
**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE
AGENCY REPORT**



THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

The Office of the Public Defender provides legal representation in the courts of Los Angeles County to indigent persons charged with criminal offenses. Established in 1914, the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office is both the oldest and the largest full service local governmental defender in the United States, with offices in 39 separate locations throughout the County. Currently, under the administration of Chief Public Defender, Michael P. Judge, the Public Defender employs over 1,100 staff members, comprised of approximately 730 budgeted Deputy Public Defender positions as well as 34 additional managing attorneys, supported by paralegals, psychiatric social workers, investigators, secretaries and clerical staff. The Public Defender represents clients:

- 1) charged in felony and misdemeanor offenses;
- 2) charged in juvenile delinquency cases;
- 3) charged in sexually violent predator cases;
- 4) facing mental health commitments;
- 5) facing civil contempt matters;
- 6) in pre-judgment appeals and writs; and
- 7) in post-conviction matters including areas of police misconduct and intimate partner battering and its effects.

In fiscal year 2007-2008, the Public Defender represented clients in approximately 150,000 felony-related proceedings; 345,000 misdemeanor-related proceedings; and 63,000 juvenile clients in juvenile delinquency proceedings.

While continuing to provide the highest quality legal representation to clients in a cost effective manner, the Office of the Public Defender also devotes its resources to facilitate

broad justice system improvements for all of its clients. This includes programs and initiatives designed to produce positive lifestyle outcomes for children, their families, and the communities in which they reside. The Public Defender actively participates, often in a leadership role, in numerous criminal justice inter-agency committees and projects designed to focus on the issues faced by communities at risk. Such inter-agency collaborations craft creative solutions to effectively resolve those issues in a manner that addresses the root causes of criminal behavior. The Public Defender recognizes that effective advocacy can only occur in the context of understanding the unique needs of the individual client, including the developmental, educational, psychological, and sociological history of each individual represented.

SPECIAL PROJECTS OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

WOMEN'S RE-ENTRY COURT

Many women cycle daily through the doors of the Los Angeles County criminal justice system, the county jails and state prisons and then back into the community without the appropriate services to address the underlying issues that brought them into the system in the first place. The complex needs of women – surviving sexual and physical abuse, domestic violence, severe trauma, and chronic addiction, have been well documented. Many of these women enter the criminal justice system and over sixty percent face drug and property crimes. This rapid influx of women into the criminal justice system has resulted in an increased demand for appropriate evidence-based, gender responsive programs for women in lieu of incarceration and/or upon parole. These programs are designed to break the cycle of substance abuse and crime and to



positively impact the children of women offenders who are at high risk of continuing the intergenerational patterns of drug abuse, criminal behaviors, and neglectful parenting. The pathways to crime for women are different than for men: a majority of women offenders have mental health problems and four in ten were physically or sexually abused before age 18; 64% of women imprisoned in California are mothers and nearly one-third have children under the age of six; half were living with their children in the month prior to their arrest. (Petersilia, J. (2006). *Understanding California Corrections: A Policy Research Program Report*. California Policy Research Center, 1-88.) Few initiatives have focused specifically on treatment and services for women offenders.

The Public Defender's Office has played a leadership role from concept to implementation of the Women's Re-entry Court (WRC). This first in California, second in the country prison alternative pilot, combines individually designed wraparound services in a residential facility with intensive judicial supervision, for women parolees with or without children, who face a subsequent felony charge and an imminent state prison commitment. The WRC is part of a long-term strategy to enhance public safety by addressing and treating underlying substance abuse and mental health issues, providing education, job preparation and housing stability while promoting individual accountability, to promote the successful return of formerly incarcerated individuals back into local communities.

The primary objective of the WRC prison alternative pilot is to develop and implement an early assessment of mental health and substance abuse problems among women parolees in Los Angeles County who are under the jurisdiction of the Superior Court because they are facing a new non-violent,

non-serious felony charge; or are otherwise simultaneously on parole and probation. The WRC pilot is voluntary, and only candidates facing an imminent state prison commitment are considered for the program. The WRC prison alternative pilot consists of six months of residential treatment at Prototypes Women's Center in Pomona followed by six months of Prototypes outpatient services. The Re-entry Court judge oversees this plan by monitoring the women's progress and ordering them back to court for monthly progress reports.

