



**2021 - 2022**

# SAN MATEO COUNTY **PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

SUCCESS CENTERS  
ANNUAL EVALUATION



*Helping People  
Build Better Communities*

## ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a nonprofit social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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# Program Description

The mission of Success Centers is to empower marginalized community members through education, employment, and art, so they may develop a positive self-image and a sense of hope and purpose for their futures. San Mateo County Probation Department's (Probation) Juvenile Probation Camp Funding (JPCF) supports Success Centers' evidence-based year-round program, Helping Instill Knowledge & Empowerment in You (Hi-Key). The program provides basic, necessary life skills training and teaches how to obtain and create important documents, such as Social Security cards, driver's licenses/state IDs, and resumes. Hi-Key's JPCF-funded services were provided at their location in South San Francisco and include:

- **Case Management:** Youths are assigned a case manager to connect them to needed supports and to develop an individual Steps to Success plan detailing the youth's goals, services needed, barriers, and concrete steps to progress toward goals. The case manager ensures the plans are realistic and meets regularly with each youth to ensure continued stability.
- **Job Readiness Training/Life Skills:** Success Centers Job Readiness Training (JRT) is a simple yet comprehensive curriculum that engages job seekers to become better at resume writing, interview skills, and searching for the right job using current technology. Class topics include self-awareness, career exploration, interview skills, resume writing, and a wrap-up session that allows students to discuss what they've learned and how to apply it to their lives. The Life Skills development section prepares young people for the transition to employment by helping them develop work maturity skills, including conflict resolution; dealing with punctuality, fraternization, or authority issues; stress management; and financial literacy, including reading a pay stub, understanding banking systems, etc.
- **Job Placement/Employer Spotlights:** Success Centers links participants to local job fairs and assists jobseekers by attending interviews at places of employment and by engaging potential employers to visit, conduct employer spotlights, and interview potential candidates onsite.

Additionally, Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) funds support Success Centers to do the following work in the Youth Services Center-Juvenile Hall:

- **Academic Study Hall:** Services encompass a two-pronged approach, starting with one-on-one academic mentoring and tutoring services from highly qualified college graduate/business professionals. The mentoring strategy contains a targeted matching process centered on each student's educational content, standard needs, and their tutor's skill and expertise. This strategy increases youths' personalization and academic stamina, so youths achieve higher academic success. Second, Success Centers' academic counseling strategy deepens students' understanding of college pathway options by formulating personalized learning plans centered on certificate development pathways and academic attainment.
- **Job Readiness Training/Life Skills:** See description above.
- **Visual Arts Program:** The Visual Arts Program engages youths in fine arts as a vehicle to build life skills that reduce the risk of recidivism. Each 90-minute session begins with an introduction to a life skill that explicitly builds the ability to counter the most common criminogenic factors that lead to repeat

offenses (anti-social thinking, temperament, anger management, etc.) as well as building upon important noncognitive skills such as communication, decision-making, and empathy, all of which are necessary for success. The youths then engage in a corresponding fine arts project taught by community-based teaching artists who serve as strong role models and informal mentors. By introducing art materials, techniques, and the creative process in a formal, large group setting, youths are exposed to positive methods for expression and communication and are inspired to discover their best selves. The 12-week “Arts for Transformation” Program provides instruction on expressive art, with an intention to show the youths that life is about realizing possibilities, is designed with a dynamic encounter with nature, perception, and challenges that lead towards a place of insight and learning.

