

# **A Comparison between North and South County JJCPA Caseloads and the Evening Center Program:**

## **Implications on DMC and JDAI**

### **Purpose:**

Local studies have consistently shown that any analysis of juvenile hall booking trends cannot be conducted without also considering demographic data and the type of caseloads that youth are supervised on. Additionally, probation practices such as levels of supervision, the use of specialized probation programs such as Juvenile Drug Court also greatly impact the use of secure detention.

The city of Watsonville, which is only 6 square miles total in Santa Cruz County, accounts for approximately 50% of the activity that results in bookings in juvenile hall. Multiple factors play a role in contributing to decisions that result in a juvenile hall booking. This can include arrest for new law violations, probation violations, failures to appear in court and court remands. Recent studies have demonstrated that youth from Watsonville, who are 70-80%, Latino, are over represented in these arrests.

The JJCPA Community Accountability Program funding supports 1 full-time probation officer dedicated to serving Watsonville and 2 full-time probation officers who serve specific geographic areas in North County. JJCPA funding also supports the Evening Center Program in South County.

JJCPA requires that all youth participating in the program be tracked for a 365-day period after intake. During that 365-day period, specific outcome measures are tracked. These reporting requirements create an opportunity to compare the North and South caseload outcomes related to arrest rates, juvenile hall bookings, successful completion of probation and other measures.

This study will compare and contrast the North and South County caseloads and the evening center program. Of interest, is determining if there are significant differences in arrest rates, violations rates and juvenile hall bookings. For instance, variations from one program to another may be the result of probation officer practices, court practices and/or program practices. Findings that demonstrate one group has far more bookings than the other will require further analysis and interpretation. Based on historical data, it may be hypothesized that youth on the Watsonville JJCPA caseload and those youth who were referred to the evening center are likelier to have higher rates of juvenile hall bookings, days in custody, probation violations and new offenses. This study will seek to prove or disprove the theory. Additionally, brief interpretations of the data will be made.

**Methodology:**

For the purposes of this report, data that was tracked for the qualifying participants spans a 365-day period that begins on the day each probationer began receiving services by the probation officer in the Community Accountability Program (CAP) and the Evening Center Program. Data is gathered for Juvenile Participant Outcome Measures.

**Findings:**

The following data compares outcomes for the North and South County Caseloads and the Evening Center. Additionally, all JJCPA caseloads are combined to demonstrate the overall outcomes.

**Juvenile Hall Bookings:**

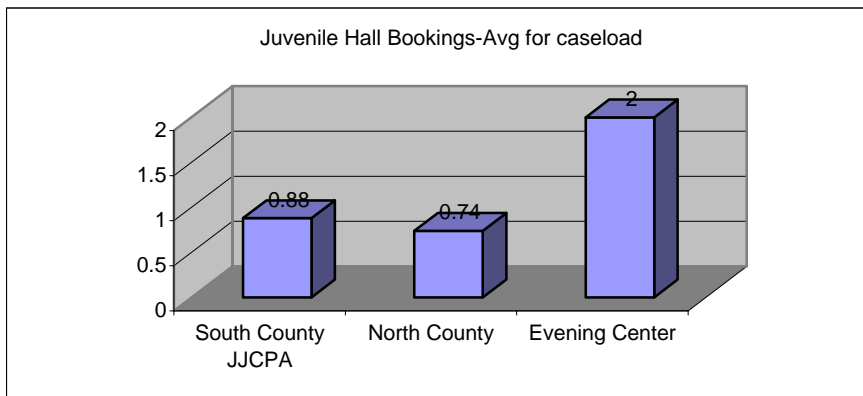
We have defined this as bookings in the juvenile hall and expressed it as an average

*CAP Total=114 total bookings/141 total youth= .80 avg. number of bookings*

*South County Total=55 Bookings/62 total youth= .88 avg. number of bookings*

*North County Total=59 Bookings/79 total youth= .74 avg. number of bookings*

*Evening Center Total=62 Bookings/31 total youth= 2 avg. number of bookings*



This is an expected outcome. Total bookings in juvenile hall indicate that a disproportionate number of youth from Watsonville are booked into custody. Many of the youth come from the JJCPA South County Caseload.

