice changes and new programming were introduced as a result of the GJJJ. These include the Mentoring Youth (MY) Project, a gender-responsive mentoring program for girls; practice and programming changes in the girls' unit in juvenile hall; and development of a gender-specific substance use treatment program, among others.

MY Project Provides Vital Support for Girls

As part of improving gender-responsive and trauma-informed services, the strategic plan recommended development of a predisposition girls' court. After investigating this possibility, the task force determined that a one-on-one mentoring program was a more appropriate option for meeting girls' needs, leading to development of the MY Project. The MY Project is a collaboration of the probation department and the Modesto-based Parent Resource Center (PRC), a nonprofit organization that works to build stronger, healthier families by offering education, mentoring, and supportive services.

The MY Project is based on a gender-responsive mentoring model developed by the Youth Justice Institute in San Francisco; its goal is for justice-involved girls to develop healthy relationships with mentors and feel supported, respected, empowered, and encouraged. Implemented in May 2012, the MY Project is coordinated by a PRC board member (a volunteer position). Prospective volunteer mentors must complete a 22-hour training led by PRC and an interview and background checks conducted by PRC and the probation department. The mentee/mentor match begins while a girl is in juvenile hall; mentors commit to working with mentees for at least a year, and mentoring continues if mentees go to placement and when they are released to the community. Participation is completely voluntary. During the

evaluation period, six mentees and five mentors participated in the MY Project.

In interviews with staff and volunteers (including mentors), interviewees focused on individual-level outcomes when describing MY Project accomplishments. For example, multiple interviewees talked about one mentee who began attending college after completing probation. Additionally, while mentee input is limited, feedback suggests that the MY Project positively impacts girls. One mentee said that while she was not initially sure whether she could trust her mentor, eventually she became more comfortable and felt able to share personal information.

While lack of resources has played a role in various components of the GJJJ, this was particularly seen in MY Project implementation. Although it was a pilot program and despite diligent efforts to recruit qualified mentors, the MY Project did not develop during the evaluation period to the extent that task force members anticipated, possibly due to a lack of paid staff.

Other Changes to Practice and Programming Impact Girls' Services

The GJJJ's implementation motivated multiple changes in practice and programming in the girls' unit in juvenile hall. These included the creation of Young Women United, a youth-led group for girls to talk about what they need to become successful and ways to improve the unit; having family-style meals; the introduction of activities such as crafts and yoga; and providing female hygiene products in a common area, rather than girls having to ask staff for these items. Additionally, for girls who are mothers, the availability and flexibility of baby visitation was increased from once a week to up to seven days a week.

To respond to youth's substance use needs, the probation department contracted with Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and the Center for Human Services to provide EMPACT, a gender-specific treatment program that served girls and boys from October 2012 through June 2013. In summer 2013, the probation department transitioned from offering EMPACT to implementing a moral reconnection therapy curriculum. Other related practice changes include approval by the probation department to drug test girls in a more private location than was previously used.

To meet the need for local placement options for girls, the probation department contracted with an organization to open a girls' group home in Stanislaus County. This group home operated from November 2011 to July 2012, subsequently closing because it lacked sufficient referrals to sustain operations. The probation department noted that while all GRAD girls ordered into placement were initially referred to this group home, they either did not successfully complete the facility's program requirements or ran away; further, group home staff may not have received appropriate training on working effectively with girls. Following this facility's closure, girls continued to be referred to out-of-county and out-of-state placements due to a lack of appropriate local placement options.

Next Steps

The GJJJ presents an opportunity to continue making improvements to programming and practices for all girls who come in contact with probation. Additionally, because not all practice and programming changes operated throughout the entire evaluation period for various reasons, including funding and staff transitions, the GJJJ provides a framework for institutionalizing these changes. Areas for consideration include the following.