The WRC prison alternative pilot represents a multi-agency collaborative effort of the Los Angeles County Countywide Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee (CCJCC), Department of Public Health, Alcohol and Drug Program Administration, Los Angeles Superior Court, Los Angeles County Public Defender, District Attorney, Probation, Sheriff, Department of Mental Health, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), PROTOTYPES, Goodwill Southern California, UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs (UCLA ISAP), and the USC Annenberg Institute for Justice and Journalism. Funding from a CDCR Intergovernmental Partnership Grant (IPG) funding covers 25 women parolees per year (75 total), who subsequently face new non-violent, non-serious felony charges in Los Angeles County. The CDCR IGP funding was released January 2007, and formal operations commenced in May 2007 for a two-and-a-half year period.

The 25 WRC women participants are chosen annually over the course of each year by members of the WRC Team, including representatives from the Public Defender, District Attorney, Probation, CDCR Division of Adult Parole; and upon approval of the Honorable Michael Tynan, who presides over the WRC and utilizes a Drug Court model approach, combining intensive supervision,



mandatory drug testing, positive reinforcement, appropriate sanctions, and court-supervised treatment to address the issues of addiction and criminal activity. The WRC also accepts women probationers facing an imminent state prison commitment, if other funding streams can accommodate the participant on a first-come, first-served basis.

Following acceptance into the WRC, service provider Prototypes conducts an in-depth needs based assessment and designs specific and appropriate wrap-around services including the following: women-focused, evidence based substance abuse treatment, mental health care, health and wellness education, education and employment training/placement, legal services, mentorship programs, financial management support, child support and family reunification services, domestic violence education and domestic violence/trauma counseling, transportation and child care, and caseworker support. Women may bring up to two children eight years old and younger with them into the residential treatment program. Child development specialists work directly with these children, thereby positively impacting the next generation.

UCLA ISAP is currently conducting the evaluation, the results of which are not yet available. However, project statistics demonstrate the following: since formal operations began in May 2007 through June 30, 2008, 88 women have entered the program; of the 88, only 8 (or 9%) have been terminated from the program and sent to prison. One hundred percent of those who entered the program have received substance abuse treatment, job development/placement services and most receive group therapy for co-occurring disorders. Two women have graduated. In addition, four women have a total of six children in the program and five are pregnant and will deliver at Prototypes.

Eight women have successfully reunited with their children and six are currently working toward reunification. Cost savings will be determined by the evaluation, however, to date, the acceptance of 88 women into the program has saved 155 years of state prison custody time and saving the \$46,000 a year to incarcerate a person in state prison.

PROJECT S.T.A.R. (STRIVING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE RECOVERY)

In 2007, the Los Angeles County Domestic Violence Council created the Incarcerated Survivor Defendant Task Force, to address the needs of an underserved community of domestic violence victims/survivors, namely those who find themselves charged with and convicted of crimes often times related to substance abuse and mental health disorders. The Public Defender's representative on the Domestic Violence Council chairs the Incarcerated Survivors Task Force.

In May 1991, the Los Angeles County Commission for Women, along with representatives from the Public Defender's Office, Superior Court, Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department, District Attorney's Office, Probation Department, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and community service providers conducted a survey and identified a correlation between the number of women engaged in prostitution who were also survivors of domestic abuse and/or child abuse. The study further found that the overwhelming number were mothers of dependent children, most of whom were either in foster care or supported by some other County program. Most of those women repeated their criminal behavior with non-serious or non-violent felonies. In its Year 2000 report, the Commission recommended diverting eligible and suitable women out of the criminal justice system and into appropriate



wraparound services in order to stop the cycle of violence for incarcerated survivors of domestic violence who had current charges or past convictions for prostitution. However, no programs were implemented due to a lack of funding.

The Incarcerated Survivors Task Force worked on a collaborative basis for over a year to create a program designed as a prison alternative for women arrested on a new felony who have recently been victims of intimate partners battering and who have a background, either charged, uncharged, or self-reported, in prostitution. On behalf of the Incarcerated Survivors Task Force, PROTOTYPES applied for and received a five-year federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to fund Project S.T.A.R. (Striving Together to Achieve Recovery). With key involvement from the Public Defender, Project S.T.A.R. represents an innovative collaboration with PROTOTYPES S.T.A.R. House and representatives from many county agencies and domestic violence service providers.

Most of the women served by Project S.T.A.R. are facing non-violent, non-serious felony charges and incarcerated at the time of referral by the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office, and are motivated to accept treatment and services from PROTOTYPES as a prison alternative. The program is voluntary. Project S.T.A.R. participants often present with co-occurring disorders, of substance abuse along with at least one mental health disorder. Participants may bring up to two children up to the age of 8 into the residential program.