The average number of bookings for all evening center youth is more than double than the JJCPA caseloads. In many ways this should be expected and demonstrates that the "right" youth are being referred to the program. Given the

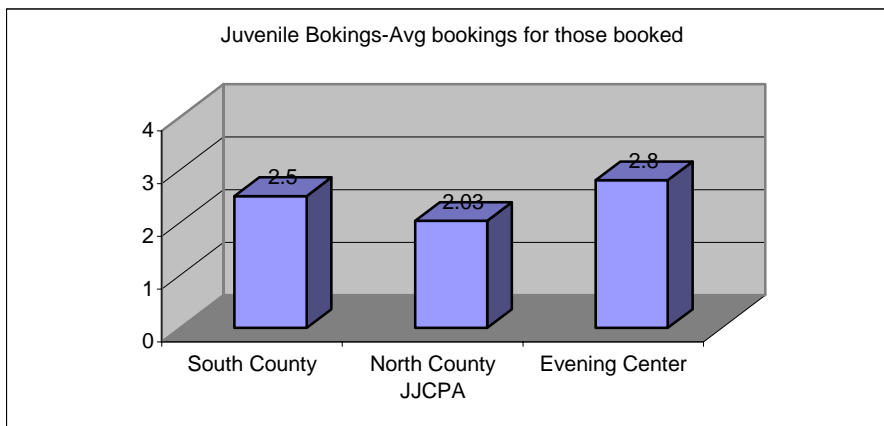
high rates of bookings, we would interpret this to mean that these youth are “at-risk” or “in risk” for being detained and use of a detention alternative would be an appropriate intervention. The screening process, which a probation officer uses to determine if the evening center should be used, is based on reviewing the violations and /or new offenses that are putting the youth at risk for further escalation in the juvenile justice system.

*The above data can be further analyzed by including only those cases that were booked.*

*South County=55 bookings total /22 youth booked in 1 or more times=2.5 avg. number of bookings*

*North County Total=59 bookings total/29 youth booked in 1 or more times=2.03 avg. number of bookings*

*Evening Center Total=62 bookings total/22 youth booked in 1 or more times= 2.8*



Many of the youth referred to the evening center come from the Juvenile Drug Court Caseload, Accountability Through Sanctions (ACTS) and the Family Preservation/Wrap Programs. These caseloads are all considered intensive. As we know, intensive supervision services often result in higher rates of violations, more court dates and subsequently, more confinement time.

