

Positive Youth Justice Initiative Year 1 Evaluation Findings

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The Positive Youth Justice Initiative is a Sierra Health Foundation initiative managed by the Center for Health Program Management, with additional funding from The California Endowment and The California Wellness Foundation.



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Executive Summary

Positive Youth Justice Initiative: Background and Context

Sierra Health Foundation has long invested in the well-being of California's youth, recognizing that supporting young people to lead healthy lives and reach their full potential is central to the foundation's vision of long-term economic, social, and cultural health. Following years of on-the-ground experience in youth development, extensive research and preparation, and in the context of a favorable policy environment, the foundation launched the Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) in 2012.¹

PYJI aims to shift juvenile justice practice and policy by supporting California counties to design and implement system-level reforms to improve the health and well-being of crossover youth—youth who have been involved in the child welfare system and who are currently engaged in the juvenile justice system. Through an approach that invests in youth, treats trauma, provides wraparound service delivery, and changes systems to strengthen local infrastructure and sustain the improvements, the initiative seeks to reduce barriers to crossover youths' successful transition to adulthood, including structural biases that exacerbate the over-representation of youth of color in county juvenile justice systems across the state.

In 2012, one-year planning grants were awarded to six counties to support the development of comprehensive, data-informed PYJI innovation plans. In October 2013, four of these counties—Alameda, San Diego, San Joaquin, and Solano—were awarded two-year implementation grants. In each county, public agencies, community-based organizations (CBOs), and community leaders work together with the support of PYJI technical assistance providers to change how their local systems view, screen, and provide services to crossover youth and their families.

Purpose and Scope of PYJI Evaluation

Sierra Health Foundation contracted with Resource Development Associates (RDA) to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation and early impact of PYJI in order to glean key lessons that the foundation can use to support counties in building systems that embrace positive youth justice. Recognizing that the literature on implementing and measuring systems change in the juvenile justice context is limited, the evaluation seeks not only to advise next steps in PYJI counties, but also to contribute to the juvenile justice field and inform future efforts in California and beyond.

The RDA evaluation team designed a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the implementation and initial impact of PYJI over a two-year time frame, with a focus on assessing the extent to which systems change how they work to support the youth under their jurisdictions. Considered a “baseline” phase, the current Year 1 evaluation aims to document the status of counties' early-stage implementation, as well as to identify pre-implementation factors that may influence the progress of implementation.

¹ The Positive Youth Justice Initiative is a Sierra Health Foundation initiative managed by the Center for Health Program Management, with additional funding from The California Endowment and The California Wellness Foundation.

The evaluation team, in collaboration with Sierra Health Foundation, identified a series of data collection activities designed to produce a thorough understanding of implementation activities and strategies. These included: key informant interviews with PYJI leadership in each county; focus groups with staff from PYJI partner agencies and CBOs in each county; a site visit with PYJI leadership in each county; a staff survey that was disseminated to staff in PYJI partner agencies and CBOs; and a survey of youth and their caregivers. The evaluation team also reviewed documentary data from each county and from the foundation, and met regularly with the Sierra Health Foundation PYJI team.

Year 1 Evaluation Findings

The evaluation team synthesized data from counties' implementation plans, progress reports, key informant interviews, focus groups, and surveys to highlight cross-cutting themes within key domains of systems change.

- **Leadership vision and support.** All counties identified strong support and a shared vision for PYJI from executive and/or upper management. At the same time, lead agencies in some counties have experienced greater challenges in developing their capacity for both cultural and structural change.
- **Line staff vision and support.** Both management and line staff observed that at this early stage of implementation there is less awareness of and support for PYJI among mid-level and line staff compared to the executive and upper management. Staff at all levels anticipated that at least some line staff would be apprehensive about or resistant to PYJI due to fears of added responsibilities and/or negative experiences with past initiatives.
- **Partnerships and collaboration.** Members of County and CBO leadership noted that collaboration among many partner agencies was strong leading into PYJI. In particular, counties with histories of collaboration through prior partnerships reported success in building on that foundation for PYJI. Most counties identified additional partners that they would like to involve in PYJI, and most public agency partners expressed a need to improve their engagement and collaboration with CBOs. Mid- and lower-level staff commonly observed challenges in coordination resulting from differences in priorities between Probation and Child Welfare and/or Probation and Behavioral Health staff, which they attributed to differences in the broader organizational culture of these agencies.
- **Policies and procedures.** In all counties both the PYJI lead agency and partner agencies have begun the process of creating new policies and procedures to support PYJI, with leadership describing PYJI elements that have been incorporated into new or revised departmental policies and procedures, and/or contracts with service providers. County leadership also noted that updating policies and procedures is a long process and that challenges can arise in ensuring policies align across systems.

- **Data collection, sharing, and use.** All counties have made improvements in their ability to collect data on crossover youth. At the same time, counties commonly cited challenges related to data capacity, data sharing, and use of data in decision-making.
- **Approach to services: PYD, TIC, wraparound, team-based decision making, and gender-responsive services.** To varying degrees, counties have implemented or explored many PYJI elements prior to the initiative. Most counties have incorporated TIC into at least some procedures and contracts and expanded access to wraparound services. While counties have taken steps to develop or expand team decision-making approaches, they also pointed out challenges with both the philosophical and practical shifts required to implement team decision making, highlighting a need for continued attention to adopting service delivery practices in line with PYJI.
- **Youth, family, and community engagement.** Counties reported varying degrees of youth and family involvement in the PYJI planning process, with most noting room for growth in the extent to which they bring youth voices to the table, both in PYJI planning and in service delivery. Counties were also at different stages in their efforts to engage the broader community, with some having held community engagement forums and others still in the planning process.
- **Staff training in PYJI elements.** All counties have moved forward in implementing staff training as part of PYJI, with TIC appearing to be the most common and highly prioritized training topic. At the same time, counties noted that identifying the right approach, trainer, timing, and participants is a time consuming process, and some members of leadership and line staff respondents raised concerns about sustaining the training over time.
- **Resources and sustainability.** With regard to staffing resources, all counties noted limited staff time as a key challenge in implementing PYJI. In terms of financial resources, some agencies reported drawing on funding sources such as Probation Department funds and contracts with community providers, although many were unclear about whether or how additional funding sources have been leveraged. Overall, agency leadership shared positive feedback about their experience working with Sierra Health Foundation. Leadership from some counties emphasized the benefit of the technical assistance provided, while also voicing the need for additional assistance. Some counties also raised concerns about having the necessary capacity and resources to sustain and expand system-level changes over the long term.

Moving Forward: Areas for Consideration

Placing counties' implementation successes and challenges in the context of the key components of effective systems change, the following stand out as key areas that Sierra Health Foundation should consider for further reflection and action as the initiative moves forward.

- **Moving from support to action.** For the most part, counties indicated high levels of PYJI support and engagement from executive and upper management, and in some cases from lower levels of staff as well. At the same time, counties noted challenges related to staff time, capacity, and

scheduling. Thus even when counties express philosophical support and buy-in, limitations in staff capacity may mean that such support does not always translate to successful implementation.

- **Importance of culture shift.** While data collection with line staff has been limited thus far, findings suggest that in many counties there will be significant challenges to changing philosophies and practices among line staff, particularly probation officers and child welfare line staff. Staff described deeply entrenched and troubling practices where agencies fight over where a youth belongs, with staff from each agency looking for ways to relieve themselves of responsibility for these youth. Focus groups with line staff and initial survey findings from youth and caregivers underscore that juvenile justice agencies in particular have significant work to do in moving from high-level philosophical support to positive juvenile probation practices on-the-ground.
- **Support for data capacity.** The development of data systems, data-sharing protocols and procedures, and capacity for outcome measurement appears to be a formidable challenge for many counties and agencies. This may be an area where counties require additional support from TA providers.
- **Integration of PYJI elements.** While all counties have had previous experience with various elements of PYJI, this may be the first time they have made efforts to integrate them. Because most counties have thus far focused on building their operational capacity, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the other elements have been implemented in an integrated manner, rather than in a more piecemeal fashion.
- **Initiative management and coordination.** The time required for County staff to coordinate and manage PYJI is significant. As such, it may be useful to consider the roles and responsibilities of the various initiative partners—grantees, TA providers, and Sierra Health Foundation—in the day-to-day management of PYJI planning and implementation.
- **Cross-county differences.** The four PYJI counties have designed implementation plans that are very different, and each of the counties themselves has unique characteristics. As the initiative progresses, it may be fruitful to explore whether counties experience particular successes and challenges based on the scope of their initiative—for example, whether they are undertaking a pilot project versus a county-wide project—as well as other county characteristics, such as size, geography, and demographic makeup.
- **Scope and scale of PYJI.** Counties have already begun to consider how PYJI's focus on the relatively narrow population of crossover youth will ultimately fit into their systems more generally. This speaks to the benefit of engaging counties in this discussion explicitly and early to ensure they are putting measures in place that will allow the initiative to be brought to scale.

I. Introduction

Background and Context

Sierra Health Foundation has long invested in the well-being of California's youth, recognizing that supporting young people to lead healthy lives and reach their full potential is central to the foundation's vision of long-term economic, social, and cultural health.

Findings from the foundation's youth-centered efforts, including its REACH Youth Development Program (2006 - 2010) and *Healthy Youth/Healthy Regions* report (2008), highlighted the extent to which young people who are typically at the margins of society experience disparities in health and well-being. Most often, these are youth of color who live in communities that have high rates of poverty, have experienced violence or other forms of trauma, and are more likely to be involved in systems such as child welfare and/or juvenile justice (Sierra Health Foundation, 2012).

At the same time, state policymakers have been emphasizing local control for public systems, including youth-service systems, and rehabilitative rather than correctional approaches to criminal and juvenile justice. In 2011 and 2012, Gov. Jerry Brown proposed closing the state's youth prisons; while these proposals were ultimately revised, they signaled a movement toward significant changes to the state juvenile justice system. The passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 109 in 2011 significantly changed the adult correctional system by shifting responsibility for certain offenders from the state to counties and placing a greater emphasis on treatment-oriented approaches to reducing recidivism and improving well-being.

In the context of its on-the-ground experience and a favorable policy environment, the foundation recognized a window of opportunity to advance juvenile justice reform and began to explore more deeply the challenges facing youth involved in juvenile justice systems, as well as opportunities for the foundation to be an effective agent for change in this arena.

In March 2011 the foundation commissioned the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ) to produce *Renewing Juvenile Justice*, a report that critically examined the juvenile justice system in California and explored the role of foundations in promoting systemic reform. Informed by the report's findings and recommendations, in December 2011 the foundation's board of directors approved a framework for a youth development initiative focusing on youth who have been formally involved in the child welfare system and who are currently engaged in the juvenile justice system—often referred to as *crossover youth*. The purpose of this new endeavor, to be called the Positive Youth Justice Initiative, would be to improve youth outcomes through broad-based reforms at the county level.

Goals and Components of the Positive Youth Justice Initiative

The Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) aims to shift juvenile justice practice and policy by supporting California counties to design and implement system-level reforms to improve the health and well-being of crossover youth. By supporting counties in addressing the systemic issues that impact this vulnerable population, the initiative seeks to reduce barriers to their successful transition to adulthood, including structural biases that exacerbate the over-representation of youth of color in county juvenile justice

systems across the state. While the initiative focuses specifically on crossover youth—with the rationale that beginning with the highest risk youth will make sure the system works for all—the foundation hopes that ultimately the system-level changes made under PYJI will benefit all children who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.

PYJI is a Sierra Health Foundation initiative managed by the Center for Health Program Management, with additional funding from The California Endowment and The California Wellness Foundation. In 2012, one-year planning grants of \$75,000 were awarded to six counties to support the development of comprehensive, data-informed PYJI innovation plans. In October 2013, four of these counties—Alameda, San Diego, San Joaquin, and Solano—were awarded two-year implementation grants of \$400,000 each. In each county, public agencies, community-based organizations (CBOs), and community leaders work together with the support of PYJI technical assistance (TA) providers to change how their systems view, screen, and provide services to crossover youth and their families. As the implementation phase progresses, Sierra Health Foundation will consider an extension of the initiative’s timeline and funding.



PYJI was designed to support counties in changing the way they work with crossover youth using an approach that invests in youth, treats trauma, provides wraparound service delivery, and changes systems to strengthen local infrastructure and sustain the improvements. Core components of this approach include: 1) Positive Youth Development (PYD), 2) Trauma-Informed Care (TIC), 3) Wraparound Service Delivery, and 4) Improving Operational Capacity.

Positive Youth Development. A PYD framework recognizes and supports youth as assets, rather than as problems, in their communities. In the juvenile justice context, this means that all youth, even those engaged in juvenile justice systems, should be meaningfully engaged and given opportunities to succeed. In contrast to approaches that emphasize incarceration and probation supervision, a positive youth justice framework prioritizes interventions that contribute to youths’ developmental needs around education, workforce, healthy relationships, and community engagement.

Trauma-Informed Care. Significant research has pointed to the importance of addressing the effects of trauma on youth and on their involvement in both the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Research also suggests that these systems often do not assess youth for trauma, or do not assess them appropriately. Failing to provide young people with services and treatment to address their trauma increases their risk for future involvement in the justice system and prevents them from reaching their full potential. In addition, it is important to identify and address ways in which participation in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems can itself be traumatizing; this is especially true when these systems take punitive or deficit-based approaches to service provision that sanction youth rather than supporting them.

Wraparound Service Delivery. Wraparound service delivery is characterized by individualized, team-based care planning and intensive service delivery for individuals with complex, multi-faceted needs. The goal of this approach is to improve the effectiveness of treatment by developing care plans that are comprehensive, community based, culturally relevant, strength based, and family centered.

Improving Operational Capacity. A key element of PYJI centers on strengthening counties' operational capacity, with the engagement of technical assistance providers to support counties in improving data collection and reporting, institutionalizing the use of validated screening and assessment tools, promoting culture change through staff engagement and training, integrating PYD and TIC in agency policies and practices, and leveraging additional funding sources. In addition to streamlining operational practices and improving overall efficiency, this focus on operational capacity is intended to support counties in address racial and ethnic disparities in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. By supporting counties in identifying and addressing potential disparities in how their systems respond to youth of color, PYJI seeks to advance consistent and equitable responses to youth across County systems.

Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

Sierra Health Foundation contracted with Resource Development Associates (RDA) to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation and early impact of PYJI. Recognizing that the literature on implementing and measuring systems change in the juvenile justice context is limited, the evaluation seeks not only to advise next steps in PYJI counties, but also to contribute to the juvenile justice field and inform future efforts in California and beyond.

Sierra Health Foundation recognizes that challenges are to be expected in the implementation of any major initiative. Thus rather than critically judging or comparing counties' performance, the evaluation aims to document what it takes to implement broad system-level changes, in order to glean key lessons that the foundation can use to support counties in building systems that embrace positive youth justice. To this end, the evaluation focuses on three broad areas of inquiry, which will be discussed in greater detail in Section II: Evaluation Design and Methods.

1. Successes and challenges of PYJI implementation;
2. System-level impacts of PYJI; and
3. Individual-level impacts of PYJI on youths' experience of the systems with which they interact.

The Year 1 evaluation is designed to focus on the first of these three areas, while also documenting baseline data for the second and third areas. The Year 2 evaluation will synthesize data across the two years to document progress toward actualizing systems change. The findings presented in this report reflect data from qualitative and quantitative data gathered from PYJI partner agencies and CBOs between February and May 2014, covering the first two quarters of Year 1 of PYJI implementation.

Organization of the Report

Section II of the report describes the evaluation design and methods. Section III is the main body of the report, presenting cross-cutting findings related to the implementation of PYJI according to key domains of system change. Section IV steps back to place the findings in a broader context, highlighting factors across counties that emerged as key facilitators of success, as well as key challenges and considerations as PYJI moves ahead.

In order to place PYJI in the context of comparable reform efforts, Appendix A reviews the literature on implementing and measuring systems change. Appendix B includes county-level reports describing key progress and challenges in implementation, along with a summary of youth and caregiver survey results.

II. Evaluation Design and Methods

Evaluation Overview

The RDA evaluation team designed a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the implementation and initial impact of PYJI over a two-year time frame. The high-level research questions that guide the evaluation are:

1. What successes and challenges have counties experienced in the implementation of PYJI?
2. What are the system-level impacts of implementing PYJI, and how does PYJI affect partner agencies' relationship to the systems they function within?
3. How does PYJI affect youth and caregiver experiences with the systems they interact with?

These research questions intentionally focus on measuring changes at the system level. While the ultimate goal of PYJI is to improve the experiences and outcomes of youth and families involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems—including reducing justice system involvement and improving educational and employment outcomes—the two-year evaluation was designed with the recognition that counties will likely not see changes in youth outcomes until the systems themselves have evolved to better meet youths' needs. Thus while the longer-term measure of this initiative's success will be improvements in youth health and well-being, this evaluation centers on assessing the extent to which systems change how they work to support the youth under their jurisdictions. As such, the evaluation emphasizes shorter-term individual-level outcomes as they relate to youth and caregivers' *experiences with* the various systems with which they interact, rather than changes in justice system involvement over the two-year period.

Phases of Evaluation

The evaluation is divided into two phases. Considered a “baseline” phase, the Year 1 evaluation focuses on the first of the research questions described above, and aims to document the status of counties' early-stage implementation, as well as pre-implementation factors that may influence the progress of implementation. In addition, the Year 1 evaluation includes data collection aimed at establishing baseline indicators by which to assess the second and third research questions in Year 2.

The Year 2 evaluation will synthesize data across the two years in order to document progress toward actualizing systems change within partner agencies and CBOs, as well as progress toward improving individual-level experiences with services and programs. RDA will also work with the W. Haywood Burns Institute (BI), PYJI's data capacity TA provider, to collect quantitative juvenile justice-system data from each county in order to present preliminary data on youth justice system involvement before and after PYJI implementation.

In order to inform the evaluation questions and indicators, RDA conducted a literature and best practice review of evaluation studies and performance measures in relevant fields such as youth systems, criminal justice systems, and collaborative system-wide initiatives. This review focused on determining

outcome domains and performance measures applicable to the scope and goals of PYJI. In addition, RDA consulted with internal staff with expertise in systems change and contacted experts in the juvenile justice field to gather suggestions about well-regarded performance measures for relevant systems-change initiatives. Our staff corresponded with Jeff Butts, Director of the Research and Evaluation Center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York (CUNY) and PYJI evaluation advisor; and Vincent Schiraldi, Commissioner, New York City Probation. Evaluation domains and indicators are discussed in greater detail in Appendix A: Implementing and Measuring Systems Change.