Project S.T.A.R. provides eligible domestic violence survivors with sex work histories with early assessment of trauma, substance abuse and mental health disorders and appropriate residential treatment and wraparound services. Women admitted to the program reside, along

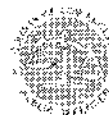
with their children, at PROTOTYPES S.T.A.R. House for six months while participating in treatment for substance abuse, mental health and/or domestic violence issues including parenting. The residential treatment component incorporates children's/family strengthening services with a special emphasis on family reunification and collaboration with DCFS where appropriate.

This project addresses the following emphasis areas:

- Legal and criminal justice issues relating to family violence
- Substance abuse and family violence
- New approaches to intervention, prevention, and treatment for all aspects of family violence
- Other topics related to aspects of family violence and child abuse and neglect

The Project S.T.A.R. Steering Committee, an active advisory board is committed to promoting the successful reintegration of all program participants and works collaboratively across disciplines within the criminal justice system to ensure a seamless process of referral, screening and intake. The Steering Committee consists of representatives from the Public Defender, Domestic Violence Council, Prototypes DV Programs, District Attorney, Probation Department, Sheriff's Department, Department of Mental Health, Harriet Buhai Center for family law, DCFS, and Friends Outside in LA County. The Measurement Group will be conducting an evaluation of the pilot which may become a best practice model that can be replicated.

From the beginning of formal operations in March 2008 to June 30, 2008, nine women have been accepted into Project S.T.A.R. Eight others were referred to the project.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

Approximately fifteen percent of all women will experience mood disorders related to pregnancy or following the birth of a child. In 2005, 150,377 live births occurred in Los Angeles County facilities (Source: California Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, 2008). Based on national statistics, perinatal mood disorders affect approximately fifteen percent of all women, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture or socio-economic status. Over 22,000 women in Los Angeles County alone experience clinical perinatal mood disorders each year. Compromised mental health of the mother negatively affects the entire family. Left untreated, these mood disorders experienced by pregnant and new mothers will affect the long-term development of babies, toddlers, the family and can lead to chronic depression in the mother. The best way to insure that babies and children thrive is to focus attention on maternal mental health.

Since February 2007, the Public Defender's Office has played a leadership role in forming and chairing the Los Angeles County Perinatal Mental Health Task Force which seeks to establish collaborative, community-driven approaches to improving policies and practices that address maternal mental health and reduce the prevalence and severity of prenatal and postpartum depression in Los Angeles County. The Perinatal Mental Health Task Force is a network of over 30 individuals representing more than 15 public and private agencies involved in outreach, screening, and treatment services for prenatal and postpartum depression and other mood disorders, along with community leaders, research partners, and advocates for mothers, infants, and families.

Task Force members include representatives from the Public Defender; Postpartum Support

International (PSI); Department of Public Health, Maternal Child Adolescent Health Programs, Department of Mental Health, Prenatal to Five Program; Zero to Three; LA Best Babies Network; First 5 LA; Perinatal Advisory Council/Leadership Advocacy Consultation (PAC/LAC); LA Care; Jewish Family Service Center; Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Centers; Health Services Research Center, Semel Institute, UCLA School of Medicine; UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute; UCLA School of Public Affairs; USC Clinical Faculty; Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles; Partners for Quality/Program for Infant Toddler Care; PHFE-WIC program; LAUSD Mental Health Services; and Tarzana Treatment Center.

Since its inception, the Perinatal Mental Health Task Force has influenced screening practices in health systems and public health programs, contributed to increased trainings and offerings on perinatal mood disorders for health care providers, helped shape the planning process for the Mental Health Services Act's Prevention and Early Intervention initiative (MHSA/PEI), and has jointly planned with Los Angeles Best Babies Network a 5-year policy initiative to address perinatal mood disorders with funding awarded by First 5 LA.

The Perinatal Mental Health Task Force works together with PSI, which is a Task Force partner and a nationwide volunteer organization that assists consumers suffering from perinatal mood disorders, trains health providers, and advocates for responsive public policies. The Perinatal Task Force is striving to identify gaps and unmet needs, to mobilize and align resources, to implement systematic and coordinated approaches and to disseminate knowledge and findings that are aimed at:

- Raising awareness and removing stigmas associated with perinatal mood disorders



- Providing access to screening, effective treatment, and coordinated care for perinatal mood disorders
- Training health professionals and improving clinical practice
- Supporting affected individuals and their families
- Improving the coordination and functioning of systems of care
- Addressing the unique needs of underserved and vulnerable populations with a particular focus on Medi-Cal recipients and low income women as well as high risk populations including mothers affected by criminal court involvement, substance abuse, domestic violence, and cultural dislocation. The Task Force recognizes that perinatal mood disorders occur with greater frequency in the population of women and girls who are substance abusers and domestic violence survivors. This population is often involved in the criminal justice system and less likely to access pre-natal as well as postpartum services in general.
- Establishing responsive and effective policies to address and integrate services addressing perinatal mood disorders.