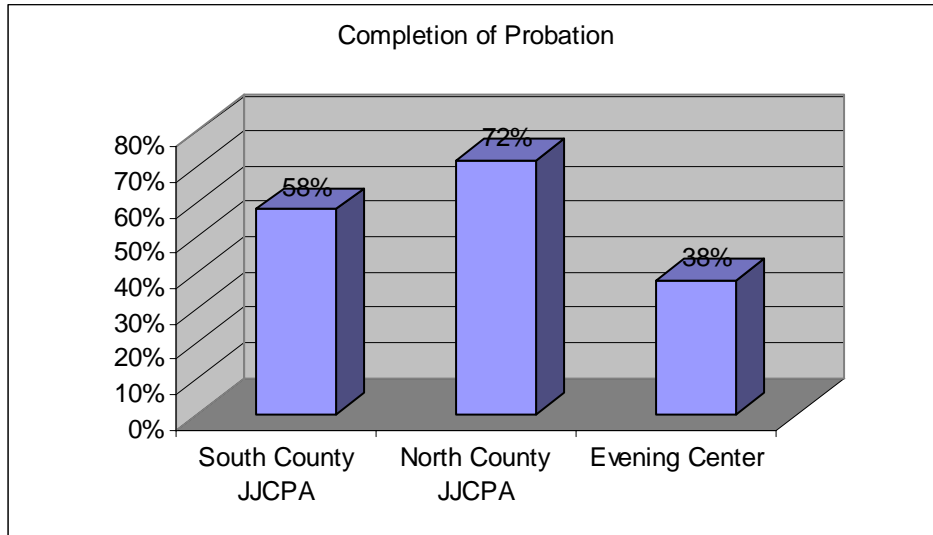
**Completion of Probation Rate:**

*CAP=(66%) or 93 out of 141 cases completed probation during this time. This indicates that 66% completed all probation terms and had probation dismissed by the court.*

*South County Total=58% or 36 out of 62 cases completed probation during this time.*

*North County Total=72% or 57 out of 79 cases completed probation during this time.*

*Evening Center Total=38 % or 12 out of 31 cases completed probation during this time*



This is an expected outcome. Why are youth staying on probation longer in South County? The answer to this question may be found by examining how many youth are wards and how many are on 654.2 or 6-month probation with out wardship. Additionally, are Latino youth more likely to be on probation longer?

We would expect the evening center youth to have lower rates of completions for several reasons. Since most of the youth referred are wards of the court, there is little chance of their probation expiring within a 6-month time period such as the many youth in JJCPA caseloads who are on a grant of 645.2 or 6 months w/out wardship probation. Additionally, the youth are referred to the evening for failing to complete conditions of probation such as community service, attending counseling and/or not meeting with the officer. This offers an explanation as to why they are staying on probation longer.

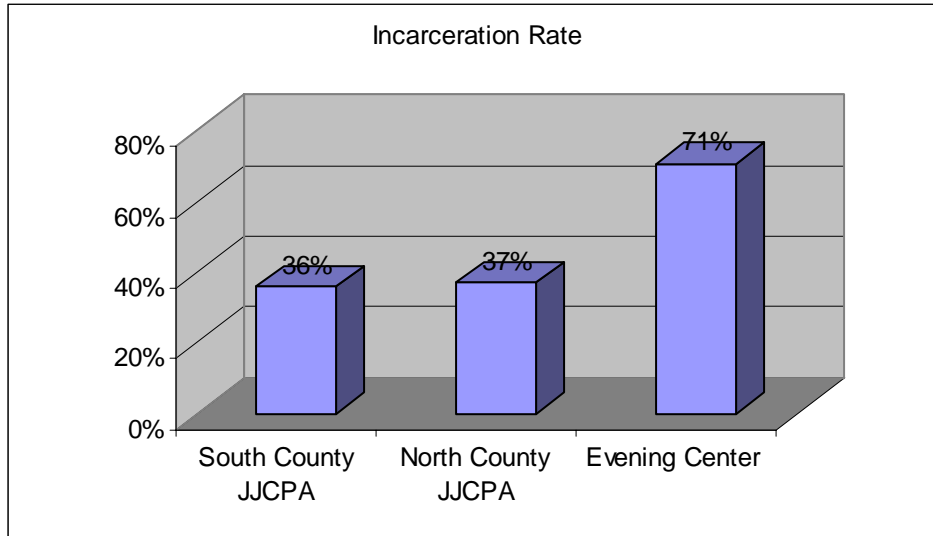
**Incarceration Rate:**

*CAP=(36%) or 51 out of 141 youth were arrested and booked at least one time during the 365 day period.*

*South County Total=36% or 22 out of 61 youth were arrested and booked at least one time during the 365 day period*

*North County Total=37% or 29 out of 78 youth were arrested and booked at least one time during the 365 day period.*

*Evening Center Total=71% or 22 out of 31 youth were arrested and booked at least one time during the 365 day period.*



The rate of incarceration is similar for North and South County. Considering the Juvenile Hall booking trends, it might have been anticipated that South County would have had a higher % of bookings per caseload. In many ways, Probation officers have great control over rates of detention. Are South County probation officers making use of detention alternatives? Does the addition of the evening center as an alternative to detention impact the South County Rate of Incarceration?