Data Collection

The evaluation team, in collaboration with Sierra Health Foundation, identified a series of data collection activities designed to produce a thorough understanding of implementation activities and strategies both within and across counties. These included: key informant interviews with PYJI leadership in each county; focus groups with staff from PYJI partner agencies and CBOs in each county; a site visit with PYJI leadership in each county; and a staff survey that was disseminated to staff in PYJI partner agencies and CBOs. In addition, RDA obtained documentary data from each county and from the foundation, including PYJI Implementation Plans and Progress Reports, and Sierra Health Foundation site visit notes. Regular meetings with the Sierra Health Foundation team and conversations with PYJI TA providers also informed our understanding of PYJI implementation.

In addition, because this initiative is, ultimately, about youth, it is essential to incorporate their voices in the evaluation. The evaluation team developed surveys for both youth and caregivers to assess their experiences with the systems with which they interact. Surveys were disseminated by the PYJI evaluation liaison in each county. Youth and caregiver surveys were available in English and in Spanish, and both versions were available online and in paper.

Table 1. Data Collection by County

Alameda County	San Diego County	San Joaquin County	Solano County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership KIIs (9) • FG with Probation Supervisors (1) • FG with Child Welfare Division Directors (1) • FG with CBO Providers (1) • Site Visit • Documentary Data • Staff Survey (67) • Youth Survey (23) • Caregiver Survey (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership KIIs (8) • FG with PYJI Leadership (1) • FG with PYJI Partners and CBO Staff (1) • Site Visit • Documentary Data • Staff Survey (8) • Youth Survey (8) • Caregiver Survey (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership KIIs (7) • FG with Probation and Child Welfare Line Staff (1) • FG with CBO Leadership and Line Staff (1) • Site Visit • Documentary Data • Staff Survey (67) • Youth Survey (93) • Caregiver Survey (65) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FG with PYJI Leadership Team (1) • FG with Education and Juvenile Detention Facility Staff (1) • FG with Probation Officers and CBO Line Staff (1) • Site Visit • Documentary Data • Staff Survey (10) • Youth Survey (34) • Caregiver Survey (0)

These activities will be repeated in Year 2, which will largely involve the re-administration of the baseline phase data collection activities. The re-administration of these data collection tools will allow

the evaluation team to explore counties' evolution over time in key domains of systems change, as well as assess movement in youth and caregivers' experiences with the systems. In addition, in Year 2 of the evaluation, the evaluation team will conduct focus groups with PYJI youth in each county to gain a more in-depth understanding of their experiences with PYJI agencies, in their own voices. Because youth participation in juvenile justice and child welfare systems is often in flux, the evaluation is not designed to follow individual youth over time, but rather to capture a broad sense of youths' experiences with these systems over the course of PYJI implementation.

Data Analysis

The RDA evaluation team coded all qualitative data thematically, coding for pre-implementation facilitators and barriers, implementation progress and successes, and implementation challenges and barriers, as well as for PYJI elements², and for domains of systems change implementation³ classified through the team's literature review. Where possible, we also coded for specific public agencies, community-partners, and staff level. Through this approach, we were able to identify progress and challenges in implementation across PYJI elements and performance measure domains, as well as differences in responses within and between PYJI partner agencies.

Staff surveys were disaggregated by public agency or community based partner and responses were triangulated with qualitative data findings. It is important to note that because of wide variations in the number of respondents in different counties as well as from different PYJI partners, staff surveys were analyzed primarily to ascertain trends within counties, in contrast to qualitative data which was analyzed for trends within and across counties.

Because youth and caregiver surveys were designed to assess clients' *experiences* with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, rather than the extent to which these systems are moving toward positive youth justice approaches, these surveys were analyzed primarily as a means to establish baselines for comparison in Year 2. This distinction was particularly important given the inability to determine the extent to which youth and caregivers' experiences may have been affected by PYJI implementation thus far.

Limitations

As with any research, there are several limitations in the evaluation design and data collection that are important to keep in mind when reviewing findings. One of the primary limitations of the Year 1 evaluation is that although it is intended to establish a baseline for comparison in Year 2, all data collection activities occurred after counties had already begun to undertake activities under PYJI. While this provides rich data by which to assess progress toward full implementation and to identify challenges that may impede implementation, it limits our ability to understand the "true" baseline context prior to

² PYJI elements included positive youth development, trauma-informed care, wraparound services, team-based decision making, and gender responsive services.

³ Domains of system change implementation included leadership vision and support; line staff vision and support; partnerships and collaboration; policies and procedures; data collection, sharing, and use; family and community engagement; training; and resources and sustainability.

PYJI. In other words, when exploring key domains of systems change, it is not possible to tell whether counties' current status has already changed since PYJI implementation began. In addition, as with any non-experimental design, the evaluation will not be able to attribute changes that occur in Year 2 to the initiative, as we will not know whether changes have occurred as part of PYJI or as part of concurrent efforts that are not part of PYJI.

In order to address both of these limitations, the evaluation design includes substantial qualitative data, along with secondary sources such as documentary data and ongoing conversations with the Sierra Health Foundation project team, to allow the evaluation team to triangulate data from multiple sources. For example, RDA will use key informant interviews and focus groups to understand each county's pre-implementation context and ask informants to identify specific changes that have occurred as part of PYJI. This will assist the evaluation team in attributing activities and outcomes to activities carried out under the initiative.

Similarly, in measuring individual-level youth and caregiver outcomes, the addition of focus groups in Year 2 of the evaluation will allow the evaluation team to gain a more complete understanding of how youth are experiencing changes that are occurring through PYJI implementation. Qualitative methods do pose their own challenges, such as a reliance on self-reported data and the possibility of recall bias or social desirability; however, the use of multiple data sources, as well as efforts to ensure that sources come from a diversity of agencies and perspectives, are designed to mitigate these limitations.

Several limitations arose regarding the qualitative data collection in Year 1. First, due to several challenges in scheduling and recruitment, the makeup of the focus group participants was not consistent across counties. For example, in some counties focus group participants came largely from leadership levels of staff, while in other counties participants were from middle management or line staff. In addition, the agencies and organizations staff represented varied greatly, with some focus groups including staff from only one or two PYJI partners and others including more diverse representation.

With regard to the staff, youth, and caregiver surveys, all three surveys also had very different response rates across the four counties, with some counties reaching high proportions of their population, and others reaching much smaller proportions. As such, it is necessary to keep in mind that the findings from these data collection efforts reflect the experiences of those who were engaged in and chose to respond to the survey, and may not be generalizable to all staff, crossover youth, or caregivers. It is also important to consider potential bias in youth survey responses based on how the survey was administered. While the evaluation team made efforts to set up consistent administration procedures, the diverse contexts of the PYJI counties and their PYJI programs necessarily led to variations in survey administration. As some youth completed the survey online while others completed a paper version, the different modes of administration may have affected youths' perceptions of the confidentiality of the survey. In addition, while all youth completed the survey independently, youth within and across counties received the survey from different staff (in some cases probation officers and in other cases youth CBO providers), which may have influenced youths' responses.

III. Cross-Cutting Findings

This section explores key strengths and challenges that PYJI counties have experienced during the first year of implementation. The sub-sections below synthesize data from counties' implementation plans, progress reports, key informant interviews, focus groups, and surveys to highlight cross-cutting themes within key domains of systems change: leadership vision and support; line staff vision and support; partnerships and collaboration; policies and procedures; data collection, sharing, and use; approach to services; youth, family, and community engagement; staff training in PYJI elements; and resources and sustainability.

The focus of this section is on cross-cutting themes, rather than on individual counties' progress for a number of reasons. First, the primary objective of this evaluation is to evaluate the implementation of the initiative, not of a particular county plan; consequently, this report focuses on common strengths and challenges across PYJI counties to shed light on the facilitators of and barriers to implementing a large-scale initiative across multiple, differing jurisdictions. In addition, the uniqueness and specificity of each county's plan makes direct comparisons between different counties' progress and challenges difficult. By looking at strengths and progress and challenges and opportunities within established domains of systems changes reduces the need for direct comparison. Appendix B presents details on each county's implementation plan and progress.⁴

When reviewing the findings in this section, it is important to recall the limitations discussed in the evaluation methods section, keeping in mind in particular that the findings below are based on counties' self-reported perceptions and that surveys had disparate response rates within and across counties. As mentioned previously, the data collection period for the Year 1 evaluation spanned from February to May 2014—roughly the first two quarters of the first year of implementation. While counties have likely progressed in their implementation since this time, these findings shed light on accomplishments and challenges across the four counties, providing important lessons from the early stages of implementing this ambitious initiative.

Overall Adoption and Rollout of PYJI

All counties have made progress in putting their implementation plans into practice. While counties are moving forward at different paces, all have begun the process of instituting significant system-level changes, in many cases building upon the successes of prior cross-system efforts. From convening multi-agency taskforces, to solidifying MOUs and contracts, to updating policies and procedures, to creating and carrying out training plans, to beginning to serve cohorts of crossover youth, all counties are moving toward a vision of working with crossover youth in a different way. The following are some of the most notable accomplishments:

⁴ Note: While the primary focus of this section is to highlight overall successes and challenges in implementation, rather than to quantify the accomplishments of PYJI counties, in general when referring to PYJI counties, "some" is used to indicate two counties, while "most" is used to refer to three counties.

- All counties have made improvements in their ability to collect data on crossover youth
- All counties have created or modified policies, procedures, and/or contracts to support PYJI
- All counties have planned or implemented staff training to support PYJI
- All counties have modified referral processes and some have increased “warm handoffs” between system partners
- Some counties have expanded access to wraparound services for crossover youth

Along with this progress, PYJI counties and their partners have also faced several key challenges in implementation. Although the four PYJI counties are implementing PYJI differently based on their unique local circumstances, all counties have come up against challenges that have complicated implementation. Among the most common have been achieving widespread support for PYJI from all levels of staff, completing contracts and hiring necessary staff to begin implementing PYJI elements, and improving capacity for data collection and sharing.

Leadership Vision and Support

Strengths & Progress

All counties identified strong support and a shared vision for PYJI from executive and/or upper management and highlighted this as an important force in relationship building, culture shift, and morale building around PYJI. Many CBO leaders also communicated their support of PYJI and responded that the initiative shows promise. On the whole, leadership across PYJI partner agencies expressed a clear understanding about their agency’s role in PYJI.

“Probation has been leading the charge, and I’ve been impressed with the Chief. It is hard—she has to have a lot of heart. She is challenging her own system.”

-CBO partner

Challenges & Opportunities

While County leadership voiced a high degree of buy-in for and faith in the initiative, lead agencies in some counties have experienced greater challenges in developing their capacity for both cultural and structural change. In some counties, PYJI partner agencies noted that executive management from lead agencies has been less actively involved in PYJI, which they felt may have impeded buy-in from mid-level management and line staff. For example, mid-level staff from one county voiced a need for a “PYJI champion,” commenting that they were not aware of a clear leader of the county’s initiative thus far. Child Welfare leadership in counties where their departments will be less directly involved with PYJI youth also mentioned that they would benefit from greater clarity about their role in the initiative.

Line Staff Vision and Support

Strengths & Progress

The degree to which the initiative has been rolled out among line staff, as well as the level of line staff support for PYJI, varied by county and across agencies within counties. According to interviews and focus groups, some counties have seen strong support from line staff and middle management in

several of their PYJI partner agencies and organizations. In these cases, counties generally provided information and/or training about PYJI to line staff early on in the initiative through informational trainings. County and CBO partners also noted that involvement and support from executive leadership

from PYJI partner agencies has been helpful in promoting the philosophy and vision of PYJI among staff at other levels.

“We’re willing to go to a [case planning meeting] and consider not violating the kid yet, to see if we can get that buy-in. We’re all about trying to make it work in the community first.”

-Probation officer

Challenges & Opportunities

Overall, both management and line staff shared that at this early stage of implementation there is less awareness of and support for PYJI among mid-level and line staff compared to the executive and upper management. Staff at all levels observed or anticipated that line staff in at least some County agencies would be apprehensive about or resistant to PYJI due to fears of added responsibilities

and/or negative experiences with past initiatives that were introduced but not sustained, with one county referring to the potential for “initiative burnout”.

Counties also held differing philosophies as to the most appropriate time to roll out the initiative to line staff. Indeed, some counties have informed and involved mid- and lower-level staff, while others have yet to roll out PYJI to staff at these levels. Several members of leadership and line staff underscored the value of gaining buy-in early on and gradually rolling out PYJI to line staff; in other cases, agency leadership expressed concerns that bringing line staff into the process before the details of the initiative had fully taken shape could cause unnecessary anxiety about potential changes in job responsibilities. In some counties, mid- and lower-level staff who had received information or training about PYJI indicated that they did not fully understand the scope of the initiative or their role. A few also commented that they felt insufficiently prepared—both in terms of time and training—to take on new duties under PYJI.

In addition, while in some counties PYJI partners reported strong support for the PYJI philosophy among line staff, in most counties stakeholders also experienced that in at least some partner agencies, “old ways” of operating were deeply entrenched, posing barriers to full buy-in to a PYD- and TIC-informed approach to their practices and services. This concern most frequently arose in relation to justice system agencies, with County agencies and CBO partners in some PYJI counties observing that although Probation leadership appeared to support the PYJI philosophy, some probation officers may hold a more traditional, punitive view of supervision.

“The leadership has strong collaboration, but that isn’t filtering down to the line staff on a routine basis... It will require massive training to get a shared value system started.”

-County leadership

Partnerships and Collaboration

Strengths & Progress

The strength of partnerships and collaboration varied across counties, agencies, and staff positions. Members of County and CBO leadership reported that collaboration among many partner agencies was strong leading into PYJI. In particular, counties with histories of collaboration through prior partnerships, such as the Georgetown Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM), described success in building on that foundation for PYJI. For example, most counties housed their PYJI taskforce within existing interagency planning and decision-making structures. In most cases MOUs formalizing partnerships and outlining partners' roles and responsibilities were created through pre-existing partnerships; through PYJI, most lead agencies have also taken steps to develop additional MOUs for relationships that were not yet formalized.

"Years ago, Probation and Child Welfare [departments] didn't collaborate well. Now I know a dozen people at different levels and I know who to call. It has helped our collaboration so much, which can only be good for youth and families."

-County leadership

County leadership also noted that PYJI has helped to put faces to the names of partners that did not play a large role in prior collaborative efforts, such as the District Attorney's Office. Some counties have been particularly successful in bringing in a broad range of partners to their PYJI planning and implementation efforts, including District Attorney's Offices, Public Defender's Offices, the Juvenile Court, and education stakeholders.

Counties also reported varying levels of collaboration with CBOs, and all—even those with a history of collaboration with CBOs—expressed a desire to strengthen these relationships. Certain County agencies (for example, behavioral health departments) described that they have strong existing partnerships with CBOs by nature of the fact that they contract out most of their direct services. Several CBO partners observed or anticipated that partnerships created or bolstered under PYJI would improve collaboration at the service delivery level, allowing systems to talk to one another more regularly. For example, one CBO that works with foster youth said that because of PYJI, juvenile justice partners are more likely to share information about clients' court dates, thus allowing providers to be more responsive as youth move through multiple systems. In another county, a CBO partner anticipated that the relationships created through PYJI will lead to more referrals from County agencies to CBOs.

Challenges & Opportunities

Some counties conveyed that there is not a strong history of communication and collaboration among PYJI partner agencies to build upon, with several members of leadership and mid-level staff voicing that County systems have historically operated in silos. Regardless of their level of pre-existing collaboration, all counties identified a need for more formalized collaboration and partnership structures. Most counties identified the school system as a partner that should be more involved in PYJI, and some noted that Court and law enforcement stakeholders could be more involved as well. Most public agency partners indicated that they would benefit from improving their engagement and collaboration with

CBOs, both in PYJI planning and implementation. For their part, CBOs tended to perceive lower levels of collaboration among partners serving crossover youth, and agreed that County-CBO partnerships characterized by trust and collaboration could be improved.

In some cases staff at leadership and lower levels expressed diverging views about the strength of interagency collaboration. While leadership generally spoke highly of their communication and coordination with leadership from other partner agencies, mid- and lower-level staff highlighted significant challenges to communication and coordination in the service delivery context. Most commonly, mid- and lower-level staff described challenges in coordination resulting from differences in

“We need to have a forum for cross-agency conversation, especially about resources and the lack of protocols and training in certain areas—to meet more regularly, to be able to provide better services.”

-County line staff

priorities between Probation and Child Welfare and/or Probation and Behavioral Health staff, which they attributed to differences in the broader organizational culture of these organizations. For example, mid- and lower-level staff in all counties observed that Probation and Child Welfare staff face challenges in agreeing on the appropriate handling of and responsibility for certain youth. Staff explained that such disagreements often arise around the

appropriate handling of child abuse claims, as well as the appropriate jurisdiction for Child Welfare-involved youth who commit an offense in counties that do not have dual jurisdiction. In these cases, staff noted that there can often be an “us versus them” mentality in determining whether Probation or Child Welfare should have responsibility for a particular youth’s case, with each side feeling that the other is “too quick to get rid of a kid.”

Some counties also highlighted practical challenges in moving from collaborative *intention* to *action*, for example, overcoming scheduling and capacity constraints to ensure all necessary parties are at the table, both in planning efforts and in implementing services for youth—for example, team case planning meetings.

Policies and Procedures

Strengths & Progress

In all counties both the PYJI lead agency and partner agencies have begun the process of creating new policies and procedures to support PYJI, with leadership in PYJI lead and partner agencies describing PYJI elements that have been incorporated into new or revised departmental policies and procedures, as well as in contracts with service providers. For example, several PYJI partners have incorporated language related to TIC into procedures surrounding intake and case planning, while others have changed procedures around the provision of and access to wraparound services. In most counties some PYJI elements had been integrated into policies and procedures prior to the initiative (e.g., TIC was already required in policies and contracts in some Behavioral Health and Child Welfare departments).

Challenges & Opportunities

While all counties have made progress toward the development or modification of policies and procedures, County leadership also noted that updating policies and procedures is a long process requiring multiple iterations and high-level approval. In particular, counties commonly identified the development and execution of procedures around data sharing and 241.1 joint assessment hearings as challenging, due to the need to meet often-conflicting needs and requirements of multiple agencies. Counties also explained that challenges can arise in ensuring that policies align across systems when these systems operate from different underlying approaches—for example, Juvenile Court judicial policies may not align with PYJI values. In addition, counties reported few, if any, changes to broader agency or departmental policies, focusing on more concrete changes to procedures or protocols.

In addition, focus groups with line staff highlighted potential challenges in ensuring that departmental policies and procedures are correctly understood and carried out. In one county, for example, probation officers shared that at times they are unclear about the expected course of action for a youth's case, even when procedures and protocols exist.

Data Collection, Sharing, and Use

Strengths & Progress

All counties have made progress in their ability to track crossover youth in their data systems. A number of counties highlighted this as an area in which they have consulted with PYJI's data capacity TA provider. As counties' data capacity increases, agencies' ability to make data-informed decisions has also grown. All counties use some form of assessment to inform decision making, and some are exploring modifications or additions to their current tools to improve their ability to identify and appropriately serve crossover youth (e.g., adding trauma to an existing validated assessment tool, and exploring gender-specific assessment tools). Some counties reported strong foundations in data-sharing practices prior to PYJI, with examples including Probation Department access to the Child Welfare data system, and a youth-controlled online system that allows providers to access personal health records.