# Programmatic Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to be a major issue during fiscal year (FY) 2021-22. For JPCF-funded programs, particularly in quarter one, youths stated that they were feeling unmotivated at times as they returned on campus after the COVID-19 shut down. In quarter two, many youths missed time at school and program time due to COVID-19. Additional challenges included lack of transportation and a fear of what the future can hold. This has sometimes served as a distraction during instruction. Teaching the youths basic meditation strategies has helped keep them focused; as a result, a brief meditation session has been added to each module to help youths cope with stress. In quarter three, many youths participants expressed an interest in earning a living wage right away. Although they are still working towards a high school diploma, many of the youths struggle to understand why they are not eligible for high paying jobs at this stage in their lives. This makes job placement for these youths extremely difficult. In the last quarter, many youths and their families have been struggling from post-pandemic financial issues. Although the youths have been resilient, there has been a change in attitude and hope. The resiliency is incredible, but the youths talk about what they do not have (access to Internet, access to computers at home, access to a gym or workout space, and access to food), which has led to a lack of hope for many of the young clients. It can be hard to get a young person to believe in the importance of soft skills while they are filled with hopelessness.

For YOBG-funded services, it has been difficult re-engaging volunteer tutors since many of the Success Centers' volunteers moved out of the area during the COVID-19 shutdown period. Although Success Centers' programs have been operating virtually and in-person, some challenges remain. When a youth tested positive, all delivery on their unit shifted to virtual delivery. Other challenges included lack of access to art supplies and timing of programs during quarter two due to the early sunset. Specifically, a facilitator ran out of daylight while painting the Golden Gate Bridge. As a result, the participating youths had to complete the painting from memory. That program would be better suited for implementation during daylight savings portions of the year to maintain visibility on the nature and the structures that are used as models. In other instances, some program dates were canceled and had to be rescheduled in a subsequent quarter in order for youths to complete this program. Despite challenges, youths interacted virtually with nature from the Youth Service Center (YSC) and continue to engage in the Success Centers JRT/Life Skills program while in detention. Despite challenges, Success Centers job developers through the fiscal year continued to conduct outreach to local businesses in the Bay Area in order to create entry level employment opportunities for the youths in our community.

# Evaluation Methods

Programs provided by Success Centers are supported by Probation’s JPCF and YOBG funding streams. Success Centers reports client, service, and outcome data to Probation and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect this data include:

- **Participants and Services:** Grantee programs collected demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) and service data (e.g., type of services, hours of services, etc.) for individual participants. Program staff entered these data elements into their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.
- **Risk Factors:** Grantee programs funded by JPCF used the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) to provide a standard measure of risk for youths. This individualized assessment is a widely used criminogenic risk, strengths, and needs assessment tool that assists in the effective and efficient supervision of youths, both in institutional settings and in the community. It has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of a brief initial assessment followed by full assessment and reassessment components (JAIS Full Assessment and JAIS Reassessment). The JAIS assessment has two unique form options based on the youth’s gender. Probation has elected to administer the JAIS to all youths receiving services in community programs for at-risk and juvenile justice involved youth. The JAIS Girls Risk consists of eight items, and the JAIS Boys Risk consists of ten items. Each assessment yields an overall risk level of ‘low,’ ‘moderate,’ or ‘high.’
- **Outcomes:** Success Centers collected six additional program-specific outcome measures to track progress toward improving their clients’ quality of life:
  - percent of youths with improved soft/hard skills following participation
  - percent of youths who apply for employment and are hired
  - number of monthly employer spotlights
  - percent of youths who reported better engagement with academics
  - percent of youths who reported enhanced knowledge about job readiness and life skills
  - percent of youths who reported enhanced appreciation for the arts
- **Evidence-Based Practices:** JPCF and YOBG-funded programs are encouraged to follow evidence-based practices. To augment Probation’s knowledge of which programs are being implemented by funded partners, each funded program has provided a catalog of its practices since the fiscal year (FY) 2017-18 evaluation period. After receiving this information, ASR runs the cataloged practices reported through several clearinghouses to determine whether each practice is an<sup>1</sup>:
  - evidence-based theory or premise

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<sup>1</sup> For the full list of evidence-based practice clearinghouses used to evaluate programs, please see the JJCPA/JPCF Comprehensive Report for FY 2021-22.