**HABEAS ADVISORY PROJECT
ASSISTING INCARCERATED SURVIVORS OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The Public Defender is an active member of the California Habeas Project Advisory Committee. The California Habeas Project is a statewide collaboration implementing a unique California law (Penal Code §1473.5) which allows incarcerated survivors of intimate partner battering to challenge their convictions in court if expert evidence on battering and its effects was not received in evidence during

the original trial proceedings. The Public Defender represents a number of clients in this regard. The Habeas Project also partners with volunteer legal teams to assist eligible abuse survivors to petition the court for a new trial or reduced sentence based upon evidence that should have been considered at their trial or during plea negotiations. Collaborating organizations of the Habeas Project include the California Women's Law Center, the University of Southern California Law School's Post-Conviction Justice Project, the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office, Legal Services for Prisoner's with Children, and Free Battered Women. The Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office is the only governmental agency partner of the Habeas Project.

Since the habeas corpus law (Penal Code §1473.5) was enacted, approximately thirty women survivors of domestic violence have been released from state prison through successful habeas petitions, parole proceedings, or other legal avenues pursued by attorneys assigned through the Habeas Project. 11 domestic violence victims' petitions have been granted under PC § 1473.5. In 10 cases, the domestic violence victim has been released from prison. In the 11th case, the prisoner was granted a new trial and her conviction was reduced from 1st degree murder to 2nd degree murder.

The Public Defender also staffs Domestic Violence Courts in Long Beach and Rio Hondo which focus on ensuring treatment and accountability in misdemeanor cases involving domestic violence in order to break the cycle of violence.

CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS COURT

In addition, the Public Defender was a key collaborative partner in the creation of the Co-Occurring Disorders Court ("CODC").



Public Defender representatives have attended Mental Health Services Act Delegate's Meetings since early 2005 and were instrumental in voicing the need for such a court. The Public Defender is represented on the CODC Standing Committee. The mission of the Los Angeles County CODC Program is to provide both mental health and substance abuse treatment to the non-violent mentally ill defendant who recognizes his/her problem and voluntarily chooses to enter into a contract with a court-supervised co-occurring disorders treatment program. They are expected to participate in all phases of treatment with the hope of improving his/her quality of life, clinical functioning and possibly further benefitting by the reduction and/or dismissal of criminal charges.

Co-Occurring Courts represent a non-traditional approach to criminal offenders who are addicted to drugs and suffer from mental illness. Rather than focusing only on the crimes they commit and the punishments they receive, Co-Occurring Courts also attempt to address some of their underlying problems. The Los Angeles County CODC, which held its first session in April 2007, is built upon a unique partnership between the criminal justice system, drug treatment community and the mental health community which structures treatment intervention around the authority and personal involvement of a single CODC Judge. CODCs are also dependent upon the creation of a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere where a single bench officer and a dedicated team of court officers and staff work together toward the common goals of breaking the cycle of drug abuse, criminal behavior and promoting the stabilization and functioning of mental health symptoms.

The Public Defender screens clients for legal criteria eligibility and represents approximately 90 percent of all participants while the Department of Mental Health screens

for the clinical criteria. Since formal operations launched in April 2007 through fiscal year 2007-08, 289 candidates have been screened for CODC; and 48 have enrolled and approximately 30 are participating in CODC with an additional ten clients pending enrollment. CODC has maintained an approximate 62% retention rate. A number of candidates who do not participate in CODC are reconnected to programs with which they were previously affiliated. CODC is a voluntary program, and some participants request to be returned to Proposition 36 court.

HOMELESS ALTERNATIVE TO LIVING ON THE STREETS ("HALO")

During fiscal year 2006-2007, the Public Defender and Los Angeles City Attorney began collaborating to address the significant percentage of misdemeanor clients who are arrested in the downtown skid row area and arraigned at the Bauchet Street Arraignment Court with the goal of diverting these individuals out of the criminal justice system. These clients face charges connected to drug and alcohol addiction, mental illness, developmental disability, homelessness, abuse or trauma. Through the collaboration, the City Attorney's Office offers pre-plea or post-plea diversion on a case-by-case basis when the individual arrested in the skid row area is charged with a misdemeanor crime that is connected to mental illness, developmental disability or trauma and who is determined by the Public Defender's attorneys and social workers to be suitable for wraparound services that focus on reentry. Such candidates include individuals facing new charges (pre-plea diversion candidates) as well as individuals facing probation violations with or without new charges attached. During fiscal year 2007-08, approximately 50 Public Defender



clients were approved for HALO participation by the City Attorney.