"[PYJI] really has helped us as a system to be bringing data to the forefront in helping us drive some of our decisions and think about using data as we move forward."

-County leadership

Challenges & Opportunities

All counties recognized challenges related to data capacity and most mentioned that these issues will be part of ongoing conversations with PYJI partners and TA providers. Some agencies are still working on their ability to identify crossover youth early enough in the case flow process to be routed into the appropriate services. All counties emphasized barriers to data sharing due to cross-platform information technology challenges and confidentiality issues, including laws governing data privacy and differing views among agencies and individuals about what information is appropriate to share.

Counties also noted that they could improve their capacity to make data-informed decisions by collecting and sharing more data about crossover youth. Some agencies that already collect more substantial data on their youth population acknowledged that this data is not always used to inform case planning as well as it could be.

Approach to Services: PYD, TIC, Wraparound, Team-Based Decision Making, and Gender-Responsive Services

Strengths & Progress

All counties have prior experience with many of the components of PYJI. To varying degrees, counties had implemented or explored many PYJI elements prior to the initiative, including an emphasis on trauma in Child Welfare and Behavioral Health departments; training with probation officers in behavioral interventions; gender-responsive services in courts, Behavioral Health, and Probation; wraparound services and the designation/use of these services by Probation; team-based decision making processes; and holistic services through Full-Service Community Schools.

Counties have also taken various steps to shift their approaches to services since PYJI implementation began. As discussed above, most counties have incorporated TIC into at least some procedures and contracts. Some have explicitly expanded access to wraparound services, with one county broadly expanding wraparound eligibility. Most have also moved forward with or explored the use of trauma-related and gender-specific assessments, including modifications to existing tools and adoption of new tools.

All counties have taken steps to develop or expand team decision-making approaches. For example, one PYJI lead agency is actively planning to adopt a team decision making model, an approach the Probation Department has not previously used. Other counties have added partners who were not previously part of joint case planning to their case planning team. In counties where Child Welfare and/or Behavioral Health have a history of TIC and/or team decision making, leaders from these agencies have been able to provide assistance to PYJI lead agencies in adopting these practices. One PYJI lead agency, for example, described working closely with the Child Welfare department to develop its team decision making model. The movement toward greater team decision making dovetails with counties' efforts to engage youth and families, as reviewed in the following subsection.

"We have Child and Family Team meetings quarterly. It's still early—it's a mindset [change] for thinking in terms of families. It's a challenge to work with the families. I think it works though, and it helps us work more with the social workers."

-County line staff

Challenges & Opportunities

Some counties noted that they have little experience of integrating PYD and TIC approaches into their practices, which has created a greater learning curve for PYJI implementation. Some also pointed out

challenges with both the philosophical and practical shifts required to implement team decision making, while most felt that CBOs could be included to a greater degree in case planning and service delivery.

In terms of the availability of services to support crossover youth and their families, staff from all counties recognized gaps, particularly in youth-centered services related to mental health, substance abuse, employment, and basic needs such as housing and food. In addition, some counties identified a need to improve awareness (among youth and families as well as probation officers and service providers) of the services that are available. Some counties have also struggled to ensure that crossover youth are being referred to and accessing wraparound services.

Youth, Family, and Community Engagement

Strengths & Progress

Counties indicated varying degrees of youth and family involvement in the PYJI planning process; in some counties youth played an active and consistent role in the planning phase—for example, carrying out surveys and focus groups with their peers and participating in planning meetings—while other counties have solicited youth input through focus groups at discrete points in time. With regard to youth and family involvement in team-based case planning, some counties reported having structures for youth and family involvement in place prior to PYJI (e.g., youth and family partners, youth mentors), while others have developed new positions as part of PYJI (e.g., youth leadership teams, adding youth to existing decision-making teams). With regard to engaging the broader community in PYJI, all counties have held or are planning community engagement forums.

Challenges & Opportunities

Counties with Probation departments as the PYJI lead agency noted room for growth in the extent to which they bring youth voices to the table both in PYJI planning and in service delivery. Several members of leadership and line staff in these counties highlighted a need for deeper shifts in organizational culture to support youth-centered systems and services.

“A lot of youth are getting referred to places that don’t meet all the required needs we have, or waiting weeks to hear from someone—we don’t have time for that; we’re going through stuff right now. Consider what the youth needs and have them express that.”

-CBO youth representative

In one county, PYJI partners pointed out that the success of the initiative will depend on shifting mindsets not only within agencies and organizations, but also among youth. For example, for many youth and families, years of generational trauma and negative experiences with public systems have led to mistrust of authority figures within these systems. Further, staff conveyed that many crossover youth and their families struggle to meet basic needs, which can impact participation in school or community-based activities.

All counties also generally cited little engagement of immediate or extended family in PYJI planning or services, with one county identifying a need to train family and community members in order to allow

for meaningful involvement. Some counties mentioned particular challenges they have encountered in engaging family members in team decision making meetings, suggesting several possible reasons, including competing family needs, perceptions of team meetings as punishment, and mistrust of authority figures.

Staff Training in PYJI Elements

Strengths & Progress

All counties have moved forward in implementing staff training as part of PYJI, with TIC appearing to be the most common and highly prioritized training topic. Leadership from counties that had already held trainings with line staff noted that they were very well received. Some counties also reported a strong history of staff training both within and across agencies—for example, in one county Probation staff are trained in Integrative Behavioral Intervention Strategy (IBIS), Motivational Interviewing, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and Probation and Child Welfare staff have participated in cross-agency trainings.

Challenges & Opportunities

Most counties were just beginning to explore training around PYD and TIC, explaining that determining the appropriate approach, trainer, timing, and participants takes time. In addition, a few leadership and line staff respondents raised concerns about sustaining the training over time and ensuring knowledge is passed on to new staff. Where a train-the-trainer model is planned, several expressed concerns about staff trainers understanding the information well enough to train others.

Resources and Sustainability

Strengths & Progress

Counties have made progress in several areas related to staffing resources. Several agencies have hired new staff to support PYJI, either through creating a new position or filling existing positions. Many of these new staff hires have filled positions related to data management or mental health services. With regard to initiative coordination and management, under the PYJI structure, each county has a designated staff person within its lead agency to coordinate and manage the county's initiative. This person also serves as a liaison to the TA providers and the evaluation team. In addition to these internal staff, most counties have also brought in consultants or facilitators from external organizations to help facilitate the PYJI planning and implementation process. Counties mentioned that this has reduced the burden on internal staff to coordinate the PYJI effort while also fulfilling their other duties. At the same time, counties pointed out that internal PYJI coordinators with longer tenure are sometimes better-positioned to bring together key partners by leveraging pre-existing relationships.

Counties have also considered ways to leverage additional funding sources, including County, state, and federal funding. In addition, all counties also described how their efforts to institutionalize PYJI through staff trainings, job descriptions, performance evaluations, and provider contracts have helped them plan for the sustainability of the initiative.

Challenges & Opportunities

With regard to staffing, all counties highlighted limited staff time as a key barrier to implementing PYJI, specifying that many aspects of the initiative, including additional trainings, data tracking, and team decision making meetings require additional staff time. Counties also voiced challenges with the significant amount of staff time required for the coordination and management of their county's initiative. In most cases the person designated to coordinate PYJI is an existing staff person who continues to carry on their previous duties in addition to PYJI. Several coordinators felt that given the amount of work required, the staff person coordinating the initiative should be solely dedicated to PYJI.

"For all agencies, a big challenge is the multiple demands placed upon staff."

-PYJI partner

With regard to financial resources, counties with larger and more geographically dispersed populations expressed that PYJI funds were not nearly sufficient to reach all crossover youth in the county or to cover staffing costs for the initiative. Some counties also noted that they are working to adapt to changes made to funding streams such as SB 163, EPSDT, and Title IV-E, including funding realignments and freezes. While some agencies reported drawing on funding sources such as Probation Department funds and contracts with community providers, many were unclear about whether or how sources such as EPSDT, SB 163, the Katie A settlement, and Title IV-E have been used. This may suggest that counties are not yet leveraging these resources, or, perhaps, that the members of leadership who participated in the evaluation—primarily those in charge of the PYJI vision and implementation—are not closely connected to the budgeting and finance side of the initiative.

Some counties also raised concerns about having the necessary capacity and resources to sustain and expand the system-level changes they are tackling under PYJI over the long term. Although they are in the early stages of implementation, counties are already considering how they will bring PYJI's focus on crossover youth to scale to serve all youth involved in the justice system, as both counties and PYJI ultimately intend.

Perspectives on the Role of Sierra Health Foundation

Overall, lead agency leadership shared positive feedback about their experience working with Sierra Health Foundation. Leadership from one county commented that Sierra Health was appropriately supportive and engaged throughout the process and maintained satisfactory communication. At the same time, one lead agency expressed some confusion about the expected timeline for the transition from planning to implementation. Leadership from some counties emphasized the benefit of the technical assistance provided, while also voicing the need for additional assistance. For example, one interview participant discussed his hope that Sierra Health would provide more templates of policies and procedures that counties could adapt according to their needs. This participant explained that it would also have been helpful if Sierra Health had a staff person to work with TA providers to develop uniform resources for counties, indicating this would have allowed his county to make more progress. In this vein, some agency leadership raised challenges in accommodating the various reporting and

evaluation requirements from Sierra Health, including the coordination of staff schedules for multiple site visits.

Youth and Caregiver Perceptions and Experiences

As noted above, surveys of youth and caregivers had a different focus than did other data collection activities, with youth and caregiver surveys focusing on their experiences with PYJI partner systems, in contrast to other data collection which sought to assess progress toward PYJI implementation. While keeping in mind the limitations discussed above with regard to the variation in response rates across counties, the understanding that results may not represent a “true” baseline, and potential bias in survey responses depending on the context of survey administration, these surveys are an important source of information about the individuals and families who are involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, and their impressions of and experiences with these systems. Below we present a summary of these initial findings.

Strengths

Surveys with youth and caregivers from across the four PYJI counties revealed a number of strengths that PYJI partners can build upon as implementation progresses.

- Youth and caregiver survey respondents almost unanimously reported that they believed the individuals and systems that touch their lives want the best for them. Across all four counties, the majority of youth and caregiver respondents agreed or strongly agreed that youths’ probation officers, social workers, and teachers or other school staff want things to go well for them.
- Across all four counties, youth and caregiver respondents overwhelmingly agreed that youth are respected by the adults in their lives.
- Most youth and caregiver respondents across most counties also agreed that youth have people in their lives who can help them when they feel sad or lonely, and that youth know where to find help in school when they need it.

These findings are particularly salient in light of PYJI’s emphasis on organizational cultures that take a positive approach to support youth, and they may indicate that while system-wide cultures need to shift, many of the individuals working in those systems are already aligned with PYJI values.

Also promising from a PYJI perspective is the fact that the majority of youth and caregiver respondents across the counties reported that both youth and families are generally involved in deciding what kind of services would be most helpful for youth and what kinds of programs they want to participate in. Although respondents indicated mixed perceptions about the extent to which both youth and caregivers were involved in these decisions, the fact that they are already engaged in this type of decision-making is important groundwork for further youth and family involvement.

Challenges

Along with these strengths, youth and caregiver survey responses also indicate a number of challenges that PYJI counties will have to address to transition to a truly positive approach to working with crossover youth and their families. Despite high levels of agreement that probation officers, social workers, and teachers want things to go well for youth, both youth and caregivers' responses were decidedly mixed when asked about the extent to which these individuals talk to youth about how what they have been through affects their lives—a trauma-informed approach—or tell them about programs that may be helpful for them. Similarly, youth and caregivers across all four counties expressed mixed feelings about the programs that they participate in, with some youth and caregivers finding some programs helpful, but sizeable minorities of both groups indicating that many programs are not helpful.

Perhaps more notable for PYJI implementation is the fact that the majority of youth and caregivers who responded to the surveys indicated they (or their youth) do not receive service from the PYJI CBO partners that were listed in each county's survey. This may speak to the need for greater coordination and collaboration between County agencies and CBOs, as well as for more established referral processes to the PYJI partner organizations.

Finally, one of the most interesting and unexpected findings of the youth and caregivers surveys was the fact that the majority of respondents indicated that they (or their child) do not currently have a child welfare social worker or caseworker and have not had one in the past. It is not clear what this finding conveys; it could be that the counties are misidentifying crossover youth, either in PYJI engagement or in survey dissemination, or it could mean that child welfare-involved youth and families do not know that they have, or have had, a social worker or caseworker. Because PYJI counties chose to define their crossover youth populations differently, in some cases youth need not have had a social worker to be considered a crossover youth, or youth may have had a caseworker only at a very young age. Either way, this finding would benefit from further exploration in future evaluation activities.

IV. Taking Stock: Year 1 Implementation

Looking back over the first year of PYJI implementation, what have we learned? Where have counties experienced progress and where have they encountered obstacles? In the early stages of this large-scale initiative, what appear to be some of the facilitators of or barriers to success, and what are areas for additional attention moving forward?

Facilitators of Success

The synthesis of findings across the four PYJI counties brings to light several factors that appear to facilitate successful system-level change. These include factors related to counties' history and context, as well as actions taken during PYJI implementation thus far.

Pre-Implementation Factors

- Pre-existing collaboration through previous initiatives or efforts
- Philosophical buy-in from leadership
- History with elements of PYJI in past initiatives
- Geographic size and dispersion of county

Implementation Factors

- Active involvement and clear messaging about the initiative from executive management
- Early involvement of and transparency with line staff
- Ability to leverage resources
- Strength and capacity of PYJI coordinator, including involvement of a PYJI coordinator external to the PYJI lead agency

Areas for Consideration

Placing counties' implementation successes and challenges in the context of the key components of effective systems change, the following stand out as key areas that Sierra Health Foundation may consider for further reflection and action as the initiative moves forward.

- **Moving from support to action.** For the most part, counties indicated high levels of support and engagement from executive and upper management, and in some cases from lower levels of staff as well. At the same time, counties identified challenges related to staff time, capacity, and scheduling. Thus even when counties express philosophical support and buy-in, limitations in staff capacity may mean that such support does not always translate to successful implementation.
- **Importance of culture shift.** While data collection with line staff has been limited thus far, findings suggest that in many counties there will be significant challenges to changing philosophies and practices among line staff, particularly probation officers and child welfare line staff. Staff described deeply entrenched and troubling practices where systems fight over where a youth belongs, with each looking for ways to relieve their system of responsibility. As the initiative

progresses, it may also be interesting to explore whether relationships and coordination between Probation and Child Welfare staff differ based on whether or not a county has dual jurisdiction. Furthermore, focus groups with line staff and initial survey findings from youth and caregivers underscore that juvenile justice agencies in particular have significant work to do in moving from high-level philosophical support to positive juvenile probation practices on-the-ground, as evidenced by youths' experiences with probation officers and in juvenile detention facilities. It will be important to pay attention to how counties are changing both detention and supervision practices, to ensure that probation departments are taking a different approach to working with youth from across the juvenile justice system.

- **Support for data capacity.** The development of data systems, data-sharing protocols and procedures, and capacity for outcome measurement appears to be a formidable challenge for many counties and agencies. This may be an area where counties require additional support from TA providers.
- **Integration of PYJI elements.** While all counties had previous experience with various elements of PYJI, this may be the first time they have made efforts to integrate them. Because most counties have thus far focused on building their operational capacity, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the other elements have been implemented in an integrated manner, rather than in a more piecemeal fashion. As integration is a key element of PYJI, as the initiative progresses it will be important to examine the extent to which elements have in fact been integrated.
- **Initiative management and coordination.** The time required for County staff to coordinate and manage PYJI (including coordination of taskforce meetings, management of communications with PYJI partners, and the completion of required progress reports and deliverables) is significant. Informal conversations with PYJI stakeholders also raised concerns about the capacity of PYJI coordinators to juggle their multiple responsibilities, including their role as liaisons with TA providers and the RDA evaluation team, observing that these challenges may lead counties to not take full advantage of the TA being offered. It is also unclear the extent to which counties that are working with external facilitators to manage PYJI have considered implications for the longer-term sustainability of this role. As such, it may be useful to consider the roles and responsibilities of the various initiative partners—grantees, TA providers, and Sierra Health Foundation—in the day-to-day management of PYJI planning and implementation.
- **Cross-county differences.** The four PYJI counties have designed implementation plans that are vastly different, and each of the counties themselves has unique characteristics. As the initiative progresses, it may also be fruitful to explore whether counties experience particular successes and challenges based on the scope of their initiative—for example, whether they are undertaking a pilot project versus a county-wide project—as well as other county characteristics, such as size, geography, and demographic makeup.
- **Scope and scale of PYJI.** As noted in the findings section, counties have already begun to consider how the current, narrower focus on crossover youth will ultimately fit into their systems. This speaks to the benefit of engaging counties in this discussion explicitly and early, to ensure they are putting measures in place that will allow the initiative to be brought to scale.

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Appendix A: Implementing and Measuring Systems Change

This section places PYJI in the context of systems-change initiatives by reviewing the literature on key components of system change and reform efforts. These represent many of the critical elements—and common challenges—in implementing large-scale systems change, and may provide some basis for comparison of the successes and challenges to date of PYJI in its four participating counties. These components also align with the key domains for evaluating system change implementation and outcomes, which will be discussed in the latter part of this section.⁵

It is also important to note that while literature on evaluating systems-change efforts exists, comprehensive evaluations of efforts to reform juvenile justice and child welfare systems are limited, highlighting the significance of this evaluation in contributing to the field.

Key Components of Systems-Change Efforts

Based on a review of the evaluation literature, the sub-sections below discuss key components of effective systems change. These elements are organized in loose chronological order—recognizing that certain steps should occur before others can begin, while many occur simultaneously—with the understanding that each initiative and location has its own unique strengths and challenges that may inform the order in which steps occur and progress is made.

Ensuring Buy-In and Support for Change

The success of partnerships and collaboration between entities is largely driven by the individuals who lead and comprise the entities. Thus success is dependent on the extent to which staff support the philosophy of the initiative and believe the system changes are important and achievable. While support from all levels of staff is necessary to ensure the success of changes in agency practices, support from agency leadership is crucial, particularly at the beginning stages of planning and implementation. Agency leadership also play a key role in promoting the changes throughout the organization and garnering support from mid- and lower-level staff. As the efforts progress, the stability and longevity of involvement from government leadership is also a key factor in the success of interagency coordination.

Building Partnerships and Collaboration

The first essential step in transitioning toward a collaborative, integrated system is establishing partnerships among government and community-based agencies serving the target population, in this case crossover youth. Next, sources pointed to the need to formalize partnerships for system coordination as among the most essential measures for an initiative that cuts across and breaks down silos among agencies. Most sources recommend pursuing this step by creating new contracts, protocols, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to support partnerships and collaboration in pursuit of the initiative's goals.