The evening center group comprises a subset of the youth in South County and seems to have characteristics similar to the youth in the now famous 8% study. These youth, though small in number, are the high recidivist and consume a disproportionate amount of time, services and juvenile hall bed days when compared to other low risk offenders.

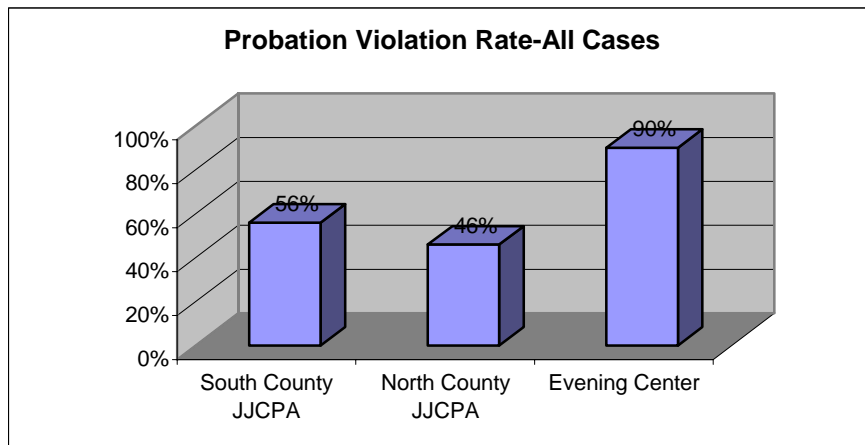
**Probation Violation Rate:**

*CAP=51% or 72 out of 141 youth had one or more probation violations. .*

*South County Total=56% or 35 out of 62 youth had one or more probation violations.*

*North County Total=46% or 37 out of 79 youth had one or more probation violations.*

*Evening Center Total=90% or 28 out of 31 youth had one or more probation violations*



A higher percentage of the South County JJCPA caseload has probation violations. This would be an expected finding, considering the higher number of Watsonville youth who have FTA's and are booked into custody for probation violations.

Determining the reason for probation violations is difficult. The caseloads sizes are approximately the same. Are more probation violations filed because the officer is more active, or are the youth more active?

South County has more specialized programs than does North County. Are the Juvenile Drug Court and the Evening Center programs inadvertently increasing rates of probation violations and rates of incarceration?

As is evident, the evening center group violation rate is more than twice that of the JJCPA groups. This is expected due to the risk level of the youth being referred to the program and the fact that they come from intensive caseloads such as Juvenile Drug Court, Family Preservation/Wrap Program, ACTs and the Community Accountability Program caseload. As stated earlier, youth are referred to the program for non-compliance issues. These very issues appear to continue for the youth following their admission to the program.

The high rates of violations also support the notion that the appropriate youth are being referred to the program since it was designed to be an immediate response to probation violators. Census data that is tracked at the evening center shows that 2/3 of the youth referred to the program are repeat cases. Many of these youth have multiple episodes at the program. Each episode is accompanied by a court hearing for a violation that ultimately results in a youth being directed to attend the program. Basically, we should expect high rates of violations because that is the mechanism that gets youth into the program. The hope is that the