- Seek funding support to expand the MY Project in order to provide mentoring for more girls. This could include funding for a part-time assistant or college student intern (or providing college credit to the intern in lieu of financial compensation) who could assist with mentor recruitment and retention and other program needs.
- Continue collecting data on MY Project mentees and mentors and use these data to evaluate the program once a small critical mass has been achieved (e.g., about 20 girls); this evaluation could be conducted by a graduate student intern who has experience with social science research methods.
- Continue to identify and develop ways to increase use of local placement options for girls who require out-of-home placement. This could include using the probation department's new commitment facility as a placement option that would incorporate family and local service providers in treatment provision.
- Continue to institutionalize programming and practice changes that are part of the GJJJ (e.g., codify in policy and include in training and orientation for new staff) to ensure sustainability of improvements that have been made.

Since the close of the evaluation period, the probation department has continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to system-wide reform. This includes contracting with a consultant to review juvenile hall policies from a gender-responsive lens in order to identify areas needing improvement. A task force subcommittee is now working on implementing the suggestions provided by the consultant.

Conclusion

The GJJ has some promising findings. The initiative has developed a very strong collaboration with county agencies to drive gender-responsive work. The probation department is developing a sustainable training infrastructure. The GRAD program appears to be lowering arrests, new law violations, and bench warrants for participants while improving well-being. Also, the department has made large structural changes, such as adopting a graduated sanctions grid.

Other outcomes are more mixed but still headed in the right direction. For example, even though a higher percentage of GRAD participants received probation violations, the average number of probation violations was slightly lower for GRAD participants. While a larger percentage of GRAD participants were held in detention, GRAD participants spent fewer days, on average, in juvenile hall. The fact that GRAD participants had an increase in probation violations, referrals to detention, and failures to appear is not surprising for a new program with an intensive caseload; increased scrutiny often leads to increased sanctions. With effort, Stanislaus County can continue to improve through changes in practice, such as a more focused probation violation response grid that considers risk level.

Since the evaluation was completed, the Stanislaus County Probation Department has continued to make progress. The GJJ began its next phase in February 2014 with an updated strategic plan and the designation of the probation department management team to lead the GJJ Task Force. The department has identified funding sources to continue staffing the GRAD program and is working to engage community partners who are not yet actively involved in the GJJ.

Some challenges remain. The probation department recognizes that, without ongoing funding, some GJJ components—such as a dedicated girls' probation officer with an intensive caseload—may not be sustainable on a long-term basis. However, by maintaining a steady focus on gender responsiveness in their day-to-day work and long-range planning, the probation department will continue to make progress. Specific areas to consider are diverting low-risk girls entirely from the GRAD program and onto a nonintensive general supervision caseload and increasing the focus on high-risk girls.

Based on this evaluation's results, the ongoing leadership, commitment, and creativity of the probation department and other organizations will help Stanislaus County continue its now well-established path toward improving outcomes for justice-involved girls and their families.



Appendix A: Methods

Evaluation Goals

In 2010, the Stanislaus County Probation Department commissioned NCCD to evaluate implementation of the Girls Juvenile Justice Initiative (GJJI). By intervention, the goals of the process and outcome evaluation were as follows.

- *GJJI Task Force*. To assess the level of stakeholder collaboration and engagement, challenges identified and possible solutions discussed, funding, impact of program/intervention implementation on girls and the community, and progress toward strategic plan goals.
- *Gender-responsive training*. To document training; assess staff understanding of gender-responsive approaches, staff skills, and services available; and highlight changes made as a result of access to training.
- *Gender-responsive assessment*. To track Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System™ (JAIS) training, implementation, and staff attitudes and impact of JAIS on the system (probation, courts) over time.
- *Gender-Responsive Alternatives to Detention (GRAD) program*. To assess program implementation, system outcomes, access to resources, JAIS profile data, girls' self-reported outcomes, and GRAD staff attitudes.
- *Mentoring Youth (MY) Project*. To document model implementation and assess its impact on mentees and mentors.

Research Questions

- What juvenile justice system processes changed as a result of the GJJI?
- What progress has occurred toward meeting the strategic plan goals?
- What factors impacted implementation of multiple GJJI components?
- Since the GJJI's implementation, how have staff attitudes and competencies shifted regarding working with girls?
- To what extent did GRAD reduce girls' juvenile justice system involvement?
- To what extent did GRAD address girls' needs?
- What well-being outcomes were improved for girls in GRAD?