⁵ A list of resources consulted for the literature review is included at the end of this report.

As partnerships solidify, initiatives may then focus on implementing shared decision-making structures, to ensure that entities are collaborating in their work and sharing the responsibility of making choices for the good of the initiative. Mechanisms may include developing structures for shared ownership and decision-making, such as taskforces that reflect a cross-section of system partners. As the coordination of multiple agencies and stakeholders is a key component of system-level change, many sources identified steps pertaining to developing a collaborative plan for what the changing system should look like, the creation and documentation of a shared vision, and the creation of a system map to document the path of clients through the service system.

Another key aspect of developing a collaborative systems-change initiative is partnering with stakeholders and the community, including obtaining stakeholder and community input in both planning and implementation, gathering feedback from community members throughout the process, and disseminating information about the initiative and services to stakeholders and community members.

Institutionalizing Changes through Policies, Procedures, and Contracts

Literature on systemic change and cross-system integration highlights the importance of institutionalizing changes through actions such as creating policy frameworks supporting the proposed changes; creating or revising agency/department procedures and protocols; adapting agency job descriptions; and adapting language in agency contracts with service providers.

Developing Strong Data Systems and Information Sharing Practices

Across the board, sources pointed to the creation of systems for data collection and sharing as one of the most important—and difficult—components of effective system integration. As systems and funders continue to place more and more emphasis on data-driven decision making, the ability of agencies to share both client-level and aggregate data is paramount. Key steps toward achieving this goal include the creation of data collection and sharing agreements and the implementation of an effective data sharing system (including purchasing new systems where necessary). Information sharing is also an area where many systems face significant challenges; given strict data privacy and confidentiality requirements and the existence of multiple electronic systems across agencies, the buy-in and resources necessary for this effort are high.

Ensuring Appropriate Staffing

Given that agency staff and service providers are the ones responsible for putting changes into practice, ensuring appropriate staffing—including the necessary positions, numbers, and qualifications—is essential to the successful on-the-ground implementation of changes to agencies' procedures or programs. System-change efforts might include the creation of new staff positions, modification of staff roles and responsibilities, interagency staff co-location, and consolidated staff functions.

Staff training is also a key component of ensuring that staff are informed and prepared to carry out their new responsibilities. Trainings should cover new program models/approaches, as well as skill-building training for service providers. Literature on cross-system efforts recommends that agencies and

organizations carry out both internal and cross-agency staff trainings, noting that cross training is important for promoting coordination between staff from different systems.

Coordinating and Leveraging Resources

Systems change experts and literature point to changes in the system's financing as a crucial step in moving toward a more coordinated system. In particular, they highlight the importance of integrating funding streams and leveraging resources from various sources including state and federal funds to strengthen cross-system coordination and promote long-term sustainability. Other activities related to financing include creating communication and marketing plans for funders, as well as a long-term financial planning that identifies potential funding sources.

Implementing and Improving Programs and Services

The ultimate aim of any systemic reform is to benefit those for whom the systems have been designed. As such, at the heart of any systems-change effort is the provision of services that reflect its goals and principles, address issues of system coordination and access, and improve youth and family satisfaction with the system and services. Sources specified a number of potential actions related to programs and services, falling into two categories: 1) changes in services offered, such as new support services or increased use of best practices; and 2) changes in service delivery, such as the number of services provided, the number of clients served, and the service dosage.

Conducting Monitoring and Evaluation

Once the systems for supporting change are falling into place, systems change initiatives often focus on tracking their progress towards their goals. Monitoring and evaluation creates an environment where effective programs are supported and sustained, allows for continuous improvement, and holds all parts of the system accountable for improved outcomes.

Measuring System Change

One of the most challenging aspects of evaluation is identifying appropriate indicators of change: what does change look like, and how do you know if you have achieved it? For example, measuring the extent of collaboration is one of the most difficult outcomes to operationalize in practice, as collaboration requires not only administrative changes, but also changes in perceptions and levels of trust.

Evaluation best practices emphasize the importance of developing specific and quantifiable indicators to measure progress toward outcomes. Across the evaluation literature, sources note that to be useful and effective, performance measures should be specific, easy to understand, and unambiguous; measureable, with quantifiable targets; attainable within the project timeframe; relevant, logical, and expected to produce the intended outcome; and easy to collect and monitor regularly.

At the same time, an overly narrow focus on quantifiable measures does not allow for an exploration of the extent to which true systems transformation has occurred; MOUs may be signed and executed, but partners may not feel they are working together effectively. It is therefore essential to include measures

of both the *quantity* and the *quality* of the changes that have occurred. As such, in addition to quantifiable measures to assess *whether* and *how much* change has occurred, it is crucial to explore descriptive indicators of *how* changes have occurred, what they look like on the ground, and perceptions of the members of the *human systems*—the staff, providers, youth, and family members involved in and affected by efforts to transform the system of services for crossover youth.

Sierra Health Foundation and the RDA evaluation team worked together to create an evaluation design that includes both quantifiable performance measures, which will come largely from county data and progress reports, as well as descriptive measures, which will be gathered through RDA's survey, key informant interviews, and focus groups.

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Alameda County

This summary reviews the implementation of the Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) in Alameda County during Year 1 of the initiative's implementation phase. The summary includes an overview of the County's implementation plan and structure; a synthesis of key strengths and challenges based on data from interviews, focus groups, and staff surveys; and a description of results from the Year 1 youth and caregiver surveys.

The Year 1 evaluation data collection included the following activities. The number in parentheses represents the number of respondents who participated in each of the activities or the number of focus groups that were conducted.

- Key informant interviews with PYJI leadership (9)
- Focus group with Probation Supervisors (1)
- Focus group with Child Welfare Division Directors (1)
- Focus group with community-based organization (CBO) providers (1)
- Site Visit
- Documentary Data
- Staff Survey (67)
- Youth Survey (23)
- Caregiver Survey (3)

Implementation Plan and Structure

Implementation Plan

The **Alameda County Probation Department (ACPD)** is the lead agency for Alameda County's PYJI. The County's PYJI implementation plan sets out a path for broad-based system reform with goals of creating a more youth-centered, gender-responsive, data-driven, and culturally-sensitive system for crossover youth. As such, the County's PYJI encompasses countywide, multi-system activities with a focus on providing training in trauma-informed care (TIC); developing data systems and capacity; expanding the use of wraparound services for crossover youth; changing practices in ACPD to increase the use of informal probation and diversion programs for crossover youth; and instituting youth and family involvement for youth being screened for out-of-home placement.

Implementation Highlights

During the first year of PYJI implementation, Alameda County:

- Submitted a revised implementation plan
- Implemented a collaborative PYJI planning structure
- Included PYJI language in Probation policies procedures and contracts
- Explored greater use of informal and formal probation for youth instead of out-of-home placement
- Moved toward the use of team decision making in Probation

Alameda County has defined crossover youth as **youth with an active probation case who have experienced a substantiated allegation of abuse or neglect within the last five years**. According to their July 2014 data report, in 2013, of the approximately 2,600 youth on probation supervision (including informal supervision), 282 were identified as crossover youth.

Recognizing that its initial implementation plan did not fully reflect the specific needs and goals of the County, ACPD submitted a revised implementation plan midway through the first year of implementation. The revised plan added emphasis on developing a collaborative leadership structure; data-driven decision-making; and youth, family, and community engagement.

Implementation Structure

Alameda County's PYJI is housed under the Juvenile Justice Partnership (JJP), a pre-existing collaborative comprised of executive leadership from 12 County agencies. The PYJI planning and implementation structure is led by two co-chairs, the Deputy Chief Probation Officer for Juvenile Services and the Social Services Administration (SSA)-Child Welfare Services Director, and supported by a dedicated PYJI Project Manager within ACPD. Planning and implementation for PYJI activities is carried out via a committee structure, with four PYJI sub-committees responsible for identifying, recommending, and implementing PYJI activities. Sub-committees meet monthly and are chaired by senior leadership from ACPD and SSA. Membership includes representatives from PYJI partner organizations and other interested stakeholders.

Pre-Implementation Context

Interview participants and survey respondents observed that Alameda County entered the PYJI implementation process with several important strengths. First, the participation of key justice and child welfare system partners in previous collaborative efforts, such as Georgetown University's Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) and the Juvenile Justice Partnership (JJP), provided a foundation of collaboration from which to build. Interviewed participants noted that the Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) had demonstrated a commitment to juvenile justice and had designated a member of senior leadership to be in charge of youth entering behavioral health care from the juvenile justice system. Members of leadership also explained that ACPD has also been able to draw on lessons learned from Child Welfare Services' experience implementing systems-change initiatives over the past ten years.

In addition, leadership from PYJI partner agencies highlighted a number of ways in which Alameda County had explored or implemented elements of PYJI prior to the initiative. For example, Alameda County has an existing protocol that addresses services for girls in Juvenile Hall, the Alameda County Juvenile Court has a history of providing gender-responsive services, and ACPD had already begun exploring the development of a girls' supervision unit. The first wraparound model in Alameda County started in 1997 with children in the child welfare system, so the Probation Department benefits from having a strong framework to build upon. Since then, many County agencies have developed experience with wraparound and team-based approaches, including SSA and BHCS. Further, both PYJI partners and technical assistance (TA) providers observed that Alameda County has a rich array of community-based providers that serve youth involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. This includes a

partnership between ACPD and the County's Delinquency Prevention Network (DPN), which was created specifically to provide diversion and prevention services for early justice-involved youth.

The County's advanced Medi-Cal reimbursement strategy also allows the County to leverage Medi-Cal funds for behavioral health treatment services and, as a federal Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver county, Alameda is able to use flexible funding to support the work of PYJI. County stakeholders also identified SB 163 foster care funding as potentially useful for supporting wraparound service provision. ACPD also draws support from Mental Health Services Act funding, Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act, and Youth Offender Block Grant funding.

Key Strengths and Progress in Implementation

Strong Support from County Leadership

County leadership reported high levels of buy-in and participation at the leadership level, citing strong participation in PYJI planning efforts, a shared commitment to PYJI values and practices, and an openness to tackling tough system-level changes. Leadership from PYJI partner agencies and staff from community-based organizations (CBOs) also observed that PYJI represents a significant organizational and cultural shift for Probation and recognized that ACPD has begun to make progress in growing its capacity for organizational and philosophical change. Several Probation Department stakeholders commented that Probation's Deputy Chief of Juvenile Services, in particular, has been actively involved and essential to moving PYJI implementation forward.

There is willingness and desire and commitment to really making a different system for crossover kids across the board.

This is all new territory, we're making some really huge shifts in terms of our practices and how we think and treat crossover youth; it's a big deal.

Involvement of Diverse Stakeholders in PYJI Planning and Implementation

Interview and focus group participants noted that ACPD has closely involved diverse partners in the PYJI planning process. By situating PYJI within the countywide JJP, leadership from key County and City agencies have been involved in PYJI from the start. The JJP includes executive level representatives from the Juvenile Court, Probation Juvenile Field Services, SSA-Child and Family Services, Health Care Services Agency-Behavior Health Children's Services, Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE), Public Health Department, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), Public Defender's Office, and the District Attorney's Office. Owing to their experience with prior system-change projects, both Probation and Child Welfare staff highlighted that senior management from Child Welfare Services have supported ACPD in their efforts to spearhead PYJI.

The active involvement of Court stakeholders in the PYJI planning process, including the Juvenile Court, Public Defender's Office, and District Attorney's Office, stands out as a strength in Alameda County. Key informants also mentioned that leadership from the ACOE and OUSD, along with CBOs, have become

more involved in PYJI planning and implementation over the course of the first year. One County leader shared:

There are a lot of people at the table, and they keep coming. There is a strong investment in the work.

Growth in Operational Capacity

Interviews with leadership from PYJI partner agencies highlighted a number of efforts Alameda County has undertaken to increase its operational capacity to carry out PYJI-related activities. Key areas of progress include:

Policies and Procedures. ACPD Juvenile Field Services has begun the process of incorporating PYJI into its departmental policies and procedures manual, including revisions to intake, case planning, and documentation procedures. ACPD has also begun developing a protocol for identification and notification of relevant parties for crossover youth involvement. Additionally, ACPD plans to include language around positive youth development (PYD) and trauma informed practices in contracts with community-based providers.

Data Capacity, Sharing, and Use. ACPD has taken steps to improve its ability to identify and capture data on crossover youth, which will allow the department to make decisions based on a more robust understanding of this population. PYJI partner agencies are also in the process of developing cross-agency information-sharing guidelines. ACPD has also implemented a data-informed graduated response grid and plans to develop an incentives grid and is piloting the addition of a crossover youth component to its detention risk assessment tool.

Staff Training. PYJI stakeholders reported that the TIC sub-committee has actively moved forward with the training component for TIC, identifying a train-the-trainer model and planning for the rollout of cross-agency trauma training.

Staffing and Resources. PYJI partner agencies are preparing for or contemplating the feasibility of additional staffing to support PYJI's goals. The County is exploring the possibility of using funding from Title IV-E, SB 163, and/or EPSDT, as well as drawing on Medi-Cal resources. Various County agencies are also pushing to hire staff with trauma experience.

Improvements in Service Delivery

ACPD leadership underscored several areas in which the department has begun to modify service delivery practices to align with PYJI. ACPD is taking steps to increase family participation in team-based planning by piloting a version of Team Decision Making (TDM) for youth involved in the 241.1 joint protocol process. ACPD has also begun working with the District Attorney's Office to expand Probation's ability to use informal probation without going through the Court, in order to expedite processes and reduce court involvement of youth. As a result of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) the District Attorney's office is developing a diversion program for crossover youth. Supported by PYJI, ACPD is also continuing its plans to develop a gender-specific supervision unit.

Leadership from PYJI agencies also described that BHCS has begun extending wraparound services to probation youth. As part of this effort, BHCS clarified referral processes with Probation staff, which BHCS leadership noted has led to marked improvements in Probation's understanding of when and how to use particular behavioral health services. Staff survey responses also suggested that Probation staff have an understanding of referral processes and knowledge of available support services. A majority of respondents from Probation indicated that they agreed (45%) or somewhat agreed (40%) that they understand the formal referral process for wraparound services. In addition, 50% agreed and 42% somewhat agreed that they know where to refer youth and 55% agreed and 42% somewhat agreed that they know how to refer youth for support services.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

Achieving Widespread Dissemination and Support for PYJI

Findings from key informant interviews, focus groups, and staff surveys suggest that Alameda County has made limited progress in bringing staff from multiple levels of County on board to PYJI. Members of leadership explained that on the whole, the county has undertaken PYJI promotion and preparation largely at upper levels and mid-levels of staff, with plans to disseminate to line staff once the PYJI sub-committees have determined details of how PYJI will affect their day-to-day work. Survey respondents from Probation and CBOs conveyed mixed perspectives on county and organizational practices, indicating that Alameda County is still in an early stage of PYJI implementation and that the County's involvement in PYJI and its progress toward PYJI objectives has not been communicated widely. Survey respondents demonstrated somewhat limited awareness of PYJI, with slightly more than half of respondents from Probation (56%) and CBOs (54%) reporting that they have heard of PYJI.

In interviews and focus groups, County leadership and management expressed mixed feelings about this approach. On the one hand, PYJI leadership sought to be mindful that informing lower level staff about PYJI before a concrete plan was in place could create unnecessary confusion and worry. On the other hand, some expressed concern that limited rollout could impede buy-in from lower level staff, noting that without early education and invitations to participate in PYJI, mid-level and line staff might feel resistant to changes perceived as top-down. Highlighting common challenges with culture shift, conversations with ACPD staff at the leadership and management levels confirmed that mid- and lower-level Probation staff would likely be apprehensive about or resistant to PYJI due to fears of added responsibilities, experiences with past initiatives that were introduced but not sustained, and recent changes in executive level leadership. One County leader shared:

With PYJI, you are trying to change people's thinking from years of how everything has been done. Everyone is not on board with that. So you have to find people within the agencies that are on board, and educate the ones that are not.

Strengthening Partnerships

While interview and focus group findings point to Alameda County's progress in enhancing partnerships among County agencies under PYJI, sources noted that in many cases these partnerships are strongest

at the executive leadership level. PYJI stakeholders from diverse organizations acknowledged that Alameda County is in the process of addressing historically entrenched barriers to communication and collaboration—a challenge common to cross-system efforts in many public systems. For example, focus group and interview participants explained that Probation and Child Welfare line staff come from different organizational cultures and practices, and as such are still in the process of developing common language and procedures for working with youth involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. In particular, focus group participants from Probation and Child Welfare voiced some disagreement about when it is appropriate for a youth to move from Child Welfare to Probation’s jurisdiction.

ACPD leadership also identified the need for targeted expansion of PYJI partnerships, including a desire to engage the Oakland Police Department and other law enforcement agencies, as well as to increase involvement of the educational system.

PYJI leaders within ACPD have also recognized a need to bring in CBOs as closer partners in the PYJI planning and implementation process. At the same time, ACPD leadership explained that determining appropriate CBOs to partner with under PYJI can be a challenge given the multitude of CBOs in the county. While ACPD’s partnerships with community-based service providers have grown and deepened through PYJI implementation, both County stakeholders and community-based providers noted that clarifying roles and responsibilities, particularly at the line staff level, would improve the collaborative process. For example, a number of community-based service providers identified challenges in coordinating and collaborating with County agencies, including difficulties in obtaining timely and sufficient information from probation officers and child welfare workers about the crossover youth they serve, as well as some confusion about which agency is or should be responsible for coordinating the care of children who are dually involved.

Survey responses alluded to possible tensions between the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in Alameda County. One-third of respondents from Probation replied that they disagree (23%) or somewhat disagree (10%) that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth collaborate effectively. Likewise, almost one-third of respondents from CBOs indicated that they disagreed (11%) or somewhat disagreed (19%) that these agencies and organizations collaborate effectively. This is despite the fact that almost all respondents from CBOs reported they agree (39%) or somewhat agree (58%) that their organization has a strong working relationship with Probation, and most respondents from Probation felt similarly, with 37% reporting they agree and 45% reporting they somewhat agree that their agency has strong working relationships with CBOs. However, respondents from CBOs were less favorable concerning their organization’s relationship with other public agencies, most notably almost 40% of respondents from CBOs replied that they disagreed (8%) or somewhat disagreed (31%) that their organization has a strong working relationship with Child Welfare.

Growing Operational Capacity

As Alameda County spent much of the past year refining its implementation plan, ACPD has simultaneously planned for and begun implementation of proposed changes in Year 1. In this light, PYJI stakeholders identified several key areas for further attention as implementation continues.

Policies and Procedures. Stakeholders specified relatively limited changes to policies and procedures to support PYJI implementation and, as noted above, mid-level staff in particular specified a need for more formalized procedures detailing inter-agency roles and responsibilities in implementing the elements of PYJI.