- evidence-based model, shown by multiple experimental or quasi-experimental studies to be effective
- evidence-based practice or modality shown to promote positive outcomes
- evidence-based tool or instrument that has been validated (concurrent and predictive)

# Evaluation Findings

## FY 2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

- During FY 2021-22, Success Centers served a total of 81 youths (63 JPCF and 18 YOBG), averaging 27.2 hours of service over 2.9 months. COVID-19 restrictions impacted their ability to perform in-person services at the YSC and complete JAIS assessments with JPCF youths in the community this year.
- Success Centers served youths across the criminogenic risk spectrum in FY 2021-21. Nineteen percent of youths scored as ‘low’ risk on the JAIS risk assessment, 29% scored ‘moderate’ risk, and 52% scored ‘high’ risk.
- Success Centers achieved two JPCF performance goals (youths improving their soft/hard skills and the number of Employer Spotlights) and two YOBG performance goals (percentage of youths who reported enhanced knowledge about job readiness and life skills and percent of youths who reported they learned a new skill).

## PROFILE OF YOUTHS SERVED

As mentioned above, during FY 2021-22, Success Centers served a total of 81 youths: 63 youths funded by JPCF, and 18 youths funded by YOBG (Exhibit 1). Race/ethnicity data were available for all youths (Exhibit 2).

- **JPCF:** Youths funded under JPCF received an average of 19.7 hours of service over a period of 2.9 months. About two-fifths (44%) of youths identified as Hispanic/Latino, followed by 17% identified as multi-racial/ethnic, 16% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 10% identified as Black/African American, 8% identified as White/Caucasian, and 5% identified as another ethnicity (Other). Seven of every 10 youths identified as male (70%), and the average age was 16.8 years.
- **YOBG:** Youths funded under YOBG received an average of 53.5 hours of service over a period of 2.9 months. Just over one-half (56%) of youths identified as Hispanic/Latino, followed by 17% identified as Black/African American, 17% identified as another ethnicity (Other), and 11% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander. All youths identified as male (100%), with an average age of 16.9 years.

**Exhibit 1. Success Centers Services Overall and by Funding Source**

YOUTH SERVICES	FY 20-21	FY 21-22
<b>All Probation-Funded Youths Served</b>		
Number of Youths Served	90	<b>81</b>
Average Number of Hours Served	13.2	<b>27.2</b>
Average Time in the Program (Months)	2.6	<b>2.9</b>
<b>JPCF</b>		
Number of Youths Served	61	<b>63</b>
Average Number of Hours Served	15.5	<b>19.7</b>
Average Time in the Program (Months)	2.7	<b>2.9</b>
<b>YOBG</b>		
Number of Youths Served	29	<b>18</b>

Average Number of Hours Served	8.3	<b>53.5</b>
Average Time in the Program (Months)	2.5	<b>2.9</b>

**Exhibit 2. Success Centers Race/Ethnicity Profile, by Funding Source**

PROGRAMS	HISPANIC/ LATINO	WHITE/ CAUCASIAN	BLACK/ AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN/ PACIFIC ISLANDER	MULTI- RACIAL/ MULTI- ETHNIC	OTHER
JPCF	44%	8%	10%	16%	17%	5%
YOBG	56%	0%	17%	11%	0%	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>7%</b>

All youths n=81, JPCF n=63, YOBG n=18.

**RISK INDICATORS**

Exhibit 3 shows that Success Centers served youths across the risk spectrum in FY 2021-22. Of the 62 youths assessed with the JAIS, 19% scored as ‘low’ risk, 29% scored as ‘moderate’ risk, and 52% scored as ‘high’ risk.