Data Sources

NCCD, in partnership with the probation department, engaged in a range of data collection strategies to address the research questions. The data collection timeframe, or evaluation period, for this report, is from July 2011 through September 2013 unless otherwise stated.

- *Probation and system outcome measures for GRAD participants*. Data on juvenile justice outcomes, including the number of arrests, failures to appear, bench warrants, and probation violations issued; new law violations received; and days spent in juvenile hall were collected during the

first six months of GRAD participation. Although 69 girls received GRAD services during the evaluation period, the total (N) of GRAD girls for the juvenile justice outcome data analysis is 57, as some girls entered the program after April 1, 2013 (and consequently lacked six months of outcome data at the time of analysis), or exited the program in less than six months. For comparison purposes, the probation department also collected data on a historical control group of girls (N = 22). The control group represents girls with demographics and juvenile justice histories similar to GRAD participants and who received traditional probation services (prior to GRAD implementation).

- *J AIS data for GRAD participants.* JAIS initial assessment data were based on assessment records for girls referred to GRAD during the evaluation period. JAIS is collected through an automated portal; data for GRAD participants were extracted using SPSS.
- *GRAD program case conferencing measures.* In conjunction with the probation department, NCCD created a tracking form for GRAD staff to capture options used with participants who do not comply with their probation terms and conditions or who received new criminal charges. The purpose of this tracking form was to determine the extent of use of nonrestrictive alternatives, particularly for girls with technical violations of probation.
- *Surveys.* NCCD developed a variety of surveys to supplement the outcome data.
 - » *GJJJ Task Force.* A baseline survey was administered at the first task force meeting

in February 2011, and annual surveys were administered to task force members in February 2012 and February 2013. The surveys were designed to assess areas including level of stakeholder collaboration and engagement, awareness of local resources/programs, and GJJJ intervention implementation.

- » *Gender-responsive training.* In order to observe changes in staff participants' self-reported understanding and knowledge of gender-responsive concepts and approaches, surveys were administered during trainings convened by the GJJJ Task Force (July 2011, October 2011, May and June 2012, and August 2013).
- » *Gender-responsive assessment.* Between 2011 and 2013, NCCD administered six surveys to track JAIS training and implementation. Surveys were completed by probation department staff and others who administered initial JAIS assessments and/or reassessments, used JAIS output reports, or supervised staff who use JAIS.
- » *GRAD program.* When a girl exited the GRAD program (whether successfully or unsuccessfully), she received an exit survey and business-sized envelope. The survey collected information about girls' well-being outcomes, relationships with GRAD staff, and perceptions regarding GRAD services. Upon survey completion, the girl placed it in the envelope, sealed the envelope, and returned it to GRAD staff. Sealed envelopes were forwarded to NCCD research staff. The majority of GRAD

- participants who exited the program during the evaluation period returned a survey, reflecting a completion rate of 82.9%.
- » *MY Project.* Although pre-/post-implementation surveys were developed to capture attitudes and perspectives of MY Project mentors and mentees, due to the project's small sample size during the evaluation period, these data were only used in discussions about lessons learned and not as part of the outcome evaluation.
 - » *Policy and practice changes.* To track changes at the system, organizational, program, and individual levels, NCCD surveyed stakeholders in October 2012 and October 2013. Stakeholders also were encouraged to email NCCD throughout the evaluation period with information about policy and practice changes.
- *Interviews and focus groups.* NCCD and the Prison Law Office conducted individual interviews with staff and volunteers from the probation department, Center for Human Services, and Parent Resource Center who were involved in planning and implementation of the GRAD program and MY Project. Interviews focused on challenges, successes, and lessons learned from these interventions. In addition, NCCD staff conducted individual interviews and a focus group with GRAD participants to capture information about girls' experiences in GRAD, relationships developed with GRAD staff, and suggestions for improving GRAD.
 - *Process database.* During the evaluation period, NCCD maintained a tracking database that collected important process data throughout various GJJJ interventions, including task force meeting minutes, training dates, impressions of planning/strategic meetings, and general information.
 - *Monthly project meetings.* Monthly conference calls, attended by the probation department, Prison Law Office, and NCCD, were held to discuss data collection progress, questions, and challenges. Meetings also provided an opportunity to discuss implementation of GJJJ components. Each meeting included participation by the chief probation officer or her designee, as well as other probation management staff.