Data Collection and Sharing. PYJI leadership and management from agencies including ACPD, SSA, and BHCS recognized that there is still much work to do to support formal data sharing agreements, and stakeholders specified a need for continued development of data systems to identify and track crossover youth.

Staff Training and Capacity. Nearly all County and community-based partner staff expressed the need for more staff training on PYJI and its elements, both to develop shared language and definitions about PYJI and crossover youth and to ensure that staff are confident in content about TIC. Staff at multiple levels observed that in some agencies, the need for more training is compounded by limited time and staffing resources available to support PYJI, while in some cases collective bargaining and service contracts for line staff and middle managers present challenges. Survey responses echoed a need for continued training related to PYD, TIC, and wraparound services. Slightly more than half of respondents from Probation reported that their agency had participated to some extent (29%) or to a great extent (27%) in training related to PYD, and a similar percentage of respondents from Probation indicated that their agency had participated to some extent (27%) or to a great extent (24%) in training related to TIC. Fewer respondents reported that their agency had participated to some extent (21%) or to a great extent (18%) in training related to wraparound services. Respondents from CBOs showed similar rates of organizational participation in these types of trainings.

Project Management Capacity. County stakeholders acknowledged that PYJI is a significant undertaking for the Probation Department and noted that it will be important to ensure that ACPD has sufficient capacity to manage the initiative. In this vein, ACPD staff from across organizational levels spoke about challenges with balancing the need for frequent meetings, communication, and participation from various County stakeholders with the ability to make timely decisions to address the needs of PYJI and the youth and families it serves. Some stakeholders also noted that the size and diversity of the County creates challenges in implementing and monitoring PYJI activities.

Improving Service Delivery

County and CBO stakeholders identified several areas for improvement in service delivery, which they hope PYJI will impact. ACPD, SSA, and CBO staff shared a desire for clearer and smoother communication and coordination among probation officers, child welfare workers, and community-based providers. With regard to youth and family involvement in services, SSA and CBO staff highlighted

that families and caregivers of crossover youth could be more empowered to participate in PYJI, feedback that is in line with the work ACPD has initiated to increase family engagement in team decision making.

CBOs also identified several areas they see as gaps in the continuum of services for crossover youth. In particular, stakeholders reported a need for expanded mental health services, especially in neighborhoods with higher populations of crossover youth. Some stakeholders commented that the transition from juvenile custody to the community could be more coordinated and smooth. Others noted a need for increased attention to the needs of transition-age youth, both in terms of probation supervision and coordination of services.

Youth and Caregiver Experiences: Survey Data

Respondent Description

In Alameda County, the youth survey was disseminated by several of the community-based providers that make up the Delinquency Prevention Network. Twenty-three youth and three caregivers responded to the youth and caregiver surveys, out of the approximately 280 crossover youth in the county. Caregiver respondents included two mothers and one employment coordinator. The age of youth ranged from ages 14 to 19 with a mean of 17. Males comprised 77% of youth respondents and females comprised 23%. The caregiver respondents were entirely female (100%). Hispanic/Latinos comprised 41% of youth respondents, followed by African Americans (32%), other ethnicities (18%), White/Caucasian (14%), Asian or Pacific Islander (9%), and American Indian/Native Alaskan (5%). Two caregivers were African American/Black and one was Hispanic/Latino.

A majority of youth heard about the survey from a CBO staff member (50%) or their therapist (36%). Nine percent heard about the survey from their probation officer. Of the 23 youth respondents, 60% reported that they currently have a probation officer, while 75% of youth without a current probation officer reported having had one in the past. Approximately three quarters of youth respondents (78%) indicated being in school. All caregivers responded that their children have a probation officer and are in school. Thirteen percent of youth indicated that they currently have a social worker through Child Welfare. Of the youth who replied that they did not currently have a social worker, 10% noted having had one in the past. One caregiver reported having a child with social worker. None of the youth surveyed reported receiving services from Lincoln Child Center, the county's wraparound service provider.

Youth and Caregiver Responses

Youth and caregivers expressed mixed feelings about their relationships and experiences with their probation officers. While more than half (53%) responded that it is very true that their probation officer wants things to go well for them, a sizeable minority of youth respondents (33%) also responded that it is not at all true that their probation officer helps them to understand how what they have been through affects them, a survey question designed to capture whether staff are using a TIC approach. Over a quarter of youth respondents (27%) indicated that it is not at all true that probation officers tell

them about programs that might be helpful. Only one of the three caregiver respondents reported that it is very true that their child's probation officer wants things to go well for them.

The three youth who reported currently having social workers suggested mixed feelings about their social workers. Youth respondents responded that it is mostly true (67%) and very true (33%) that social workers want things to well for them. At the same time, a majority of youth reported that it is a little bit true (67%) that their social worker helps them to understand how what they have been through affects them. Two out of three youth replied that it is a little bit true that they can easily get in touch with their social worker when they need to.

Both youth and caregiver respondents reported mixed feelings about teachers. More than half of youth (56%) responded that it is very true that teachers wanted them to succeed; however, many youth indicated that it is not at all true that their teachers help them understand how their experience affects their life (41%) or inform them of other programs that may help them (35%). Only one caregiver (33%) reported that it is very true that teachers inform their child about programs that may help them.

A majority of youth (61%) and all of caregivers indicated that families are involved in deciding what kinds of services are helpful. Interestingly, 65% of youth respondents reported that their probation officer, social workers, or others asked them about what kinds of programs they would like to participate in, despite mixed responses as to whether these same individuals informed them about programs that could be helpful.

Nearly half of youth (47%) identified probation officers, social workers, teachers, and mentors as individuals who are part of groups that they meet with, a survey question designed to assess whether youth and families are involved in team-based case planning meetings. Youth also mentioned parents and family members as well as staff at CBOs as being part of a group with whom they meet. Youth less commonly identified adults from a faith-based setting or their doctors as part of that group. Conversely, only one caregiver identified their child's probation officer, social worker, and teachers as adults that are part of a group with whom their child meets. It should be noted that while this survey question was designed to capture information about team-based decision making, it may not have been clear that a "group of people" referred to participants in *joint* meetings.

Almost three-fourths of youth (73%) reported that they participate in job training or internships. More than half (59%) of youth indicated receiving therapy and 41% reported attending school-based support programs. Some youth reported engaging in other programs, such as attending after school programs, participating in their church or temple, and helping out in their community. Caregivers also identified similar activities that their children participate in.

Youth respondents demonstrated mixed feelings concerning the benefit of the programs they are involved in. Almost half (47%) of youth indicated it is a little bit true that the programs they participate in help them do better in school, while 32% responded that the statement is mostly true. Caregivers' responses revealed similar ambivalence with one caregiver replying that it is not at all true and two replying that it is mostly true that their children's programs help them succeed in school. Likewise, while about half of youth indicated that it is mostly true (24%) or very true (24%) that their programs help

them get along better with parents, caregivers, or family, 19% responded not at all true to this statement and 33% responded a little bit true. Youth were similarly divided about whether their programs help them get more involved in community activities, with 20% responding not at all true to this statement, 35% responding a little bit true, 30% responding mostly true, and 15% responding very true. Despite this ambivalence, more than 80% of youth indicated that it is mostly true (41%) or very true (41%) that the programs they participate are a good fit for them. Similarly, a majority of youth replied that it is mostly true (43%) or very true (43%) that the programs they participate in help them build skills to succeed in the future. Aside from improvement in school, two caregivers indicated that it is mostly true and one indicated that it is very true that their child's programs have helped them to have a better relationship and helped their child get involved in positive community activities and build new skills that will be helpful for their child's future.

While youth generally reported that adults in their life respect them, they expressed mixed views on the extent to which adults respect them with 32% responding a little bit true, 36% responding mostly true, and 32% responding very true to this statement. Forty-one percent of youth indicated that it is very true that when they are feeling sad or lonely there are people they can talk to. While two out of three caregivers reported that their child has access to programs and services that help him/her to be emotionally healthy, one caregiver indicated that this is not at all true. All youth and caregivers responded that support is available to them to in school when they need it.

San Diego County

This summary reviews the implementation of the Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) in San Diego County during Year 1 of the initiative's implementation phase. The summary includes an overview of the County's implementation plan and structure; a synthesis of key strengths and challenges based on data from interviews, focus groups, and staff surveys; and a description of results from the Year 1 youth and caregiver surveys.

The Year 1 evaluation data collection included the following activities. The number in parentheses represents the number of respondents who participated in each of the activities or the number of focus groups that were conducted.

- Key informant interviews with PYJI leadership (8)
- Focus group with PYJI leadership (1)
- Focus group with PYJI partners and community-based organization (CBO) staff (1)
- Site Visit
- Documentary Data
- Staff Survey (8)
- Youth Survey (8)
- Caregiver Survey (5)

Implementation Plan and Structure

Implementation Plan

San Diego County's PYJI is led by the **San Diego County Probation Department** and housed within the Probation Department's Breaking Cycles division, a family-centered division with a team approach to juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention. San Diego County's PYJI is a pilot project focused on neighborhoods including the two zip codes with the highest number of youth involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.⁶ The pilot will pave the way for countywide implementation in the future. San Diego's PYJI approach also includes a countywide training component for providers that work with crossover youth.

San Diego County's PYJI program was designed to complement the County's existing Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM); while CYPM youth have an active child welfare case (dual status), the County has defined PYJI youth as **youth in the probation**

Implementation Highlights

During the first year of PYJI implementation, San Diego County:

- Created a supervision level in Probation data system to track crossover youth
- Held trauma-informed care training for Probation staff and collaborative personnel
- Hired probation officers and treatment providers for the pilot area caseload

⁶ San Diego recently expanded the geographic reach of their pilot to incorporate the neighborhoods surrounding these zip codes. Because this occurred after the data collection period, this report focuses on their plan and progress prior to the expansion.

system who have a *prior* child welfare history and are no longer receiving active services through a **Child Welfare caseworker**. The Probation Department is currently developing a system to track the number of crossover youth based on its PYJI definition; according to their July 2014 data report, in 2013 approximately 5,400 youth were on probation supervision, including 26 dual jurisdiction youth (meeting the CYPM definition of crossover youth).

San Diego County's implementation plan outlined a number of strategies to promote PYJI service provision in its pilot project. Probation officers assigned to the crossover youth pilot program will be on specialty assignment with a reduced caseload and they will receive individualized trauma-informed care (TIC) and positive youth development (PYD) training. Probation also planned to hire dedicated mental health and substance abuse specialists to work with the youth in the pilot caseload. In addition, Probation planned to incorporate PYJI-related provisions in contracts with service providers, communicate about PYJI to County political leaders, and review its assessment and screening tools to include PYJI design elements.

Implementation Structure

The PYJI Leadership Team, which draws on existing structures built under the CYPM, is comprised of San Diego County Probation, Child Welfare Services (CWS), Behavioral Health Services (BHS), the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and representatives from three community-based organizations (CBOs). The leadership team convenes at the bi-monthly CYPM Guiding Coalition Workgroup meeting. The County established a subcommittee of the PYJI leadership team to develop and establish TIC training for staff. A team of Probation leadership meets weekly to discuss implementation progress and challenges, with participation from other members of the PYJI leadership team on an as needed basis.

Pre-Implementation Context

Many members of County leadership pointed out that San Diego County's PYJI has benefitted from a strong history of collaboration. County agencies including Probation, CWS, BHS, the District Attorney's Office, the Office of Education, and the Juvenile Court reported developing strong collaborative relationships through previous partnerships, particularly the CYPM, which many felt contributed to readiness for continued relationship building and culture shift under PYJI. Probation also identified prior success with pilot programs such as the one planned for PYJI.

Interview and focus group respondents shared that San Diego entered PYJI implementation with many PYJI elements in place, including multidisciplinary teams developed under CYPM, relationships with many partners (often formalized with MOUs), and an existing emphasis on TIC in behavioral health. Probation leadership also spoke about the department's "balanced approach philosophy," with a focus on youth resiliency and a history of hiring staff with social work and psychology backgrounds. Leadership also noted that many Probation staff had been trained in Integrative Behavioral Intervention Strategy (IBIS), motivational interviewing, and cognitive behavioral therapy, and have participated in cross-agency trainings with CWS. Probation also recently created and hired a Treatment Director position. San

Diego has also emphasized integrated services; for example, co-locating probation officers with a team of child welfare staff who are engaged with crossover youth.

In addition, stakeholders explained that because San Diego is a dual jurisdiction county, the county entered PYJI implementation with an existing data-sharing system between Probation and Child Welfare. Probation stakeholders added that the PYJI pilot program itself is founded in a history of data collection, and the pilot area was identified using data on the county regions with the highest numbers of youth on probation. At the time of implementation planning, TA providers identified several strengths for the County, including sophisticated electronic screening and intake mechanisms for Probation and CWS, Probation's own electronic record and information technology systems, and a strong array of community-based services, including those for female youth offenders.

Probation leadership highlighted the department's use of evidence-based screening and assessment tools for youth, including an Evidence-Based Practice Strategic Planning Committee, which has developed and adopted a graduated sanctions and rewards matrix for youth. Wraparound services are already used by Probation, with County wraparound contracts allocating service slots for Probation's needs. Probation also has a girls' detention facility as well as a contract for gender-specific programming, and BHS provides gender-specific programming as well. BHS leadership described that because the agency contracts out most of its services to CBOs, the agency can leverage existing community-based partnerships in its PYJI work.

At the same time, there have been serious concerns around disciplinary practices used in San Diego County juvenile detention facilities, including the use of pepper spray. In July 2014, a coalition of San Diego legal and community organizations filed a formal complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) for excessive use of pepper spray and other practices that may violate youths' constitutional rights. San Diego's planned training for their juvenile facilities in their implementation plan is in response to the high use of pepper spray.

Key Strengths and Progress in Implementation

Strong Support for PYJI among Leadership

Leadership from participating County agencies highlighted their commitment to PYJI as one of San Diego's primary strengths, expressing that they support PYJI philosophy, are motivated to work together, and perceive PYJI as a good fit with both the existing CYPM implementation and the system-level changes needed within the County. These stakeholders also observed strong support for PYJI from Probation, CWS, and BHS across multiple levels of the agencies. Probation leadership discussed the County's use of the early adopters' model in garnering support across multiple levels of staff, describing that involving management level staff in the implementation process has allowed these staff to educate colleagues both above and below them about the initiative. PYJI leadership also noted that PYJI updates are given at various team meetings across staffing levels. Most of the survey respondents from County agencies and CBOs also indicated that strong working relationships exist between their agency or organization and the other agencies and organizations serving crossover youth. For example, all respondents from Probation and CWS agreed that their agency has strong working relationships with

BHS, and all respondents from Probation agreed their agency has strong working relationships with County youth and family agencies as well as law enforcement.

Collaborative Planning Efforts

County leadership emphasized that leveraging the existing work of the CYPM Guiding Coalition Workgroup has helped County and CBO partners promote further collaboration under PYJI. According to its March 2014 progress report, San Diego's PYJI team had participated in approximately 40 activities, including meetings, conference calls, or events related to PYJI. County leadership shared:

[PYJI has] really allowed us to break down walls.

Philosophically, there's a real community.

We're speaking the same language now.

Findings also pointed to strong collaboration across agencies. For example, interview participants noted that CWS and BHS have been closely involved in bringing TIC and wraparound services into the Probation Department's efforts. Probation has also focused on increasing partnerships with community-based providers, including TIC and wraparound providers. Probation and the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) have incorporated PYD and TIC language into CBO contracts and two additional community-based partners have been added to the PYJI network, according to the County's progress report. Staff surveys appeared to corroborate these findings, with all survey respondents from County agencies agreeing (63%) or somewhat agreeing (38%) that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in San Diego collaborate effectively. Most of the respondents from CBOs also agreed (56%) or somewhat agreed (33%) that the agencies and organizations collaborate effectively.

Probation leadership described that the County has also made efforts to engage the broader community in PYJI through presentations about PYJI to communities and school districts, and the public launch announcement of PYJI was featured in local news.

Steps toward Increasing Operational Capacity

Findings from interviews and Probation's PYJI progress report point to important steps in hiring and training staff, incorporating PYJI language in County contracts, and creating an infrastructure for improved data tracking.

Staffing. The Probation Department has hired two deputy probation officers (DPOs) for the PYJI pilot caseload, as well as the program's Youth and Family Counselor (YFC) and Juvenile Recovery Specialist (JRS) through existing contracts with community-based providers. The Probation Department has also designated a supervisor to manage the PYJI planning and implementation process.

Staff Training. A number of interview participants discussed the County's progress in implementing trainings related to PYJI elements. In April 2014, the County began providing training in trauma-informed care and PYD for line staff from County agencies and community partners. These trainings were informed by collaboration with TA providers, who supported the development of a "train-the-

trainers” curriculum to ensure both County staff and collaborative partners are knowledgeable about PYJI elements. Probation staff also attended two supportive trainings on the topics of Alternatives to Detention and Medi-Cal Coverage for Extended Foster Care Youth. Most staff survey respondents indicated familiarity with TIC and PYD, though it is not clear whether this is as a result of PYJI or prior trainings. All survey respondents from County agencies and CBOs reported that TIC has been introduced in their place of work, and most respondents from County agencies (88%) and CBOs (67%) reported that they have heard about the application of PYD in their agency or organization.

Policies, Procedures, and Contracts. Findings from interviews and Probation’s PYJI progress report indicate that thus far in implementation San Diego has established protocols for screening, referral, and service requirements for PYJI efforts, including eligibility criteria for identifying crossover youth for the PYJI pilot. Additionally, PYJI design elements have been incorporated into several Probation, HHSA, and BHS contracts for community-based providers. The job announcement for the new PYJI DPO position also included PYJI language.

Data Collection, Sharing, and Use. At the time of the implementation plan, TA providers recommended that the County develop a mechanism to measure the number of crossover youth in the juvenile justice system. While Probation is still in the process of modifying its Case Management System to identify youth who meet the PYJI definition of crossover youth, Probation has established a data field to track participants participating in the PYJI pilot, which will enable the County to monitor data specific to pilot program participants. In line with practices developed under CYPM, survey respondents from Probation and Child Welfare reported that they share data with other agencies serving crossover youth and that they have adapted their data and reporting systems to track crossover youth.

Preparing for Service Delivery

In April 2014, San Diego began accepting cases for the pilot program. The team for serving these cases will consist of one Supervising Probation Officer, two DPOs, the YFC, and the JRS (the JRS has been hired and is slated to begin in September). Probation staff noted that wraparound care coordinators, education liaisons, and other collaborative partners will be added to youth teams on an individualized basis. Because data collection for this report occurred prior to the beginning of service delivery, information is not available about progress or challenges in serving the program’s caseload.

PYJI leadership explained that San Diego’s’ implementation efforts have focused on increasing service availability so the county can ensure that there are support services in place to meet the needs of the incoming caseload. For example, San Diego has created a mechanism to ensure that the PYJI pilot population has access to wraparound services through existing providers in the County. A majority of staff survey respondents indicated knowing how to refer youth to support services and understanding the formal referral process for wraparound services, with all respondents reporting that they agree (50%) or somewhat agree (50%) that they know where to refer youth for support services.