Together with specially assigned Deputy Public Defenders, two Public Defender licensed clinical social workers assigned to Central misdemeanor trials and Bauchet Street arraignment identify and screen new clients. These clients face new misdemeanor charges connected to homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness, disabilities, abuse or past trauma, or are on Proposition 36 probation, or other misdemeanor/felony probation. Screenings include individual needs assessments conducted by the licensed clinical social workers incorporating the client's prior arrest and conviction record as well as prior mental health history.

When appropriate clients are deemed eligible and suitable for participation in the pilot project, the City Attorney and the Public Defender jointly contact the relevant bench officer, prosecutor as well as parole and probation officer where relevant to ensure that the individual remains on Proposition 36 probation. Public Defender social workers and designated Deputy Public Defenders collaborate with community based organizations, law enforcement and other governmental agencies such as the Department of Mental Health to assist in connecting eligible clients to supportive services on an expedited basis and for those in custody upon release, including mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, affordable housing, educational opportunities, and other transitional services. This includes training such as literacy labs, cognitive skills development, life skills and job skills; family reunification services and vocational training and support.

Other involved agencies include the Los Angeles Police Department; Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Los Angeles

County Department of Mental Health; Mayor's Office; City of Los Angeles and Business Improvement District.

PUBLIC INTEGRITY ASSURANCE SECTION AND INNOCENCE PROJECT

The Public Integrity Assurance Section (PIAS Unit) of the Public Defender's Office focuses on the investigation and litigation of wrongful convictions primarily resulting from police misconduct. PIAS Unit attorneys also handle post-conviction cases of former clients in conjunction with the Habeas Project described above. In the wake of the Rampart scandal, PIAS was instrumental in preparing numerous post-sentencing motions which included petitions for writs of habeas corpus and motions to vacate based on police misconduct and wrongful conviction of innocent clients many of which were granted. The Innocence Project seeks to exonerate factually innocent clients who were convicted, especially where DNA evidence plays a role in their exoneration.

HOMELESS COURT

Homeless Court is a collaborative project between the Public Defender, District Attorney, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Los Angeles City Attorney, and Public Counsel. Homeless Court is a mechanism whereby formerly homeless participants who complete a requisite program designed to address the issues contributing to their homelessness are able to secure dismissal of outstanding 'quality of life' infraction and misdemeanor warrants. The purpose of this court is to avoid incarceration for old outstanding matters that might interfere with or erase the progress the participant has made. During fiscal year 2007-08, Homeless Court received funding from the Board of Supervisors and is now



staffed by dedicated personnel from Public Counsel and the Los Angeles Superior Court Clerk's Office. Transportation, housing and food vouchers have been added to this program to provide more holistic services for the participants.

DRUG TREATMENT COURTS AND PROPOSITION 36 TREATMENT COURTS

The Public Defender was also a leader in creating Drug Court in 1994. Drug Court is a collaborative program involving the Superior Court, Public Defender, District Attorney and drug treatment providers to allow drug offenders with minimal criminal records to participate in a closely supervised drug treatment program instead of jail. Because of the tremendous success of this program that began in downtown Los Angeles, fourteen adult Drug Courts and three Juvenile Drug Courts now operate in Los Angeles County. Additionally, in 1998, a second collaborative effort resulted in the creation of the Sentenced Offender's Drug Court, a highly successful program involving more intensive and jail based therapeutic treatment as an alternative to prison for drug addicted offenders including parolees subsequently charged with new crimes.

Proposition 36 Courts are the result of the statewide initiative mandating treatment for eligible drug offenders. The Public Defender has taken a leadership role in promoting this treatment opportunity in the most effective manner. Through collaboration with community partners such as Volunteers of America and with cooperation from the Sheriff's Department and the Superior Court, the Public Defender created a transportation project to deliver in-custody clients directly to treatment. The Public Defender has also successfully lobbied for an on-site Assessment Center in the busy downtown court, brought Social Services directly to the courtroom, and partnered with

Public Counsel to address clients' civil legal issues often connected to homelessness.