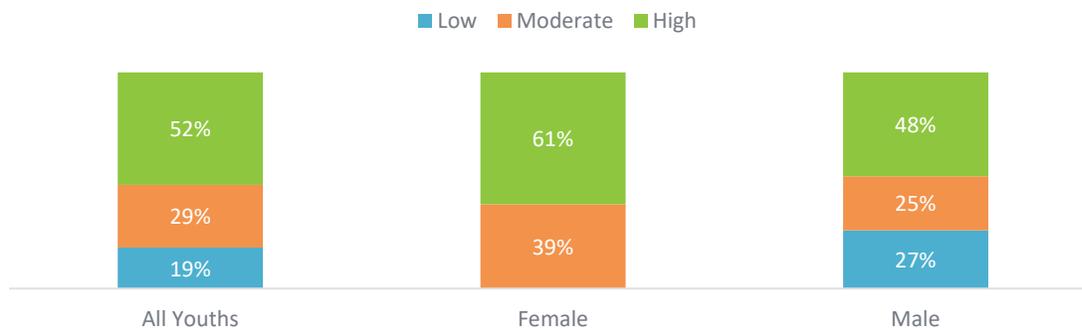
**Exhibit 3. JAIS Risk Levels**

JAIS RISK LEVELS	FY 20-21	FY 21-22
Low	20%	<b>19%</b>
Moderate	53%	<b>29%</b>
High	27%	<b>52%</b>

FY 2021-22 n=62.

When disaggregated by gender, the largest portion of both self-identified female and male youths scored as ‘high’ risk (61% and 48%, respectively). All other female youths scored as ‘moderate’ risk (39%), while one quarter of male youths scored ‘moderate’ (25%), and another quarter scored ‘low’ risk (27%; Exhibit 4).

**Exhibit 4. Criminogenic Risk Level by Gender**



All Youths n=62, Female n=18, Male n=44.

## PROGRAM-SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

Success Centers and Probation developed six additional measures specific to Success Centers activities, three each for JPCF and YOBG funded activities, to further understand outcomes of the youths receiving services (Exhibits 5 and 6). Success Centers met four of the six performance goals. Regarding JPCF Job Readiness Training, 95% of the youths improved soft/hard skills. Success Centers also achieved the second JPCF performance measure, monthly employer spotlights, by hosting 45 spotlights over the year. They did not meet the third measure of youths hired, as none of the youths obtained jobs. Anecdotally, Success Centers staff reported that the youths want higher paying jobs. ASR and Success Centers created a survey to track youths salary expectations before and after the Job Readiness Trainings. The survey will be implemented in FY 2022-2023.

**Note:** Success Centers has amended its JPCF contract with Probation to extend JRT and other employment supports to justice-involved youths in fiscal year 2022-23 using Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funding.

For the YOBG performance measures, Success Centers exceeded two of the three performance goals - 87% of youths reported enhanced job readiness and life skills, and 100% of youths reported that they learned a new skill and that they felt confident enough to use their new skills they learned in real life situations. Success Centers used this last measure in place of participants reported enhanced appreciation for the arts. The Study Hall Program is a face-to-face model that was placed on hold for the second consecutive year. Therefore, they did not have a result of youths reporting better engagement with academics.

**Exhibit 5. Performance Measures – JPCF**

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 20-21 RESULTS	FY 21-22 TARGET	FY 21-22 RESULTS
Job Readiness Training: Percent of youths with improved soft/hard skills following participation	Goal met for 2 of the 3 quarters from which data were available	80%	95%
Job Placement: Employer Spotlights to be held monthly	100%	100%	100%*
Job Placement: Percent of youths hired who apply for employment	13%	50%	0%

\*45 spotlights were held.

**Exhibit 6. Performance Measures – YOBG**

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 20-21 RESULTS	FY 21-22 TARGET	FY 21-22 RESULTS
Participants will report better engagement with academics	N/A	80%	N/A*
Participants will report enhanced knowledge about job readiness and life skills	88%	80%	87%

Participants will report enhanced appreciation for the arts	N/A	80%	100%**
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Note: \*The Study Hall Program is a face-to-face model that was placed on hold.