Leadership also highlighted the County’s strong focus on evidence-based practices. For example, at the time of implementation, Probation’s Evidence-Based Practice Operational Support Team began

exploring areas for policy review, program enhancement, and training based on a review of evidence-based practices in PYD and TIC.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

Broadening Support and Shared Vision for PYJI

While findings from interviews and focus groups highlighted the shared vision and high level of support for PYJI among agency leadership, at the same time, County agency representatives recognized that implementing a shared vision can be complicated because all agencies “speak different languages.” Additionally, at the time of data collection for this report, County leadership observed that the strong vision and support of leadership-level stakeholders had not yet reached mid- and lower-level staff. The recent complaint regarding the use of pepper spray in juvenile detention facilities discussed above also indicates that there is substantial work to be done to bring line staff on board both philosophically and in practice. Because of the county’s two-pronged approach to PYJI, staff hired to serve the pilot caseload have been brought on board, but other County staff may not yet understand how PYJI will affect their day-to-day responsibilities. As such, some members of County leadership recognized that the perception of additional work resulting from PYJI implementation may seem overwhelming to mid- and lower-level staff. County stakeholders anticipate that further rollout will resolve some of these challenges as staff become familiar with their roles, responsibilities, and activities under PYJI.

Enhancing Partnerships and Collaboration

Some stakeholders also spoke of a need for broader involvement in PYJI. While San Diego has made progress in terms of engaging youth and their families through community-focused events, both Probation and CBO staff acknowledged that there is room for growth in bringing youth and family voices to the table. Additionally, they noted that there could be a wider and stronger array of partnerships with community stakeholders such as workforce groups, education groups, drug and alcohol services, and contracted providers in the pilot project region. Notably, although all staff survey respondents from County agencies reported having heard of PYJI, only about half of CBO respondents reported having heard of PYJI. In addition, fewer CBO survey respondents replied that their organization has worked with new government agencies (44%) or CBOs (44%) than respondents from County agencies (63% and 75%, respectively). Probation has voiced a desire for strengthening such partnerships, and the efforts to better engage these stakeholders may already be contemplated or underway as San Diego’s pilot rollout continues.

Responding to Staffing Changes

Probation leadership pointed out that a major challenge in San Diego’s preparation for PYJI services has been staff turnover. Early on in the PYJI implementation period, Probation experienced several key staffing changes that resulted in the need for additional training and onboarding to new staff members’ roles within PYJI. Probation reported that while the transition has gone as well as could be expected, these unforeseen circumstances have contributed to a somewhat slower implementation than initially planned. The pace of implementation may also have been affected by the need to hire staff to support

the pilot program, which according to some County stakeholders took longer than expected. Probation mentioned that during this time, the County continued to promote PYJI by focusing its efforts on informing stakeholders countywide about the mission, goals, and elements of PYJI.

Growing Data Capacity

At the time of the implementation plan, TA providers identified San Diego's understanding and use of data as one of the County's primary challenges. TA providers recommended that the County ensure PYJI stakeholders have a common understanding of the purpose of decision-making tools, develop key indicators to review and monitor crossover youth, establish an institutionalized response to using data, and train staff about the value and uses for data to develop policy solutions. While San Diego has laid the foundation for improved tracking and monitoring, as of the County's initial progress report, data collection, data sharing, and outcome measurement related to PYJI had not yet begun. As with most counties, San Diego expects challenges around data privacy requirements, which will become clearer as data collection and sharing efforts mature. While a majority of survey respondents from County agencies reported that, to some or a great extent, their agency shared data with other agencies serving crossover youth (100%) and adapted data and reporting systems to track crossover youth (88%), fewer respondents from CBOs reported that their organization shared data (56%) or adapted data and reporting systems (44%).

Youth and Caregiver Experiences: Survey Data

Respondent Description

In San Diego County, the Probation Department administered the youth survey to the eight youth participants who had been enrolled in the pilot program at the time of data collection. The ages of youth ranged from ages 12 to 17 and the mean age was 15. Sixty-three percent of youth respondents were male and 38% were female. Youth respondents were predominately African American/Black (50%) and Hispanic/Latino (50%), followed by 25% White/Caucasian and 13% American Indian/Native Alaskan.

The County collected five responses to the parent/caregiver survey. Of these, four were mothers and one response represented a mother and a father who took the survey together. Sixty percent of caregivers were Hispanic/Latino followed by African American (40%), American Indian/Native Alaskan (20%), and those who identified as another race/ethnicity (20%).

Youth reported hearing about the survey from their probation officer (75%) and their counselor or therapist (38%). All youth and caregivers reported currently having a probation officer or having a child placed with a probation officer. One youth replied that he currently has a social worker through Child Welfare and two indicated having had a social worker in the past.⁷ No caregivers reported having a child with a social worker. Most youth (71%) reported being currently in school, and 80% of caregivers responded that their child is currently in school.

⁷ Because PYJI youth in San Diego County are not intended to have social workers, the accuracy of these responses is unclear.

Youth and Caregiver Responses

Youth and caregivers' responses suggest that overall they feel positively about their experiences and relationship with their probation officers. Most youth indicated that it is very true (75%) that their probation officer wants things to go well for them and that it is very true (86%) that it is easy to contact their probation officer when they need to. All caregivers reported that it is very true that their child's probation officer wants things to go well for them. One quarter of caregivers (25%) and 13% of youth responded it is not true that their probation officer tells them about programs that might be helpful for them.

Caregivers and youth had mixed responses about their experiences and relationships with teachers and adults at school. Half of caregivers and 40% of youth indicated that it is very true that their teachers want things to go well for them. While a number of youth responded that it is mostly true (40%) that teachers talk with them about how what they have been through in life has affected their lives, a survey question designed to capture whether staff are using a TIC approach, 40% of youth also responded that this is not true at all. Caregivers reported similarly mixed feelings as to whether teachers help their child understand how what they have been through affects their child's life. A majority of youth replied it is very true (60%) that teachers inform them about programs that might be helpful; however, 20% of youth answered that this is not true at all. Caregivers also expressed mixed feelings as to whether teachers inform their children about programs that might be helpful.

All youth and 80% of caregivers responded that their family is involved in deciding what kind of services would be most helpful. While all caregivers reported that their child's probation officer asks their child what kind of programs they want to participate in, only 63% of youth agreed. A majority of youth (88%) and caregivers (80%) indicated that there is a group of people that they (or their child) can meet with to decide what types of programs would be helpful.

Youth and caregivers provided differing responses as to who makes up a group that the youth meet with, a survey question designed to assess whether youth and families were involved in team-based case planning meetings. Both youth and caregivers identified family members, including siblings and grandparents, as part of this group. Similar percentages of youth and caregivers agreed that probation officers (88%, 100%) and mentors (50%, 60%) are part of this group. While 80% of caregivers indicated that teachers and therapists were part of this group, only 25% of youth identified teachers and 38% identified therapists. Among youth, 25% reported that social workers were part of this group, but no caregivers selected this. It should be noted that while this survey question was designed to capture information about team-based decision making, it may not have been clear that a "group of people" referred to participants in *joint* meetings.

Youth and caregivers identified a variety of programs in which youth participate. Therapy and counseling was the activity most commonly reported by youth (63%) and caregivers (80%). Similarly, 50% of youth and 60% of caregivers reported that youth participate in programs to help them succeed in school. Interestingly, 40% of caregivers indicated that their child participates in job training or internship programs; however no youth replied that they participate in these activities. A quarter of youth (25%)

and 13% of caregivers reported that they or their child receive services from the Fred Finch Youth Center. No youth or caregivers indicated receiving services at Families Forward Wraparound.

Caregivers and youth responses suggested mixed feelings about how the programs youth are involved in affect them. More than half of youth (50%) and caregivers (60%) responded that it is very true that programs help them to do better in school. While more than half of youth reported that it is very true that programs help them participate in activities in school, 60% of caregivers reported that this is only a little bit true. A majority of caregivers responded that it is very true (80%) that programs help their child build skills that will be helpful in the future; however youth indicated more mixed feelings, with 50% responding that it is very true, 38% responding that it is mostly true, and 13% responding that it is a little bit true. Similarly, a majority of caregivers reported that it is very true (80%) that that the programs their children are involved in are a good fit for them, while youth responses were less positive, with 38% responding it was very true that the programs were a good fit for them and 38% responding that it is only a little bit true.

Youth reported that it is very true (63%) and mostly true (38%) that adults in their lives respect them. Three-fourths (75%) of youth and 40% of caregivers responded that it is very true that when they are feeling lonely there are people they can talk to; however 20% of caregivers replied it is not true at all. Similar percentages of youth (88%) and caregivers (80%) felt that is very true that when they need help in school they know where to find it.

San Joaquin County

This summary reviews the implementation of the Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) in San Joaquin County during Year 1 of the initiative's implementation phase. The summary includes an overview of the County's implementation plan and structure; a synthesis of key strengths and challenges based on data from interviews, focus groups, and staff surveys; and a description of results from the Year 1 youth and caregiver surveys.

The Year 1 evaluation data collection included the following activities. The number in parentheses represents the number of respondents who participated in each of the activities or the number of focus groups that were conducted.

- Key informant interviews with PYJI leadership (7)
- Focus group with Probation and Child Welfare line staff (1)
- Focus group with community-based organization (CBO) leadership and line staff (1)
- Site Visit
- Documentary Data
- Staff Survey (67)
- Youth Survey (93)
- Caregiver Survey (65)

Implementation Plan and Structure

Implementation Plan

San Joaquin County's PYJI is led by the **San Joaquin County Probation Department**. The County's PYJI centers on broad system-level change designed to build organizational capacity and strengthen service delivery, with a focus on the county's medium- and higher risk crossover youth. As such, San Joaquin County has defined crossover youth as **youth who have experienced documented neglect, abuse and/or trauma, have a history in the child welfare and/or foster care system, and who are currently engaged in the juvenile justice system**. According to their July 2014 data report, in 2013, of the approximately 1300 youth on probation supervision (including informal supervision), 537 were identified as crossover.

In its implementation plan San Joaquin County discussed a number of key activities to enhance organizational capacity, including standardizing tracking of crossover youth in County agency databases, implementing multi-agency staff trainings on

Implementation Highlights

During the first year of PYJI implementation, San Joaquin County:

- Expanded eligibility for wraparound services for moderate and high risk crossover youth
- Developed and planned for trainings on PYJI and trauma-informed care for probation officers and CPS caseworkers countywide
- Improved tracking and monitoring of crossover youth
- Purchased and prepared to implement the Girls Health Screen tool

positive youth development (PYD) and trauma-informed care (TIC), and developing new tools and protocols to support data-driven decision making. Cornerstones of the County's plan to strengthen services for crossover youth included expanding wraparound services to include broader eligibility, implementing the Girls Health Screen tool, and increasing engagement of community-based partners and crossover youth leaders in service planning and delivery.

Implementation Structure

San Joaquin County's PYJI Executive Steering Committee is composed of leadership from Probation, Child Protective Services (CPS), Mental Health Services, Healthcare Services, Public Health, Correctional Health, County and City education stakeholders, as well as several community-based organizations (CBOs). The Steering Committee meets monthly, and has held several subcommittee meetings related to particular components of the County's PYJI plan. The planning and implementation process is facilitated by an external consultant and supported by a Management Analyst within Probation.

Pre-Implementation Context

County and community-based PYJI partner leadership identified a number of pre-implementation strengths on the part of the County. For example, agency leadership reported a history of strong collaboration and inter-departmental partnerships in the County, particularly between Probation, Healthcare Services, and CBOs. Additionally, some leaders observed that CBOs are well-linked to the community, and thus have strong community trust and buy-in. Probation stakeholders also identified the strong collaboration between CPS and Behavioral Health Services (BHS) as a pre-implementation strength. Through Katie A settlement planning, BHS and CPS strengthened the procedures for mental health screening, assessment, and referral of all children and youth served by CPS and have improved coordination of services through the placement of children's mental health clinicians within the CPS offices.

At the time of San Joaquin County's implementation plan, Probation described strong data-gathering practices, along with an electronic case management system for youth. Probation was also already using a rewards and sanctions matrix, and all probation officers had been trained in motivational interviewing prior to the introduction of PYJI. In addition, CPS case managers were already trained in family team decision making and family engagement, and the County was providing coordinated wraparound services and exploring the expansion of wraparound eligibility for Probation youth. Mental Health Services clinicians had been trained in trauma-informed and gender-responsive care, including trauma-informed cognitive behavioral therapy and the Seeking Safety program for girls, and the Probation department was in the process of establishing a functional family therapy team with Mental Health Services.

Key Strengths and Progress in Implementation

Support from Leadership and Line Staff

Key informant interviews with County agency leadership indicated excitement for PYJI, with leaders observing that the PYJI model encourages diverse stakeholders to join in the systems change process. Leadership emphasized PYJI has provided an opportunity to develop system-level capacities such as evidence-based practices and data-driven decision making, as well as the opportunity to strengthen previous partnerships, particularly between Mental Health Services and CPS, and CPS and CBOs. Community-based partner leadership noted that PYJI shows promise for aiding Probation and CPS in collaborating more effectively.

County agency leadership recalled being conscious of how best to roll out PYJI to line staff, wanting to ensure that line staff understand the purpose of each PYJI component before introducing new components. Probation leadership explained that they began to observe changes in staff mentality after they presented the definition of crossover youth and demonstrated the extent to which youth in the juvenile justice system meet the crossover youth definition. The County also invited senior and mid-level staff from PYJI partner agencies to a briefing on PYJI goals and objectives in April 2014. Probation and CPS line staff with whom the evaluation team spoke reported that they found PYJI concepts inspiring and exciting. One County leader shared:

The trauma informed care issue [is] not new to licensed social workers in the behavioral health area, but how profoundly it is used is new to them. Learning more about this has been really interesting—everyone has bought into this.

At the same time, only about half (49%) of County staff survey respondents indicated having heard of PYJI, although the relatively high number of respondents may mean that the survey was distributed to staff who may not have direct involvement with crossover youth or PYJI.

Collaborative Planning Efforts

San Joaquin County reported carrying out a number of planning meetings with County agencies, community partners, and TA providers, with many more planned for the near future. In key informant interviews, leadership from across PYJI partners described strong communication between organizations participating at the task force level. A majority of staff survey respondents from County agencies also replied that they agree (25%) or somewhat agree (55%) that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in San Joaquin County collaborate effectively.

Building Foundational Partnerships

As noted in their March 2014 progress report, much of San Joaquin's focus thus far has been centered on developing contractual agreements for training and technical assistance and developing partner agreements for information sharing and referral practices. Key progress in this area has included Probation's identification of two CBO partners under PYJI and the development of MOUs and scopes of work for their services. Additionally, the County reported that four partner agencies entered an

agreement to provide pre-wraparound services, and three partner agencies entered an agreement to implement the Girls Health Screen tool.

According to Probation leadership at the time of Sierra Health Foundation's April 2014 site visits, local partnerships are progressing well, and the Probation Department has met with its contracted CBOs to review their scopes of work and deliverables, both of which are focused on youth empowerment. As one County leader shared:

The PYJI effort has brought both Mental Health Services and Child Welfare to the table with the primary CBOs that probation is involved with, and has enhanced our working relationships and awareness and linkages with those organizations that might have been much more peripheral to our operations pre-PYJI. Now, post-PYJI, we find ourselves engaging and accessing the CBOs and reaching out to them in a manner that we did not do before.

Survey responses also indicate that County agencies and CBOs have relatively strong working relationships, with respondents from County agencies agreeing (36%) or somewhat agreeing (40%) that their agency has strong working relationships with CBOs. Likewise, all five respondents from CBOs agreed or somewhat agreed that their organization has strong working relationships with Probation, Child Welfare, and Behavioral Health Services.

San Joaquin County has also reported some successes with engaging youth, family, and the community in PYJI partnerships. According to the County's March 2014 progress report, youth were in attendance at three out of the five PYJI task force planning meetings, and youth from the PYJI youth development group attended community meetings to provide input and testimony around mental health needs of children and youth in the community.

Developing Operational Capacity

Interviews with County leadership and the County's PYJI progress report highlight San Joaquin County's progress in developing policies and procedures, strengthening data capacity, and preparing for broad staff training under PYJI.

Policies and Procedures. PYJI leadership underscored that capacity building has been the chief focus of San Joaquin County's PYJI thus far. At the time of their progress report in March 2014, San Joaquin County had begun the process of identifying and developing new formal procedures related to PYJI, including 1) procedures for how and when probation officers should refer youth to youth development groups; and 2) procedures for how and when probation officers should refer youth to the county's new preventive and early wraparound services. At the same time, survey respondents from County agencies indicated mixed understandings of the extent to which their agency has created new policies and procedures for serving crossover youth, with about a quarter (27%) reporting they did not know if their agency had created any new policies or procedures.

Data Capacity. PYJI leadership reported that San Joaquin's Juvenile Justice Information System has been updated to include a query tab to indicate crossover youth status. The County also noted in its progress

report that agencies were in the process of drafting an interagency MOU concerning information sharing for crossover youth; the MOU should be executed during the next reporting period. The progress report also relayed that community-based partners are increasing their data collection activities and that information sharing agreements with CBOs are in process. Almost half (49%) of survey respondents from County agencies replied that their agency shares data with other agencies serving crossover youth to some extent or to a great extent. The same percentage of respondents noted that their agencies have adapted their data and reporting systems to track crossover youth during the past 12 months. Likewise, three out of the five respondents from CBOs indicated that, to some or to a great extent, their organization has engaged in data sharing and adapted their data and reporting systems to track crossover youth during the past year.

Staff Training. PYJI leadership explained that much of San Joaquin County's efforts have focused on planning and preparation for staff training, including a number of trainings on TIC, youth mental health first aid, and the Girls Health Screen tool for various levels of staff from PYJI partner agencies. During evaluation team site visits in March 2014, Probation and other agency leadership expressed excitement about these learning opportunities, especially the TIC and the Girls Health Screen tool. Staff from Probation, Mental Health, the Public Defender's Office, and Correctional Health have since attended training sessions on TIC. Staff survey responses point to growing familiarity among County staff about key elements of PYJI, though the survey did not assess whether this training was part of PYJI or prior efforts. At the time of the staff survey, slightly more than half of respondents from County agencies reported that their agencies had to some or a great extent participated in trainings related to PYD (57%), TIC (53%), or wraparound services (56%). Sixty-six percent of County survey respondents replied that TIC had been introduced in their agency and 64% replied that they have heard about the application of PYD in their agency. Responses from CBO staff also suggest a high degree of training in and familiarity with PYJI elements among CBOs, though again, participation in such training may not be as a result of PYJI. All respondents from CBOs reported that their organizations have participated in training related to PYD to a great extent, and four out of five respondents indicated that their organizations have participated in training related to wraparound services and TIC to some or a great extent.