WESTFIELD CUSTOMER SERVICE LEARNING CENTER PROJECT

The Los Angeles NAACP, Westfield Corporation and National Retail Federation (NRF) partner to help young people, primarily in the 18-25 year age group to obtain jobs in the retail and service industries, through the Customer Service Learning Center, located at the Fox Hills Mall in Culver City, California. The Customer Service Learning Center is the twentieth center of its kind in the United States and the only NRF Foundation affiliated Skills Center in Southern California. Nationwide, there are 21 Skills Centers, and over 9,000 potential retail employees have found jobs through Skills Center placements. More than 680 companies in the retail and service industries nationwide have participated in the programs. The Public Defender's Office piloted a collaborative venture in July 2006 to identify appropriate candidates among the Department's clientele for participation in the Customer Service Learning Center program.

The Customer Service Learning Center offers a three month, twelve session training program. Upon completion of the program, participants earn a certificate of completion and an opportunity to pass NRF certification. A network of employers give consideration to applicants who have earned the certificate of completion including Fox Hills Mall employers, hotels in the LAX area, employers located at the Bridge at the Howard Hughes Center, businesses in the Crenshaw district including the Coliseum Center and Baldwin Plaza as well as Borders bookstore and CVS pharmacies.

The goal of this collaborative venture is to significantly increase employment opportunities for Public Defender clients who complete the Customer Service Learning



Center program and earn a certificate. Understanding that prior convictions often present barriers to employment, Westfield has agreed to screen for potential employers who will be the most receptive to working with formerly incarcerated individuals. The Department is involved not only in conducting initial screenings of potential program candidates, but also in monitoring the employment progress of clients who complete the program. Since the inception of the Public Defender's pilot program in July 2006, 28 clients have participated in the training program, and 13 have graduated overall, with ten graduating in fiscal year 2007-2008.

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Within the Juvenile Justice system, the Office of the Public Defender continues to be proactive and successful not only in providing quality representation addressing the liberty interests of children charged in juvenile delinquency proceedings, but also by accomplishing a broader agenda to better the lives of the children and their families who become subject to the juvenile court system. The Los Angeles County Public Defender's Juvenile Division represents over 63,000 juvenile clients in juvenile delinquency proceedings each year. Many children enter the Juvenile Justice system with serious, long standing, and unaddressed educational and psychosocial problems that significantly contribute to their troublesome behavior. The underlying issues are mental health and substance abuse problems, cognitive learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, and the results of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect.

According to the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, the prevalence of mental disorders among youth in the juvenile justice system is two to three

times higher than among youth in the general population. Some studies suggest the rate of such disabling conditions among incarcerated children might be as high as 70 percent. (Otto, R. et al., (1992) Prevalence of Mental Disorders Among Youth in the Criminal Justice System.) According to the Juvenile Court Judges of California, 50 percent of all children in the juvenile delinquency system have undetected learning disabilities. Learning disabilities affect cognitive systems related to perception, attention, language, and the symbolization abilities required to learn to read and/or carry out mathematical calculations in an automatic manner. Clearly, youth with disabilities are over represented in the Juvenile Justice system. One study from the National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice noted that the prevalence of youth with disabilities is three to five times greater in juvenile corrections than in public school populations.

Accordingly, many children in the Juvenile Justice System including many of those detained in juvenile halls and camps suffer from significant learning, developmental, emotional and behavioral disabilities that impede their ability to fully benefit from mainstream educational services. Many of these children are covered by state and federal special education laws that mandate a continuum of educational program options for special education students. For example, AB 490 effective January 1, 2004, seeks to ensure educational rights and stability for foster youth. Through AB 490, the Legislature declared its intent to ensure that all pupils in foster care and those who are homeless as defined by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11301et seq.) have a meaningful opportunity to meet the same rigorous state pupil academic achievement standards to which all pupils are held. Similar to the approach already



utilized by the Public Defender, AB 490 places high emphasis on promoting educational advancement and stability by holding specific agencies accountable to maintain stable school placements and to ensure that each pupil is placed in the least restrictive educational programs and has access to the academic resources, services, extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all pupils.

Unfortunately, many of these disabilities are not diagnosed until these children appear in the Juvenile Justice system, and even then, all too often the juvenile delinquency system focuses only on the specific behavior or circumstances that bring delinquent children to the attention of law enforcement and the courts. For any number of reasons, the system failed to pay sufficient attention to the serious underlying issues that often lead children into juvenile court charged with criminal or status offenses. A November 2004 White Paper prepared by FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS California, a bipartisan, anti-crime organization of over 300 California sheriffs, police chiefs, district attorneys, and victims of violence noted that at least 80% of youthful offenders have a mental disorder and that at least 20% of youthful offenders suffer from serious disorders such as schizophrenia, major depression, and bipolar disorder; furthermore, over 50% of youthful offenders have dual diagnoses (i.e., more than one mental disorder, including learning and substance disorders).