Appendix B: GJI Task Force—Core Committees

Table B: GJI Task Force—Core Committees

Committee Name	Mission
Successful Diversion Committee	To connect girls to individualized services to prevent them from coming into contact with the justice system, to divert many of those that do, and to support the latter in successfully completing diversion program requirements.
Gender-Responsive Alternatives to Detention (GRAD) Committee	To provide enhanced services (dedicated probation officer, case manager, and clinician) for low-risk, high-needs girls to prevent them from being detained.
In-Custody and Transitional Programs Committee	To develop gender-responsive programs to facilitate girls' development in custody and as they transition out of custody; create a list of available county services; regularly update and distribute the list to youth in custody, on supervision, and in the community; and match existing resources to JAIS interventions.
Successful Placement Committee	To develop nurturing, therapeutic placement options locally for girls who cannot stay or return home right away. This includes foster family placements and congregate care, such as group homes.
Educational Success Committee	To identify prevention and reentry issues that prevent girls from enrolling and succeeding in the least restrictive educational placement and to conduct trainings with the Stanislaus County Office of Education and district schools to improve these issues.

Appendix C: JAIS™ Supervision Strategy Groups

There are four Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System™ (JAIS) supervision strategy groups: Casework/Control, Environmental Structure, Limit Setting, and Selective Intervention. The majority of girls in the Gender-Responsive Alternatives to Detention (GRAD) program (70.1%) were in the Casework/Control or Selective Intervention strategy groups.

Overview of Selective Intervention

The Selective Intervention strategy was recommended for 25 girls in GRAD, the majority of whom were moderate risk. This strategy is recommended for youth who tend to have positive, prosocial adjustment and lack significant behavior problems prior to a sudden onset of delinquency. Contributing factors may include a rapid drop in school attendance and achievement and a shift in peer group from prosocial to delinquent. External events prompting delinquency may include family disruption; physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; or estrangement from friends or family. Early physical maturity, especially among girls, may lead to interest in an older peer group, followed by curfew violation, decreased interest in school, substance use, and promiscuity. Youth in this strategy group are generally comfortable with adults and are likely to be successful in meeting their probation terms and fulfilling other requirements. They will typically view their probation officer or case manager as an ally. As these youth are usually new to the juvenile justice system, they may have difficulty adjusting to supervision and situations that call for detention or institutional placement (National Council on Crime and Delinquency [NCCD], 2011).

Overview of Casework/Control

The Casework/Control supervision strategy was recommended for 20 girls in GRAD, the majority of whom were high risk. Casework/Control is targeted to youth who tend to have general instability and chronic adjustment problems. This often includes chaotic home lives, drug/alcohol abuse, and inconsistent or exaggerated parental discipline. Physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse are common. They are likely to have a history of felony and misdemeanor offenses. Delinquent behavior is usually due to inability to cope with chronic personal and family problems, coupled with a generalized hostility. Girls who have been commercially sexually exploited may be part of this strategy group and tend to be hard to reach, difficult and frustrating to supervise, and more likely to violate probation than girls in other strategy groups. Staff who work with Casework/Control girls should be seasoned, well trained, and ideally have a clinical/counseling background (NCCD, 2011).

Overview of Limit Setting Strategy

The Limit Setting supervision strategy was recommended for 10.4% of girls in GRAD. This strategy is used with youth who tend to be motivated by power, money, and excitement. They commit status offenses as a means of asserting their independence, but criminal misconduct is the dominant pattern of delinquency. They may see crime as their only opportunity to achieve money and power and see delinquent identification as their only means to gain acceptance. With criminal behavior frequently beginning at a young age, these youth often grow to

be sophisticated, street-smart survivors who prefer to direct their talents toward beating the system and avoiding being controlled by adults. They may be linked to adult criminal associates, which may signal a degree of exploitation by the adults involved. When supervising girls in this strategy, staff should recognize that limits and established rules must be consistently and fairly enforced. While supportive or helping techniques are generally not appropriate, fair and consistent use of authority can gain girls' respect. Girls in this strategy should be encouraged to use their talents and energy in challenging but prosocial ways (NCCD, 2011).