Sustainable Funding. Probation leadership specified that the County has leveraged public funds to cover wraparound services, though respondents were unclear exactly how these funds were being used. Probation has also leveraged funding from the County's Second Chance Act Grant to extend TIC training opportunities to staff.

Preparing for Improvements in Service Delivery

As noted above, at the time of their March 2014 progress report, San Joaquin's efforts had been focused primarily on preparation for service provision, in particular, scheduling and planning staff trainings and capacity building events, as well as extensive consultation with TA providers. Thus far, changes to service delivery have centered on the expansion of wraparound services to include three levels: "preventive wrap," "pre-wrap," and "traditional wrap." Probation leadership described these efforts to enhance wraparound service provision as a means to bring in wraparound services at an earlier stage of supervision, rather than waiting until a youth reaches placement. Leadership observed that since PYJI

implementation began, Probation has been consistently making wraparound referrals and CPS wraparound referrals are increasing. As part of the creation of new services under PYJI, according to the progress report, San Joaquin County was planning to initiate Positive Youth Development Groups for crossover youth in the summer of 2014.

In general, a majority of County agency staff reported that they agreed (23%) or somewhat agreed (62%) that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in San Joaquin County effectively carry out referrals and linkages. Survey responses suggest that County and CBO staff have a relatively high level of understanding of the service delivery system, although the percentages of staff indicating that they *somewhat* agreed with each survey item underscores a need for continued efforts in this area. A majority of survey respondents from County agencies replied that they agreed (41%) or somewhat agreed (44%) that they understand the formal referral process for wraparound services. Most respondents from County agencies also agreed or somewhat agreed that they know where (87%) and how (89%) to refer youth to support services. All five respondents from CBOs agreed or somewhat agreed that they understand the formal referral process for wraparound services and know where or how to refer youth for support services.

Probation leadership also observed that PYJI-engaged agencies are working well together around TIC. Probation leadership shared that they will be adding (and that other agencies are considering) the Girls Health Screen tool for all girls booked in juvenile hall to support identification of youth for TIC and wraparound referrals. TA providers distinguished one of San Joaquin's major strengths at the time of the implementation plan as its willingness to implement the gender-responsiveness component of PYJI. CBO staff who participated in focus groups also noted that they feel well prepared to implement PYJI elements as applicable to their service areas.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

Time Required for Implementation Start-Up

As San Joaquin's PYJI team explained in their progress report, the amount of time the County spent on startup tasks—such as hiring, budgeting, and contract negotiations with service providers and trainers—meant that the County began PYJI implementation later than anticipated. Child Welfare leadership added that fixed funding and increasing regulatory requirements have prevented additional hiring and exacerbated demands placed on staff. Leadership from County agencies including Mental Health and Child Welfare reported that during this time there was a lack of clarity around the timeline for implementation.

Permeation of PYJI Information and Philosophy

While many PYJI stakeholders described the successes of leadership and partnerships under PYJI implementation, some County and CBO stakeholders observed that the Probation Department has not yet achieved the degree of culture shift needed to move the department from a more traditional view of supervision to one more consistent with PYD, youth and family engagement, and partnerships with

CBOs. Various PYJI stakeholders also specified a need for expanded partnerships with the school system, the juvenile court system, law enforcement, and faith-based organizations.

In addition, while leadership at PYJI partner agencies conveyed high levels of engagement with PYJI, line staff from multiple County agencies and CBOs expressed less engagement with and understanding of PYJI. For example, at the time of focus groups conducted in March 2014, Probation and Child Welfare line staff had not yet been involved in PYJI implementation, and some focus group participants shared that they were not clear about the County's operational definition of crossover youth. About half (49%) of the staff survey respondents from County agencies reported having heard of PYJI.

Strengthening Partnerships and Collaboration

While leadership and line staff from County agencies and CBOs affirmed that partnerships and collaboration are generally strong, findings from key informant interviews, focus groups, and the staff survey suggest that this is an area for continued development. For example, while a majority of survey respondents from County agencies reported at least partial agreement that strong working relationships exist between agencies and organizations serving crossover youth, and that these agencies and organizations collaborate effectively, it is worth noting that more respondents indicated they somewhat agreed (55%) than agreed (25%) that agencies and organizations collaborate effectively. About one-third to a half of respondents indicated they agreed that their agency had a strong working relationships with Probation (54%), Child Welfare (40%), Behavioral Health Services (40%), Youth and Family Services (38%), Law Enforcement (36%), and CBOs (43%). For each of these agencies, similar percentages of respondents reported that they somewhat agreed that their agency had a strong working relationships.

Stakeholders identified several areas in which relationships and collaboration could be improved. For example, line staff from Probation and CPS discussed several challenges with communication and information sharing, particularly when dealing with 241.1 joint assessment hearings; in these cases, stakeholders noted that there can sometimes be an “us versus them” mentality in determining which agency—Probation or CPS—should have responsibility for a particular youth's case. County staff responses to the survey appeared to underscore these tensions, with about one-third of staff survey respondents from Probation (36%) and CPS (30%) agreeing that their agency has a strong working relationship with the other. Another 46% of Probation and 50% of CPS reported that they somewhat agreed that they had a strong working relationship, while 18% of Probation and 20% of CPS staff disagreed.

County and CBO stakeholders also expressed conflicting views about the degree to which CBOs had been integrated into the PYJI partnership. For the most part, County leadership described CBOs as being relatively well integrated into the PYJI partnership. Although CBO leadership and staff agreed that the County had made efforts to involve CBOs in PYJI, many discussed ways in which CBOs could be included more fully in the PYJI partnership, both in terms of their role and their funding allocation. CBO line staff also observed that referrals from Probation to Youth Development Group partners and other CBOs are not yet running as smoothly as they could be, and would benefit from increased clarification and formalization.

Ensuring Operational Capacity

As mentioned above, at the time of its progress report San Joaquin County was in the process of formalizing policies and procedures related to PYJI. Stakeholders involved in managing PYJI planning and implementation explained that while progress had been made, the process of ensuring that new procedures are vetted and that policies align across systems takes time. They noted that challenges can arise in ensuring that policies align across systems when these systems operate from different underlying approaches—for example, the Juvenile Court judicial policies may not align with PYJI. Probation officers also commented that at times, they are unclear about the expected course of action for a youth's case, even when procedures and protocols exist. Staff survey results also demonstrate some uncertainty about the extent to which agencies have created new policies and procedures for serving crossover youth in the past 12 months: 28% of County agencies respondents indicated their agency made no or limited progress in the creation of new policies and procedures, 45% reported some or great progress, and 27% reported they did not know what progress was made.

San Joaquin County agencies and community-based stakeholders are also conscious of the need for increased support in sharing and working with data, noting that data collection on crossover youth was still in its preliminary stages at the time of the progress report. Stakeholders explained that differences in Probation and CPS data platforms have complicated data sharing efforts. Staff survey results also pointed to data collection and sharing as an area for further improvement. While 25% of staff survey respondents from County agencies replied that they agreed that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in San Joaquin collect and share data effectively, 40% somewhat agreed, and 36% disagreed or somewhat disagreed. Likewise, respondents from both County agencies and CBOs conveyed mixed perspectives about the extent to which their agency or organization has adapted forms or reporting tools to be consistent across agencies.

A number of stakeholders identified challenges in developing sufficient capacity for service provision. Leadership across County agencies noted that their agencies have limited time and staffing available to support PYJI efforts, and line staff also voiced apprehension about the additional time commitments of PYJI responsibilities. Leadership also commented that filling preexisting vacancies in a timely fashion can be challenging. Speaking to the importance of San Joaquin's planned staff trainings, at the time of the staff survey, over one-third (36%) of respondents from County agencies reported that they disagreed (11%) or somewhat disagreed (25%) that staff in their agency were well trained to support crossover youth.

County staff also noted that, in the process of turning the PYJI conversations into implementation, the scope of systems change and culture change contemplated under PYJI can be overwhelming and various levels of Probation staff feel burdened by the demands of their new roles and tasks with PYJI. Some County leadership expressed concern that the length of PYJI funding is insufficient to execute the degree of systems change desired.

Implementing Service Delivery

As noted above, at the time of data collection for this report, San Joaquin County was in the process of setting the groundwork for many of the planned changes to PYJI service provision. With regard to the pre-existing system of services, County and CBO line staff identified mental health services as an area for improvement, including increasing the availability of youth-centered mental health services and improving engagement in mental health services for youth being released from detention.

Youth and Caregiver Experiences: Survey Data

Respondent Description

In San Joaquin County, 93 youth and 65 caregivers responded to the youth and caregiver surveys, out of the approximately 530 crossover youth under probation supervision. The ages of youth respondents ranged from ages 13 to 18 and the mean age was 17. Males comprised 81% of the youth respondents and females comprised 19%. The most common ethnicity was Hispanic/Latino, representing 53% of the youth respondents, followed by White/Caucasian (30%), African American/Black (29%), Native American/Alaskan Indian (10%), Asian or Pacific Islander (7%), and other ethnicities (4%).

Caregivers were primarily made up of mothers (63%), fathers (11%), and grandmothers (5%). Females comprised 74% of caregivers and males represented 26%. Forty-seven percent of caregivers were Hispanic/Latino (47%), followed by White/Caucasian (39%), African American/Black (18%), Native American/Alaskan Indian (11%), other ethnicities (5%), and Asian or Pacific Islander (2%).

Nearly all youth (99%) reported currently having a probation officer. All caregivers also reported that their child has a probation officer. Less than one-quarter (17%) of youth replied that they currently have a social worker through Child Welfare. Of the youth that did not report currently having a social worker, 18% indicated they have had one in the past. Fifteen percent of caregivers indicated that their child currently has a social worker. Nearly all youth (98%) and caregivers (97%) responded that they (or their child) were currently in school. Probation officers assumed primary responsibility for administering the survey in San Joaquin County, and nearly all youth (95%) reported hearing about this survey from their probation officer.

Youth and Caregiver Responses

Youth and caregivers reported mostly positive responses about their experiences and relationships with their probation officers. A majority of youth (84%) and caregivers (75%) indicated that it is very true that their probation officer wants things to go well for them, and nearly two-thirds of caregivers (62%) replied that it is very true that their child's probation officer talks with their child about how what they have been through has affected them, a survey question designed to capture whether staff are using a TIC approach. Youth responses revealed more ambivalence about this with one-third (34%) of youth responding that it is very true, one-third (33%) responding that it is mostly true, one-quarter (28%) responding it is a little bit true, and 6% responding it is not at all true that their probation officer talks with them about how what they've been through has affected them. Similarly, 65% of caregivers

indicated it is very true that their child's probation officer tells them about programs that might help them, while among youth only 46% replied that this is very true and 11% replied that this is not at all true. Most youth and caregivers (71%) reported that they can easily get in touch with their probation officer if they need to.

Among those who indicated having a social worker, youth and caregiver responses revealed mixed feelings about their experiences and relationships with their social worker. While 56% of caregivers and 40% of youth responded that it is very true that their social worker wants things to go well for them, 7% of youth and 22% of caregivers responded it is not true at all. Similarly, 27% of youth reported that it is very true that their social worker talks with them about how what they have been through affects them; however 20% of youth replied that it is not at all true. In addition, 40% of youth indicated that it is not at all true that their social worker tells them about programs that might be helpful. Youth and caregivers reported mixed responses as to whether they can easily contact their social worker if they need to.

Caregivers generally reported positive experiences and relationships with teachers or adults at their child's school, while youth respondents expressed mixed feelings about these relationships. A majority of youth (67%) and caregivers (73%) responded that it is very true that teachers or adults at school want things to go well for them. However, although 63% of caregivers responded that teacher or adults at school talk to their child about how what they have been through affects them, youth responses suggested mixed feelings, with 41% of youth indicating this is very true, but 18% indicating that this is not true at all.

Interestingly, 91% of caregivers reported that families are involved in deciding the kinds of services that would be helpful for their child, but only 16% of youth replied that their family is involved. A majority of youth (79%) affirmed that probation officers, social workers, and other adults ask them what kind of programs they want to participate in.

More than half of youth (57%) and about two-thirds of caregivers (64%) reported that there is a group of people that they (or their child) can meet with to decide what types of programs would be helpful, a survey question designed to assess whether youth and families were involved in team-based case planning meetings. Most youth (80%) and caregivers (82%) identified probation officers as part of this group. Teachers were also identified by a majority of youth (54%) and caregivers (56%), and therapists, doctors, and mentors were also identified by about 30% of youth and caregivers as part of this group. A slightly higher percentage of youth (28%) identified social workers as part of the group than caregivers did (20%). It should be noted that while this survey question was designed to capture information about team-based decision making, it may not have been clear that a "group of people" referred to participants in *joint* meetings.

Youth and caregivers both identified a variety of programs in which the youth participate. Over half of youth (56%) and caregivers (60%) reported that youth participate in therapy or counseling. Programs to help youth succeed in school was the next most commonly indicated program, identified by 50% of youth and 46% of caregivers. More youth (41%) than caregivers (22%) reported that youth participated in afterschool programs. About one-third of youth identified that they participated in job training or

internships (34%), activities at their church or temple, or help in the community (35%). Fifteen percent of youth reported participating in services through Victor Community Services, the County's wraparound service provider. Similar percentages of youth and caregivers responded that they participate in programs through Community Partnership for Families (5%) and Father and Families of San Joaquin (5%).

Overall, youth and caregivers reported mixed feelings about the programs the youth participate in, with youth expressing slightly less positive opinions about the programs they participate in than caregivers. Over one-quarter of youth (27%) and 20% of caregivers replied that it is not at all true that the programs in which they participate help them in school. A sizeable minority of caregivers indicated it is very true (43%) the programs helped their child get more involved in their community, while 34% of youth indicated that it is not at all true.

A majority of youth responded that it is very true (42%) or mostly true (38%) that adults in their life respect them. About half of youth (48%) and caregivers (51%) reported that it is very true that when they are feeling lonely there people they can talk to who can help them; however 14% youth and 16% of caregivers reported that this was not at all true. Sixty percent of youth and 53% of caregivers indicated that it is very true that if they need help in school they know where to find it.

Solano County

This summary reviews the implementation of the Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) in Solano County during Year 1 of the initiative's implementation phase. The summary includes an overview of the County's implementation plan and structure; a synthesis of key strengths and challenges based on data from interviews, focus groups, and staff surveys; and a description of results from the Year 1 youth and caregiver surveys.

The Year 1 evaluation data collection included the following activities. The number in parentheses represents the number of respondents who participated in each of the activities or the number of focus groups that were conducted.

- Focus group with PYJI Leadership Team (1)
- Focus group with Education and Juvenile Detention Facility staff (1)
- Focus group with Probation Officers and community-based organization (CBO) line staff (1)
- Site Visit
- Documentary Data
- Staff Survey (10)
- Youth Survey (34)
- Caregiver Survey (0)

Implementation Plan and Structure

Implementation Plan

Distinct among the PYJI counties, Solano County's PYJI is led by the **Vallejo City Unified School District (VCUSD)** and focuses on crossover youth in the city of Vallejo. In the long run, Solano County hopes to expand PYJI to other school districts in the county. Solano County defines crossover youth as **young people who are currently engaged in the juvenile justice system and have a prior case history or referral to the child welfare system**. According to their July 2014 data report, in 2013, of the 270 youth on probation supervision in the city of Vallejo (including informal supervision), 118 were crossover youth.

To best serve crossover youth in the context of the school setting, VCUSD's implementation plan outlined a number of operational capacity goals to support PYJI, including improving data practices and systems; developing an incentives and

Implementation Highlights

During the first year of PYJI implementation, Solano County:

- Hired a PYJI Liaison to work with crossover youth students
- Finalized MOU between VCUSD and Solano County Probation
- Established mechanisms to identify and track crossover youth
- Developed referral case flow processes between VCUSD, Probation, and Solano County Office of Education
- Held staff trainings in trauma-informed care and restorative justice

sanctions matrix; training PYJI partners in PYJI elements; restructuring preexisting student success team (SST) meetings to better incorporate PYJI principles and partners; improving and formalizing referral mechanisms between schools and the Probation Department; and hiring a PYJI School Site Liaison to support VCUSD crossover youth in navigating the systems with which they interact.

Implementation Structure

VCUSD created a PYJI taskforce to carry out planning and implementation. The taskforce comprises leadership from VCUSD, Solano County Probation Department (SCPD), Solano County Office of Education (SCOE), Solano County Health and Social Services Department (H&SS, which includes Child Welfare Services and Behavioral/Mental Health), Kaiser Permanente, the UC Davis Center for Community School Partnerships, and two student representatives. The PYJI planning and implementation process is managed by VCUSD's Director of Partnerships & Community Engagement.

Pre-Implementation Context

Leadership and line staff from PYJI partners emphasized that VCUSD's approach to supporting its students, particularly the commitment of District leadership to youth development and addressing racial and ethnic disparities, provided a strong foundation for the District's undertaking of PYJI. Through its Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) program—which aims to ensure that all youth and families reach their full academic, social, and emotional potential through integrated services—VCUSD has placed mental health specialists at high school campuses, implemented restorative justice practices, and instituted youth leadership programs. One PYJI partner stated:

It has been the charge of the [District] Superintendent to eliminate disparities when it comes to suspensions and expulsions of black and brown youth. Things she's been doing to implement interventions like Restorative Justice and trauma-informed care—that level of professional development and training is almost a mandate at each school site.

PYJI stakeholders including school and community representatives also observed that simultaneously, changes in Probation leadership in recent years have led to a “*shift from a punitive mindset to a more educational mindset*”—a shift that many have seen trickle down to multiple levels of the SCPD. Stakeholders commented that in a county where the prevailing mindset has been punitive, rather than restorative, this progress is quite significant.

Along with a strong philosophical foundation for PYJI, VCUSD and County leadership highlighted several areas related to operational capacity and collaboration that were strong prior to the initiative. For example, the H&SS Network of Care database is designed to facilitate data sharing among partners and allows youth to develop their own electronic personal health records. SCOE and Child Welfare Services also reported having a data-sharing system in place. In addition, SCPD has co-located staff in Child Welfare Services and the department had a practice of using evidence-based assessments and county wraparound services for youth. PYJI leadership also noted that Solano County's Interagency Case Management Committee represents a forum where stakeholders including law enforcement, Behavioral Health, Child Welfare and School District stakeholders come together on a regular basis to engage in

collaborative planning for youth facing out-of-home placement; under PYJI the County plans to expand the role of this body in team-based decision making by convening the team earlier in a youth's case.

Key Strengths and Progress in Implementation

Strong Support for PYJI from Leadership and Line Staff

PYJI leadership described that the PYJI task force, which includes representatives from Probation, the education system, Behavioral Health, and the Court, among others, is well aligned in its vision and commitment to collaboration. One member of the PYJI leadership team observed:

There's a level of cultural competency that exists within this team that I don't think is everywhere.