JUVENILE ALTERNATIVE DEFENSE EFFORT

Pursuant to the direction of Public Defender Michael P. Judge beginning in 1999, the Public Defender's office initiated an innovative and comprehensive plan known as the Juvenile Alternative Defense Effort (JADE). JADE is designed to bring

critically needed services to the children in juvenile delinquency courts and consists of two components: the Client Assessment Recommendation Evaluation (CARE) Project and the Post Disposition Program.

The holistic advocacy approach already embodied by and practiced in the Public Defender's Office was recognized through the adoption of Rule 1479 of the California Rules of Court on July 1, 2004. Rule 1479 suggests guidelines for all juvenile court defense attorneys to follow for effective advocacy that acknowledges the dual role which the Public Defender's Office had adopted: one of defending against charges filed in the petition and determining whether the child is appropriately in the juvenile delinquency court as well as advocating on behalf of the child to ensure that the child receives appropriate care, treatment, and guidance especially in the areas of education and mental health.

CARE PROJECT – PREDISPOSITION COMPONENT

2008 CALIFORNIA COUNCIL ON MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS (COMIO) "BEST PRACTICES" AWARD

The California Council on Mentally Ill Offenders (COMIO) was created by the Legislature in 2001 "to investigate and promote cost-effective approaches to meeting the long-term needs of adults and juveniles with mental disorders who are likely to become offenders or who have a history of offending". According to COMIO Chairperson and CDCR Secretary James E. Tilton, "The Council's 2008 Best Practices awards are an excellent example of how we can appreciate and recognize the 'best of the best' approaches throughout California in effectively serving the needs of the mentally ill offender.



Practitioners at the state and local levels can learn much from these exemplary programs and seek to replicate them". In 2008, five COMIO Best Practices Awards were presented to adult and juvenile programs statewide. The Public Defender's CARE Project was the only non-mental health court program and one of only two juvenile programs to receive an award.

Since its inception in 1999, the Juvenile Division of the Public Defender's Office has implemented its CARE Project which focuses on early intervention with children in delinquency court by addressing the cluster of underlying causes of delinquent behavior such as mental illness, mental retardation, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, emotional disturbances and trauma. It is a child advocacy model that is non-traditional in its vision and approach. The CARE Project provides a model continuum of legal representation that incorporates attention to the unaddressed psychosocial and educational needs of children in the Juvenile Justice system while also emphasizing early intervention and accountability of both the child involved and the agencies collectively responsible for safeguarding the child's interests.

Currently through the CARE Project, Los Angeles County Deputy Public Defenders collaborate with a multi-disciplinary team of psychiatric social workers, mental health professionals, resource attorneys and other clinicians from the earliest stage of the juvenile delinquency proceedings through disposition. Currently the Public Defender CARE Project employs sixteen psychiatric social workers and seven resource attorneys. The psychiatric social workers prepare an assessment of a juvenile client to determine the child's special needs whether developmental, emotional, or psychological. Based on the assessment, an effective and individualized treatment plan is

created to address the issues that put youth at risk for delinquent behavior and aims to significantly reduce the likelihood of recidivism. The psychiatric social workers also provide consultation services which include early intervention to identify needed services as well as client support during the court process, advocacy with school systems and recommendations for disposition plans in difficult cases.

The Public Defender resource attorneys advocate on behalf of juvenile clients to assure accountability by various outside agencies that are obligated to provide services to address the child's educational and mental health needs. In reviewing school and mental health records and appearing at administrative hearings before schools and the regional centers, the attorneys work to ensure that children receive appropriate special education services in the school districts and that the Regional Center system accepts eligible clients and provides needed services to the children. The success rate in obtaining services previously denied both by schools and the Regional Center system has been very high. In fiscal year 2007-2008, the Public Defender's Office provided Regional Center assistance to 122 children through the CARE Project.

The Public Defender's office recognizes that traditional representation for these clients similar to that normally provided to adult clients is no safeguard against recidivism if other resources are not channeled toward those children to assist them in dealing with the many other challenges and obstacles they face outside of the courtroom; hence, the advocacy of Public Defender staff on behalf of children in the Juvenile Justice system is not viewed purely in a legal context. The Public Defender adheres to the philosophy that effective child advocacy must encompass



a holistic approach individually tailored to the particular needs of each unique client.