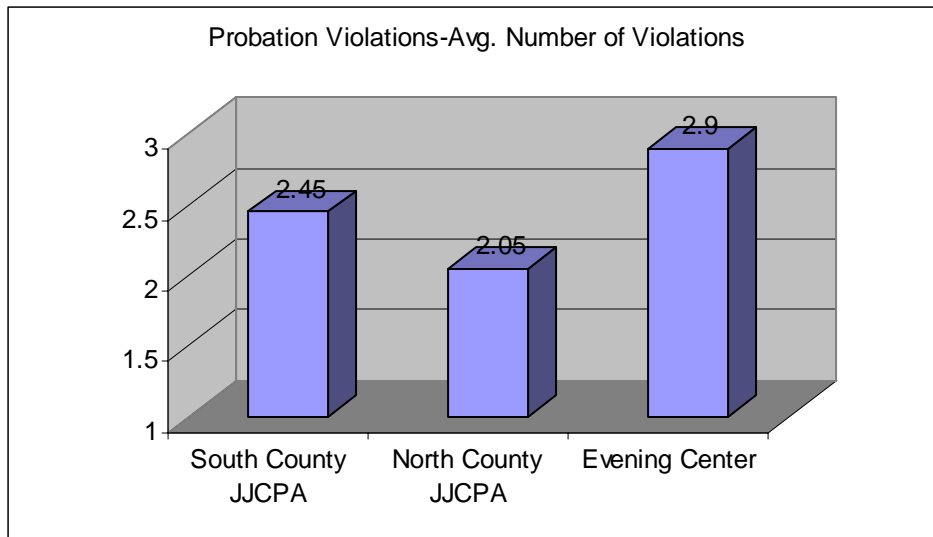
violations are high but that the rate of new offense is lowered due to increased supervision and evidenced-based interventions.

**Probation Violation Rate-Average Number of Pv's:**

*South County Total=2.45 Avg. number of PV's (35 youth had 86 sustained probation violations)*

*North County Total=2.05 Avg. number of PV's (37 youth had 76 sustained probation violations.)*

*Evening Center Total=2.9 avg. number of PV's (28 youth had 82 sustained probation violations)*



This chart demonstrates that youth in South County, who violated probation, had a higher number of violations than did North County Youth. The Juvenile Drug Court has weekly court hearings and this may have impacted outcome. The court and the probation officer closely monitors youth and weekly court appearances increase the likelihood that a petition will be filed.

The addition of the evening center in South County may have an impact on the JJCPA South County caseload probation violation rates. Many JJCPA youth attend the program multiple times. As explained earlier, a probation violation court hearing precedes each episode at the evening center. Additionally Youth who fail to attend the program may have their probation violated and be required to complete additional days as a sanction.

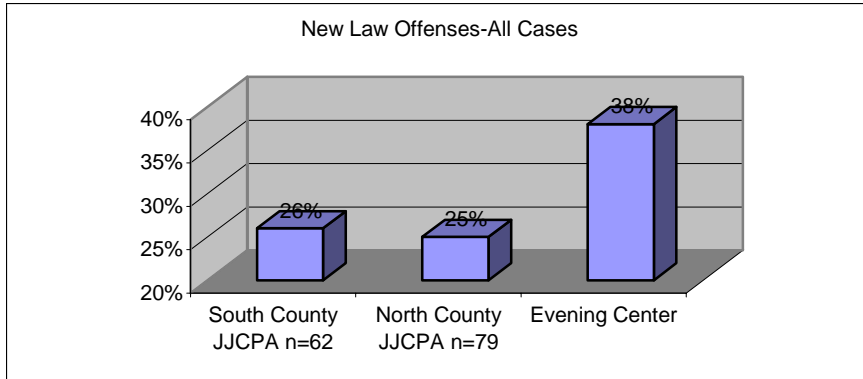
**Arrest-New Law Violations:**

*CAP=26 %, or 36 youth out of 141 had sustained new law violations.*

*South County Total=26%, or 16 out of 62 had sustained new law violations*

*North County Total=25%, or 20 out of 79 had sustained new law violations*

*Evening Center Total=38% or 12 out of 31 had sustained new violations*



The rate of youth who had sustained new offenses on the North and South caseloads is similar. This may not be an expected outcome, since it is thought that Watsonville youth are committing more new offenses. Perhaps the intensive supervision provided by the ACTS caseload, Juvenile Drug Court and Family Preservation/Wrap combined with the addition of the evening center are helping to reduce recidivism.