Focus group findings also suggest that Vallejo has achieved a high level of buy-in for PYJI from SCPD staff at multiple levels. SCPD leadership has informed all probation officers about PYJI, and SCPD leadership and line staff alike reported a high level of philosophical alignment and support from probation officers. Several probation officers who have participated in the SST process observed a positive impact on meeting the educational and treatment needs of crossover youth. Probation officers shared in focus groups:

We're willing to go to an SST and consider not violating the kid yet, see if we can get that buy in. We're all about trying to make it work in the community first.

[PYJI will be] time consuming. [But] if we can get a positive result, I don't mind.

While challenges remain in securing full buy-in from school staff, VCUSD's progress report also cited instances where school teachers and administrators have involved PYJI staff in decision-making processes regarding crossover youth and have used less punitive measures in response to academic and behavioral issues.

Building Partnerships and Collaboration

VCUSD reported formalizing and developing several key partnerships to carry out its PYJI plan. At the time of VCUSD's progress report in March 2014, VCUSD had signed an MOU with SCPD outlining information sharing agreements, confidentiality requirements, referral processes, and roles and responsibilities of each party under PYJI. VCUSD specified that the PYJI taskforce has identified several community-based services to serve crossover youth, including gender-specific care; trauma-informed care (TIC); FSCS wraparound services; and county wraparound service providers, which have assigned 15 service slots for crossover youth. Using the County's Interagency Case Management Committee, Child Welfare Services and SCPD have also begun to align their efforts around case management plans for crossover youth, efforts that agency leadership attributed to PYJI.

During the first year of PYJI implementation VCUSD also partnered with a community-based organization (CBO) to implement a positive youth development (PYD) leadership skills training program

called Project Restore. Project Restore, offered at high schools and Probation's Day Reporting Center, provides an opportunity for youth to talk about issues of race and inequality while developing leadership skills; according to school leadership, the program has received positive feedback from participating youth.

Staff survey responses also pointed to strong partnerships between partner agencies and CBOs, with all respondents from VCUSD and County agencies indicating that they agreed that their agency works with other agencies and organizations to provide coordinated services to crossover youth. Although the results from CBO respondents were somewhat mixed, respondents generally reported positive ratings of collaboration between organizations and agencies serving crossover youth, and felt that their organization coordinated well with the other agencies and organizations providing services to crossover youth.⁸ CBO respondents reported the greatest level of collaboration with VCUSD and the least collaboration with SCOE and juvenile justice related agencies.

Engaging Youth and the Community

Discussions with PYJI leadership emphasized Vallejo's commitment to youth engagement and involvement in PYJI planning and implementation as a pillar of its approach to PYJI. From the beginning planning stages, VCUSD partnered with the UC Davis Center for Community School Partnerships to gather youth input on their perceptions of the system for crossover youth and suggestions for system improvement. VCUSD leadership noted that youth feedback was instrumental in creating the PYJI Liaison position. VCUSD has also included crossover youth in the youth leadership groups at VCUSD high schools to promote their ongoing involvement in PYJI efforts.

VCUSD also reported engaging parents and caregivers of youth by conducting parent surveys and presenting information about PYJI at events such as town halls. In May 2014 VCUSD held its second annual Positive Youth Justice Summit, a public forum to discuss efforts to support the County's youth, including restorative justice, PYD, and TIC.

Building Operational Capacity

Findings from focus groups and VCUSD's PYJI progress report highlight several key accomplishments in the areas of staffing and policies and procedures.

Staffing. VCUSD's PYJI service implementation began with the hiring of the PYJI School Site Liaison (PYJI Liaison) to engage and support VCUSD's crossover youth. The PYJI Liaison meets individually with youth, including those who are reentering school from Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF), to help them navigate the transition to school and support their academic, social, and emotional development. PYJI stakeholders described that in its hiring process, VCUSD intentionally sought out a staff person who was reflective of students' background, hiring an African American male, Vallejo native from the same community as many students. Further, while not undertaken as part of PYJI, SCOE also hired a Student

⁸ All CBO respondents were from the same provider. Because there were only four CBO respondents and all were from the same organization, we have not included percentages here.

Support Specialist to serve all Solano County youth at the JDF; within PYJI, the Student Support Specialist plays a special role in coordinating with the PYJI Liaison.

Policies and Procedures. PYJI leadership identified a number of concrete changes that County agencies and VCUSD have made related to referral processes for crossover youth. For example, VCUSD reformed the SST referral process to receive referrals directly from probation officers; SCPD and VCUSD have developed an electronic referral form for probation officers; and SCPD has trained probation officers to set up an SST meeting prior to filing a violation of probation for school-related issues. Line staff specified that SCPD and VCUSD have also developed a process for referring cases from the JDF to the school system by way of a warm handoff to the PYJI Liaison, which they noted enables the PYJI Liaison to follow up with youth (including visits to youth at JDF) and provide ongoing support after youth are released from juvenile detention to the school system. Solano County's March 2014 progress report also highlighted an increased focus on formalizing service referrals for youth and prioritizing high-risk youth, in contrast to focus group findings suggesting that previously staff would make referrals based on their personal knowledge of the system and available resources. In addition, PYJI leadership described that SCPD worked with TA providers to draft a Positive Youth Development response grid, and VCUSD is finalizing a tool for staff at secondary schools to assess trauma. Staff survey responses provided support for Solano County's progress in formalizing the service referral processes, with a majority of respondents from VCUSD and County agencies reporting they agree (40%) or somewhat agree (30%) that they understand the formal referral process for county wraparound services. Likewise, all respondents from these agencies reported that they agree (70%) or somewhat agree (30%) that they know where and how to refer youth for support services. At the same time, survey results from the staff of the one CBO that responded to the staff survey may indicate a gap in the communication of formalized referral processes: while all CBO respondents reported they generally knew where and how to refer youth to support services, only half agreed that they understood the formal referral process for county wraparound services.

Staff Training. Solano County and VCUSD leadership reported consulting with TA providers to develop and conduct a number of trainings to prepare staff for implementation. For example, school staff and probation officers have attended trainings related to PYJI, PYD/Restorative Justice, and TIC. Survey responses also suggested that VCUSD and County agencies have emphasized training on PYD and TIC, though it is not clear whether this training occurred as part of PYJI or prior to implementation. A majority of staff survey respondents reported that to some extent (40%) or a great extent (50%) their agency has participated in PYD trainings. Similarly, most respondents replied that to some extent (40%) or a great extent (40%) their agency has participated in TIC trainings. Fewer respondents reported that their agency has participated to some extent (40%) or to a great extent (10%) in training related to county wraparound services. Nevertheless, all survey respondents reported that they agreed (30%) or somewhat agreed (70%) that staff in their agency are well trained to support crossover youth.

Data Collection and Sharing. Focus group and survey findings highlight the progress that County agencies and VCUSD have made in identifying and tracking crossover youth. SCPD has developed a process for identifying crossover youth through their existing case management system, and the department provides appropriate data to VCUSD per their data sharing MOU. Staff elaborated that SCPD

has developed a mechanism to track students at JDF who are on the PYJI caseload, which enables the PYJI Liaison and Student Support Specialist to closely follow up with these students. In addition, the County is moving toward enhancing its ability to measure youth data using an electronic case management system. VCUSD and County agency survey responses pointed to progress in strengthening data capacity: 70% of respondents reported that their agency to some extent or a great extent adapted their data and reporting systems to track crossover youth, and half of the respondents reported that their agency to some extent or a great extent shared data with other agencies serving crossover youth. At the same time, 30% indicated they did not know the extent to which their agencies had adapted their data and reporting systems and half reported they did not know the extent of their agency's data sharing practices.

Improving Service Coordination and Delivery

Stakeholders from VCUSD, school sites, and SCPD agreed that the partnerships, procedures, and staffing created under PYJI have improved service coordination and delivery for the PYJI caseload. VCUSD leadership reported that probation officers enjoy working with the PYJI Liaison and respect his advocacy role for crossover youth. As a result, they explained, the PYJI Liaison is able to maintain communication with probation officers and has found them to be easily accessible. According to VCUSD leadership at the time of the progress report, the level of partnership between the PYJI Liaison and Probation has far exceeded expectations. PYJI stakeholders also noted that collaboration and communication has been strong between the PYJI Liaison, academic support coordinators at VCUSD schools, and the Juvenile Detention Facility's Student Support Specialist. The PYJI Liaison articulated:

There hadn't been communication previously.... I'm the call board and you've had all these people calling, but there was no one there to make the connections, so the phone call was one ended. I'm working the switchboards now.

This coordination appears to have trickled down to students as well, with education and law enforcement stakeholders observing that students appreciate the PYJI Liaison's role. Stakeholders attributed this in large part to the success of the PYJI Liaison in building rapport with students. The JDF Student Support Specialist observed that since the PYJI Liaison has come on board, VCUSD students "notice that there is someone there who is going to care and be there to provide service for [them] and make sure [they're] going to school." A key stakeholder from the UC Davis Center for Community School Partnerships highlighted the "role model status" that the PYJI Liaison has been able to achieve as someone from a similar background as many of the PYJI students:

It plays a huge dynamic in the relationship building. Having an African American male to support other males has to be huge.

In this vein, the PYJI liaison affirmed:

The significance of ethnicity and gender as it relates to my position cannot be understated. Because our crossover youth are mostly African American and Latino young men, they don't get an opportunity to interact with adults that look like them on a consistent basis, and who have

been in their shoes. I start off telling each kid – telling them I’m from Lofas (neighborhood in Vallejo). That immediately creates a connection with them that goes beyond me just walking in the room. That gets them in the room. That’s half the battle.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

Gaining Buy-In from Key Stakeholders

VCUSD and the County have had clear successes in gaining support from the Probation Department and other key partners to undertake broad-based system and culture changes in how the county supports young people. At the same time, several stakeholders noted that support for and awareness of PYJI—and the requisite shifts in organizational culture—varies across school sites, with some individuals and schools demonstrating greater buy-in than others. VCUSD stakeholders observed that this variability depends in large part on organizational culture, as many school site administrators and teachers, particularly those who have been in the field for many years, are accustomed to educational approaches that do not align directly with a PYD philosophy. The progress report also suggested the need to bring additional partners to the table, including Court stakeholders and law enforcement.

As highlighted in VCUSD’s progress report, another barrier to implementation is the perception on the part of some teachers, youth, and other partner agencies of the Probation Department; in the Vallejo community, probation officers are often perceived as law enforcement figures only, rather than as partners supportive of the PYJI philosophy.

Along these lines, County, VCUSD, and CBO staff suggested that because many youth and families have had negative past experiences with the justice system, as well as negative experiences with disciplinary action in schools, one of the most significant challenges to the success of PYJI may be securing youth and family buy-in. As one probation officer shared:

The challenges are moving the kids forward and changing their mindset so they can embrace what we’re trying to do. That’s the million dollar question.

Strengthening Interagency Coordination and Communication

According to Solano County and VCUSD leadership, one of the foundational challenges at the time of implementation was the limited coordination and communication between Probation and the school district. As of the start of PYJI, there was no formal system in place to ensure that schools were aware of youth coming from juvenile detention facilities or to allow Probation and the school system to communicate about students’ needs. Stemming from this challenge, Probation and educational stakeholders have voiced some confusion around roles and responsibilities, especially in terms of ensuring that students are enrolled in and attending school. Probation line staff also noted some differences between Probation and Child Welfare that have caused complications, particularly related to standards for substantiating child abuse claims, the urgency of 241.1 reports, and understandings about which agency should have responsibility for youth whose jurisdiction may not be clear.

Staff survey responses also reflected the continued need to improve coordination and collaboration between Probation and education stakeholders. Respondents from Probation, VCUSD, and SCOE expressed differing opinions on how effectively the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in Solano County collaborate, with 20% reporting they somewhat disagree, 60% reporting they somewhat agree, and 20% reporting they agree that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth collaborate effectively. Responses showed similar ambivalence about data collection and sharing, with 40% of respondents replying they somewhat disagreed, 40% replying they somewhat agreed, and 20% replying they agreed that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth collect and share data effectively.

According to PYJI leadership, while interagency data sharing has improved, Solano County continues to face challenges in finalizing procedures that are in line with data privacy and confidentiality requirements.

Overcoming Challenges to Service Delivery

While VCUSD has made significant progress in rolling out PYJI programs and processes at school sites, Probation Department and education stakeholders highlighted several obstacles that have arisen around SST meetings. First, there has been limited participation in SSTs from teachers or administrators in the student success team process, which PYJI stakeholders attributed both to lack of buy-in and scheduling difficulties. Probation officers also expressed some uncertainty about their role in the SST process. Encouraging parent and caregiver involvement in SSTs has also been a significant challenge. VCUSD and Probation stakeholders suggested several possible reasons for this, including competing family needs, perceptions of SSTs as punishment, and mistrust of authority figures. VCUSD noted that the PYJI Liaison is actively seeking to develop better relationships with parents and families of youth to mitigate this obstacle.

While Solano County has made significant efforts in providing support for crossover youth in the context of team-based decision-making and PYD, at the time of Sierra Health Foundation site visits in April 2014, no crossover youth had access to formal county wraparound services. Leadership communicated that a common understanding of service eligibility and referral processes among institutions is required before this service model can be more effectively provided.

According to Solano County's March 2014 progress report, additional challenges in service delivery include gaps in access, availability, and coordination of youth services. Probation officers and service providers also mentioned that providers, youth, and their families often have limited awareness about the available resources for youth in the system. Access to employment is limited based on requirements for students' grade point average that are very challenging for crossover youth to meet. Additionally, there are limited bilingual services available for youth who need them as well as challenges with transportation to and from services.

Finally, even with the impressive successes of the PYJI Liaison, VCUSD stakeholders voiced concern that he already operates under a large caseload, and that at least one PYJI Liaison per high school campus would be required if PYJI is expanded to additional districts.

Youth and Caregiver Experiences: Survey Data

Respondent Description

In Solano County, 34 youth responded to the youth survey, out of the approximately 100 identified crossover youth. There were no caregiver respondents from Solano County. The ages of youth respondents ranged from ages 15 to 19 and the mean age was 17. Respondents were predominately male (88%). Nine percent of respondents were female and 3% were transgender. Seventy-six percent of respondents were African American/Black, followed by Hispanic/Latino (12%), American Indian/Native Alaskan (6%), Asian or Pacific Islander (6%), White/Caucasian (6%), and other ethnicities (6%).

While VCUSD's PYJI Liaison was the primary mechanism through which the youth survey was disseminated, youth reported hearing about the survey through a variety of sources, including individuals from school (30%), counselors or therapists (27%), staff from CBOs (21%) and other individuals such as mentors (18%). Of the youth surveyed, all answered that they currently have a probation officer. Nine percent of youth reported currently having a social worker; 64% reported they do not have a social worker and 24% indicated they don't know if they do. The one youth who did not report currently having a social worker reported having had a one in the past. Nearly all youth (97%) replied that they were currently in school.

Youth Responses

Youth responses suggested mixed feelings about their experiences and relationships with their probation officers. More than half of youth (58%) reported that it is very true that their probation officer wants things to go well for them and 49% reported that it is very true that they can get in touch with their probation officer when they need to. In contrast, 28% of youth responded that it is not at all true and 38% responded that it is only a little bit true that their probation officer talks to them about how what they have been through affects them, a survey question designed to capture whether staff are using a TIC approach. Nearly a quarter of youth indicated that it is not at all true (23%) or only a little bit true (23%) that their probation officer tells them about other programs that might be helpful.

Of the three youth who reported currently having social workers, two responded that it is mostly true that their social worker wants things to go well for them. One youth replied it is mostly true and one replied it is a little bit true that their social worker talks with them about how what they have been through affects them. One of the youth indicated it is not at all true and another that it is a little bit true that their social worker tells them about programs they can benefit from. All three youth reported it is a little bit true that they can get in touch with their social worker when they need to.

Youth also reported mixed feelings about their experiences and relationships with teachers or adults at school. Almost two-thirds of youth responded that it is very true (61%) that their teacher or other adults at school want things to go well for them, while 26% responded this is somewhat true, and 13% responded that this is a little bit or not at all true. While a quarter of youth indicated that it is very true that teachers and other adults at school talk to them about how what they have been through affects them, 25% responded it is not at all true. More than one third of students reported that it is very true

(35%) that teachers or other adults at school tell them about programs that might be helpful for them, while 38% reported that this is not at all true. A majority of youth indicated involvement of other adults in deciding what programs to participate in. A large majority of youth (79%) reported that family members are involved in deciding what kind of services would be most helpful for them. More than half of youth (58%) responded that probation officers, social workers, and others ask them what kinds of programs they want to participate in.

Less than half (44%) of youth replied that there is a group of people they meet with to decide what types of programs would be helpful, a survey question designed to assess whether youth and families were involved in team-based case planning meetings. Respondents most commonly identified probation officers (63%) as adults involved in a group that youth meet with. About one-third of youth indicated that teachers (34%) or mentors (28%) were a part of this group. Less than a quarter of youth reported that their therapists (19%) or social workers (19%) were part of this group. Smaller percentages of youth identified doctors (13%) or adults from faith-based settings (9%) as a part of the group. Youth also reported that parents and behavioral specialists were involved in this group. It should be noted that while this survey question was designed to capture information about team-based decision making, it may not have been clear that a “group of people” referred to participants in *joint* meetings.

With regard to participation in programs, no more than one-third of youth replied that they participate in any given program. The most common activities youth reported participating in were programs to help them succeed in school (33%), followed by therapy or counseling (30%). About a quarter of youth indicated they participate in after school programs like sports, art, or music (24%); mentoring (24%); or activities at church or temple (24%). Slightly less than one-fifth of youth (18%) reported they participate in job training or internship programs. Youth also conveyed mixed opinions about the activities they participate in. Almost one-third responded it is not at all true (29%) that programs help them succeed in school, but 26% responded that it is very true and 23% responded it is mostly true. A majority of youth indicated that it is not at all true (42%) or only a little bit true (23%) that the programs they are involved in help them participate in activities in school. Similarly, over two-thirds of youth reported that it is not at all true (48%) or only a little bit true (23%) that the programs they participate in get them more involved in their community. Conversely, a large portion of youth responded that it is very true (40%) or mostly true (27%) that the programs they are involved in help them develop skills that will be useful in the future. Similarly 40% youth replied that it is very true that the programs they are involved in are a good fit for them. Youth respondents expressed mixed opinions to the whether programs help them get along better with their family; 28% indicated it is not at all true, while 28% indicated it is mostly true and 24% indicated it is very true.

Most youth respondents indicated feeling respected by adults in their life, with over 80% reporting that it is very true (46%) or mostly true (36%) that adults in their lives respect them, whereas 15% responded it is a little bit true and 3% responded that it is not at all true. Nearly half of youth replied that it is very true (47%) that when they feel sad or lonely there are people that can help them; however 25% reported that this is not at all true. Similarly, 58% of youth responded that it is very true that if they need help in school they know where to find it, while 12% reported that it is not at all true.