\*\* Used a different measure: "Participants reported that they learned a new skill and that they felt confident enough to use their new skills they learned in real life situations."

## EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

In FY 2021-22, JPCF- and YOBG-funded programs were asked to provide the curricula or practices employed in their programs. ASR then evaluated the given programs to determine whether they were evidence-based or promising practices through a comprehensive search of evidence-based practice clearinghouses. Exhibit 7 details the practices that Success Centers reported for their JPCF and YOBG-funded programs and the evidence base for each practice.

**Exhibit 7. Evidence-Based Practices**

PRACTICE	IMPLEMENTATION	RATING
Case Management	Individual meetings with clients; Face-to-face meetings, phone calls, text messages. The curriculum is only implemented under the JPCF programming.	Not rated. Informed by tools that are research-based or promising.
Growth Mindset	Individual meetings with clients; Group meetings as part of Job Readiness and Life Skills training	Research-based practice based on empirical evidence. <sup>2</sup>
Job Readiness Training	Group meetings	Not yet rated. Informed by employment and training-related programs that are research-based or promising.
Life Skills Training	Group meetings	Not yet rated. Informed by skill-building training and curricula that are research-based or promising.
Motivational Interviewing	Individual meetings with clients	Evidence-based practice according to the Center for Evidence-Based Practices. <sup>3</sup> Elsewhere rated as research-based for children in mental health treatment, <sup>4</sup> but the Office of Justice Programs rates the use of motivational interviewing for juvenile substance abuse as having “no effect” for clients age 14-19. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Mueller, C. M., & Dweck, C. S. (1998). Praise for intelligence can undermine children's motivation and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75(1), 33-52. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.75.1.33>

<sup>3</sup> Center for Evidence-Based Practices (2018). Motivational Interviewing. Case Western Reserve University. <https://www.centerforebp.case.edu/practices/mi>

<sup>4</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy. (2020). Updated Inventory of Evidence-Based, Research-Based, and Promising Practices: For Prevention and Intervention Services for Children and Juveniles in the Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Mental Health Systems. [http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1727/Wsipp\\_Updated-Inventory-of-Evidence-Based-Research-Based-and-Promising-Practices-For-Prevention-and-Intervention-Services-for-Children-and-Juveniles-in-the-Child-Welfare-Juvenile-Justice-and-Mental-Health-Systems\\_Report.pdf](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1727/Wsipp_Updated-Inventory-of-Evidence-Based-Research-Based-and-Promising-Practices-For-Prevention-and-Intervention-Services-for-Children-and-Juveniles-in-the-Child-Welfare-Juvenile-Justice-and-Mental-Health-Systems_Report.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> OJJDP Model Program Guide. (2011). Practice Profile: Motivational Interviewing (MI) for Substance Abuse Issues of Juveniles in a State Facility <https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=180>

## CLIENT STORY

Staff at funded programs provide a client story to help illustrate the effect of services on their clients. Due to changes related to staffing, Success Centers did not submit client success stories for either funding stream. The anecdotes below are drawn from quarterly reports submitted to Probation during FY 2021-22.

### JPCF

- After creating his resume, one youth stated, “I am going to get my high school diploma and a college degree because I don’t like how that section of my resume looks”. This youth was able to see his life via his resume. A Success Center staff member noted, “The best thing about this is that he understood he could change things in order to create the life he wants to have.”
- One of the skills that a female student said she learned from the Healthy Academic Habits module in the JRT/Life-Skills program was note-taking. She said that the note taking skills she learned makes her want to be a writer or an author. She asked why they don’t teach note taking and financial literacy in the comprehensive schools.

### YOBG

- One of the youths stood up and walked up to the zoom camera and said to the facilitator; “I wasn’t good at painting like this last week, but I am better this week.” This was a great example of this youth utilizing the Growth Mindset skills he learned in the JRT/Life-Skills program during the last quarter.