Essentially, over the course of a 365-day period, there is 25% rate of recidivism.

The evening center group has a significantly higher rate of recidivism. In some ways this is an expected outcome due to the nature of the youth being referred.

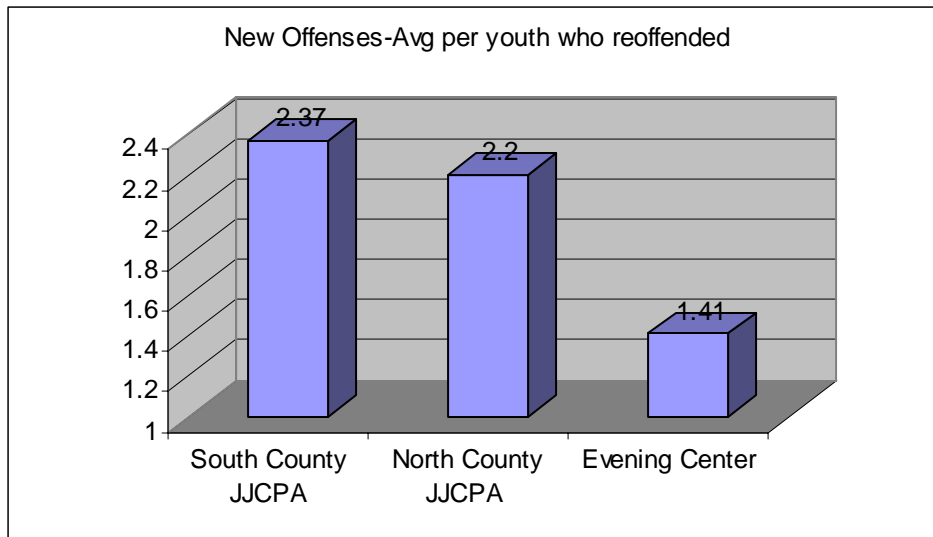
**Arrest-Average Number of New Violations (only includes youth that had new offenses)**

*South County Total= Average number of new offenses=2.4 (16 youth re offended 38 times)*

*North County Total=Average number of new offenses=2.2 (20 youth re offended 44 times)*

*Evening Center Youth=Average number of new=1.41 (12 youth reoffended 17 times)*

Repeat offenders have a slightly higher average of new offenses in the JJCPA South County group



A closer review of the evening center youth that committed at least one new offense illustrates a significant distinction. While more of the evening center group had had least one new offenses following their episode(s) at the program, their average number of new offenses is much less that of the other JJCPA caseloads.

This may indicate that the evening center services, combined with the supervision programs they are participating are impacting delinquent patterns of behavior. Do high rates of violations lead to lower rates of new offenses?

**Institutional Detention/Commitment-Juvenile Hall Days:**

*CAP=The youth on the program were detained for a total of 1158 days, an average of 8.2 days per youth*

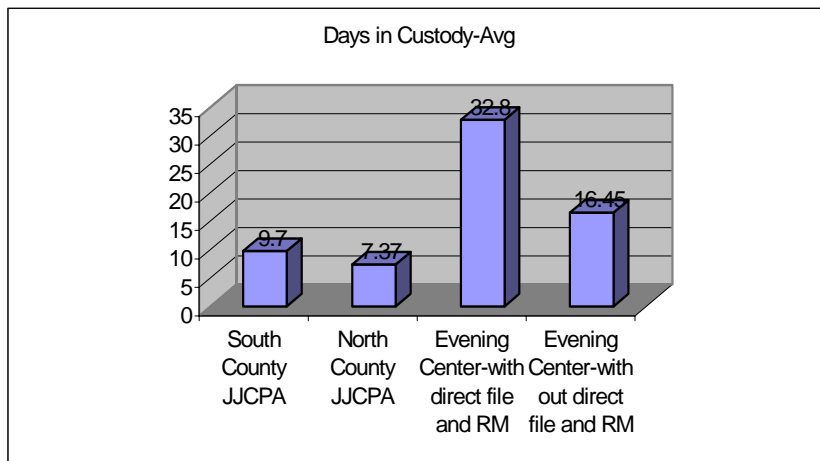
*South County Total= The youth on the program were detained for a total of 606 days, an average of 9.7 days per youth*