Overview of Environmental Structure Strategy

The Environmental Structure supervision strategy was recommended for 19.4% of girls in GRAD. In general, this strategy is the best approach for youth under age 12. It targets youth who lack social and survival skills and have poor impulse control. These youth tend to have difficulty understanding others' motives

and are often used and exploited. Delinquency tends to occur when they are influenced by more sophisticated and criminally oriented peers. When associating with delinquent peers, these youth may be assaultive, abuse drugs/alcohol, and be verbally belligerent. These youth often associate with much younger companions, and the potential for acting out sexually with younger partners is a reality, likely due to limited social skills. Conversely, they may be sexually exploited by older or more sophisticated partners. Members of this group often function poorly in school, and special education classes are often appropriate. Regarding supervision, the caseworker should assume a supportive parent/teacher role. A patient, nonthreatening stance, which includes being direct, simple, and concrete in setting rules and expectations, is recommended. It is helpful to set achievable goals so girls experience success and continue to put forth effort (NCCD, 2011).

Appendix D: Decisions Made Regarding Noncompliance (GRAD Participants)

**Table D: Decisions Made Regarding Noncompliance
(N = 163 instances of noncompliance)**

Type of Option	Percent Referred
New referral for treatment	13.5%
Written work (may include writing an essay, doing a mini project, developing goals and plans, etc.)	30.1%
Community service	12.9%
Substance abuse treatment	7.4%
Wraparound services	1.2%
Temporary shelter/cooling off location	3.1%
Electronic monitoring/house arrest	1.8%
Juvenile hall	26.4%
Out-of-home placement	3.7%

Appendix E: References

- Acoca, L. (1999). Investing in girls: A 21st century strategy. *Juvenile Justice*, 6(1), 3–13.
- Acoca, L., & Dedel, K. (1998). *No place to hide: Understanding and meeting the needs of girls in the California juvenile justice system*. San Francisco, CA: National Council on Crime and Delinquency.
- Chesney-Lind, M., & Shelden, R. (1998). *Girls, delinquency, and juvenile justice* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- DeHart, D. D. (2009). *Polyvictimization among girls in the juvenile justice system: Manifestations and associations to delinquency*. Columbia, SC: Center for Child & Family Studies.
- Gage, N., Josephs, N. L., & Lunde, K. (2012). Girls with emotional disturbance and a history of arrest: Characteristics and school based predictors of arrest. *Education & Treatment of Children*, 35(4), 603–622.
- Holsinger, K., & Holsinger, A. M. (2005). Differential pathways to violence and self-injurious behavior: African-American and White girls in the juvenile justice system. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 42, 211–242.
- Irvine, A., & Roa, J. (2010). *When gender specific programs for girls are not culturally competent enough*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Lipsey, M., Howell, J. C., Kelly, M. R., Chapman, G., & Carver, D. (2010). *Improving the effectiveness of juvenile justice programs: A new perspective on evidence-based practice*. Washington, DC: Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Georgetown University.
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency. (2010). *Stanislaus County Girls Juvenile Justice Initiative: Strategic plan*. Oakland, CA: Author.
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency. (2011). *JAIS™ system manual*. Madison, WI: Author.
- Rowan, A. B., Foy, D. W., Rodriguez, N., & Ryan, S. (1994). Posttraumatic stress disorder in a clinical sample of adults sexually abused as children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 18(1), 51–61.
- Sherman, F. T. (2005). *13 pathways to juvenile detention reform: Detention reform and girls challenges and solutions*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- Sherman, F., Mendel, R. A., & Irvine, A. (2013). *Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Practice Guide 5—Making detention reform work for girls: A guide to juvenile detention reform*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- Teplin, L. A., Abram, K. M., McClelland, G. M., Dulcan, M. K., & Mericle, A. A. (2002). Psychiatric disorders in youth in juvenile detention. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 59(12), 1133–1143.
- Underwood, L., Stewart, S. E., & Castellanos, A. M. (2007). Effective practices for sexually traumatized girls: Implications for counseling and education. *The International Journal of Behavioral Consultation and Therapy*, 3(3), 403–419.
- US Census Bureau. (2013). *State & county QuickFacts: Stanislaus County, California*. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06099.html>
- Veysey, B. M. (2003, July). *Adolescent girls with mental health disorders involved with the juvenile justice system*. Delmar, NY: National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice.
- Wu, L. (2010). *Why do we need gender-responsive assessments, programs and services for justice-involved girls?* Berkeley, CA: Prison Law Office.

