

California's Juvenile Justice System



Trained Experts: Probation professionals are highly trained and skilled in managing trauma and high-risk needs.

Highly Educated: Staff undergo rigorous education and training.

Dual Expertise: Probation professionals are uniquely trained in both public safety and rehabilitative services.

Diversity: Professionals that reflect the communities they serve, providing culturally informed and responsive care.

Community Supervision: Probation delivers or refers youth to supports and services necessary to avoid detention or to facilitate successful transition back into the community.

Decades of experience handling complex youth populations with the highest risk and needs while also supporting youth to avoid deeper system involvement.

Key Connectors: Probation bridges the state court system with county services and balances community safety with rehabilitation through education, job training, and other pro-social programs.

Probation's Role in the Juvenile Justice System

County probation departments play a vital and unique role throughout the entire juvenile justice continuum, serving both the court and the county to coordinate the diverse responses needed to support youth at every stage — including foster youth, young adults (18-25), and those requiring secure detention for serious and violent offenses. Probation also works to reduce system involvement through prevention and intervention, supporting youth and families while coordinating services across community, county, and state entities, including:

- Schools
- Social Services and Supports
- Courts and other Government Agencies
- Community-Based Organizations

Evolution of California Juvenile Justice System: Post SB 823

The closure of the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has resulted in the entire juvenile justice system to be a local county probation responsibility. The shift of DJJ has increased the complexity, seriousness, and age of the detained population in local facilities. California Probation has been at the forefront on building upon decades of reform to manage the juvenile continuum successfully and safely. The higher level of youth now in our care requires Probation to continue the adaptive and innovative approaches used in previous efforts to mitigate the years of trauma and challenges presented by the latest reforms.

After Probation: Continuing Needs

After completing their probation term, Probation works to connect youth/young adults to resources like transitional supportive housing, independent living services, and workforce development programs and services. Youth are encouraged to maintain the positive relationships they have gained and continue on a safer and healthier pathway as they return to our communities.

90%

OF YOUTH ARE SAFELY SUPERVISED IN THE COMMUNITY

73%

DECLINE IN JUVENILE ARREST RATES

60%

DECLINE IN YOUTH DETENTION RATES

75%

OF YOUTH REFERRED TO PROBATION ARE DIVERTED FROM BECOMING A WARD OF THE COURT