*North County Total= The youth on the program were detained for a total of 583 days, an average of 7.37 days per youth*

*Evening Center Youth:*

*Including Direct File Cases, and special placement case=The youth in the program were detained for total of 1017 days, an average of 32.8 days*

*Excluding Direct File Cases and special placement case=The youth in the program were detained for a total of 510 days, an average of 16.45 days*



This figure might be expected when one considers the monthly Juvenile Hall Statistics. Latinos tend to have a higher average length of stay and are disproportionately represented in number of those detained.

As is evident, evening center youth have a significantly higher number of days in custody over the 365-day period than either JJCPA group. Even when the three direct files cases and the special placement case were extracted, custody time was still more than double.

**Summary:**

This study demonstrates that more South County Youth (70-80% of which are Latino) are booked in juvenile hall than their counterparts in North County. They also spend more time in custody.

Evening center youth have much higher rates of bookings. This can be partially explained by the fact that they have higher rates of sustained probation violations and a high number of them reoffend at least one time. Further analysis is needed to identify the exact reasons why this is true. The following questions need answers:

- Are the specialized programs in Watsonville inadvertently impacting JDAI and DMC?
- Are the youth in Watsonville simply more likely to recidivate? If so, why?
- How are probation practices and procedures impacting juvenile hall bookings
- What is the role of local law enforcement and what is its impact on juvenile hall and DMC

During the 365-day period reviewed, South County youth (JJCPA and evening center) did not complete probation at the same rate as North County youth. This increased time on probation most likely increases the possibility that youth will have probation violations and/or reoffend. The consequences for these actions are likely to result in detention. What would happen if probation grants were time limited? If a youth were to get off probation after 12 defined 12 month period, he or she might avoid incarceration.

The finding of this study can be useful in program design and evaluation of the services we provide. The evening center data demonstrates that as a whole, the South County group has higher rates of recidivism and is booked into the juvenile hall more frequently. One significant difference however is the fact that while more evening center youth recidivate at least 1X, the average number of times they reoffended offenses was lower. An explanation could be the intensive level of services available to youth is keeping them from re-offending as frequently.

It is important that we ask the following question if we are to address any disparities between the groups: How the is evening center and other caseloads in Watsonville working with the high-risk youth?

- Is the evening center offering services that address the high-risk behaviors and criminogenic factors that lead to recidivism?
  - Are evidences based-intervention used?
- Why do youth continue to have such as high rate of probation violations?
  - Are probation violations followed by well thought out interventions?
  - Do probation violations work to reduce the committing of new offenses?
  - Do the high rates of sustained probation violations lead to high rates of detention for youth

- Are probation programs providing services to address the chronic issues of marijuana and alcohol use? Drug and alcohol use is a reason for referral in 50% of all cases referred to the evening center

Is there a correlation between probation violation rates and custody time? For South County youth there seems to be. For example the evening youth and JJCPA youth had higher rates of probation violations and a higher average of days in custody.

If a correlation between high numbers of sustained probation violations and high average number of days in custody exists, then perhaps we can propose changes to how we conduct case work and address violations. What if probation officers were able to rely less on the court for technical violations? I tend to believe that that the number of custody days would decrease. This is because a court appearance increases the risk that a youth may fail to appear, and or be remanded.

Submitted By,

Fernando Giraldo, Assistant Probation Division Director