Appendix F: Endnotes

¹ Wu, 2010.

² While there are various definitions for gender responsiveness, one commonly used definition, which provides the GJJ's framework, is: "...[C]reating an environment through site selection, staff selection, program development, content, and material that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses the issues of the participants. Gender-responsive approaches are multidimensional and based on theoretical perspectives that acknowledge women's pathways into the criminal justice system. These approaches address social (e.g., poverty, race, class and gender inequality) and cultural factors, as well as therapeutic interventions. These interventions address issues such as abuse, violence, family relationships, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders. They provide a strength-based approach to treatment and skill building." Bloom, B., and Covington, S. (2000). *Gendered justice: Programming for women in correctional settings*. Paper presented to the American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, CA, p. 11.

³ The existing research is not clear about whether girls actually commit more status offenses or if they are arrested for more status offenses compared with boys. More in-depth research is needed to understand behavior differences across gender and differences in system responses across gender.

⁴ Sherman, Mendel, & Irvine, 2013.

⁵ Acoca, 1999; Acoca & Dedel, 1998; Holsinger & Holsinger, 2005.

⁶ Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1998; DeHart, 2009; Gage, Josephs, & Lunde, 2012; Sherman, Mendel, & Irvine, 2013, DeHart, 2009.

⁷ Foa & Rothbaum, 1998, as cited in Underwood, Stewart, & Castellanos, 2007; Rowan, Foy, Rodriguez, & Ryan, 1994; Veysey, 2003.

⁸ The NCCD Center for Girls and Young Women was a center of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, which promotes just and equitable social systems for individuals, families, and communities through research, public policy, and practice. As part of the GJJ, the Stanislaus County Probation Department implemented the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System™ (JAIS), a gender-specific risk and needs assessment and supervision system from NCCD. JAIS™ training and technical assistance was provided by NCCD staff and consultants who work independently of NCCD program or research staff.

⁹ NCCD, 2010.

¹⁰ NCCD, 2010.

¹¹ Unless otherwise noted, the evaluation time period was July 2011 to September 2013. (Data collection methodology is described in Appendix A.)

¹² The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), in partnership with NCCD, launched the National Girls Institute (NGI) in 2010 to advance the understanding of girls' issues and improve program and system responses to girls. NCCD partnered with OJJDP on NGI from 2010 to 2013.

¹³ Because some probation department staff and staff from other agencies attended multiple trainings, this total does not represent 234 unduplicated individuals.

¹⁴ "Booked" refers to a youth being taken into the facility and kept until released by a probation officer or judge.

¹⁵ After September 2013, the probation department continued contracting with the Center for Human Services for the case manager position, which has remained full time. However, due to funding limitations, the clinician now works with GRAD participants on a more limited basis than previously. Additionally, while the clinician role was historically filled by Center for Human Services staff, it is now staffed by Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services.

¹⁶ US Census Bureau, 2013.

¹⁷ The historical control group is very small because NCCD, in partnership with the Stanislaus County Probation Department, also had to exclude many girls from the control group because they did not have similar criminal histories or demographic characteristics to the participant group.

¹⁸ Juvenile justice outcome data represent the unduplicated number of girls who experienced a particular outcome one or more times within six months of program entry. Outcome data (other than out-of-home placement data) were collected during the first six months of GRAD participation. The out-of-home placement outcome is representative of all participants (GRAD compared with control) during the entire evaluation period.

¹⁹ Only sustained new offenses were considered for the analysis.

²⁰ Only sustained probation violations were considered for the analysis.

²¹ Lipsey, Howell, Kelly, Chapman, & Carver, 2010.

²² This analysis is based on 163 instances of noncompliance. A girl may have multiple instances of noncompliance while in GRAD or may have none.

²³ Irvine & Roa, 2010.