Under the pre-disposition component of the Public Defender CARE Project with funding from the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG), two supervising psychiatric social workers, fourteen psychiatric social workers, and seven resource attorneys operate in ten juvenile branch offices of the Public Defender. Deputy Public Defenders refer cases to the CARE Project. Referrals are for either Extended Services or Brief Services. Brief services are those which can be completed on the same day the request for services was made. Extended services extend beyond the date of the request for services. The referrals involve a variety of consultation services including: 1) psychosocial and educational assessments; 2) early intervention to identify requisite services; 3) referrals to community resources which include substance abuse services (such as Alcoholics Anonymous-AA, Narcotics Anonymous-NA, after school activities such as the YMCA and parenting classes); 4) inter-agency advocacy that triggers Department of Mental Health, Regional Center and special education assistance; 5) client and family support during the court process; and 6) recommendations to the court for disposition plans and conditions of probation in difficult cases.

Psychosocial assessments often help Deputy Public Defenders to determine whether the child represents a risk to the community and constitute the basis for effective treatment plans likely to reduce re-offending by addressing the issues that otherwise would put the child at risk for further delinquent behavior. The psychiatric social workers interview the juvenile clients along with their family members and other involved parties such as school counselors, team coaches, social workers working in dependency courts,

foster parents and therapists. At the discretion of the Deputy Public Defenders, CARE Project psychiatric social workers prepare reports for the Deputy Public Defenders to present to the court. The information developed by the psychiatric social workers plays a key role in assisting the Deputy Public Defenders to individualize and humanize the perception of each child by busy bench officers who otherwise would not have the advantage of in-depth evaluations and insight about each child and awareness of services available to implement an effective treatment plan. Consequently, more appropriate services are rendered to children and families to reduce recidivism while continuing to hold minors accountable.

Additionally, seven Deputy Public Defenders serve as resource attorneys. These attorneys enhance the CARE Project's advocacy in the areas of special education and mental health for children who otherwise would not receive necessary mental health and educational services mandated by state and federal law. CARE Project resource attorneys ensure that children with educational difficulties have current Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which identify special education needs and define specific services to be provided. In addition, they facilitate special program referrals to agencies such as the Regional Center system which provides services for children with developmental disabilities. Resource attorneys also garner Department of Mental Health entitlements for their juvenile clients and provide consultation for other Deputy Public Defenders on complicated cases involving children coming from the dependency court system.

By referring clients for evaluation, identification and intervention at the pre-trial stage, the Public Defender's Office focuses on abating the behaviors that prompted the



filing of the juvenile petition in these cases. By beginning to design disposition plans at an early stage, members of the CARE Project team are able to provide the court with a better assessment of the minor's needs, present reasonable recommendations for appropriate conditions of probation and identify resources that will assist the minor and his/her family to responsibly satisfy the conditions of probation. This approach enables the court to make orders that will foster accountability by both the minor and the system.

Since the 1999 inception of the pre-adjudication component of the Public Defender CARE Project through June 2008, 12,137 children have received project services. In fiscal year 2007-08, 7,915 services were provided to 1,295 new clients. Additionally, in fiscal year 2007-08, the Public Defender provided special education assistance to 769 clients and DMH assistance to 419 clients. On average, each child served received approximately six services from the Project. The referrals involved a variety of consultation services including psychosocial and educational assessments, early intervention to identify services, referrals to community resources (such as 12-step programs for alcohol and substance base, and after school activities such as the YMCA and parenting classes), crisis intervention referrals during the court process, and recommendations for disposition plans and conditions of probation in difficult cases. A significant number of these dispositions were for placements that provided treatment for a problem identified in the assessment process or the minor was permitted to remain in the home while receiving treatment services in the community. Many of these children are wards of both the delinquency and dependency court systems and are themselves victims of abuse and neglect.

The current beneficiaries of the integrated components of these programs are the children, together with their families and

communities, who receive services from attorneys, psychiatric social workers, resource attorneys and others. For example, children with special education needs are represented by Public Defender resource attorneys and psychiatric social workers at school district hearings, including IEP meetings. Advocacy by the Public Defender's Office on behalf of children entering the Juvenile Justice system has reaped tremendous benefits for children with disabilities and has provided them with a necessary continuum of educational program options in the school system that are mandated by state and federal law. Children and their families also benefit from referrals to appropriate mental health residential and outpatient treatment programs, Regional Center services for children with developmental and cognitive disabilities and referrals to other public and private service agencies.

Overall, for fiscal year 2007-08, the Los Angeles County Juvenile Courts adopted 82% of the Public Defender disposition recommendations where CARE extended services were provided. Judicial officers have stated that the evaluations are invaluable in making the courts better equipped to identify those youth with emotional or developmental issues.

POST DISPOSITION PROGRAM

Through the Post Disposition Program, the Public Defender's Office provides assistance to children who were sent to juvenile probation camp by court order. It is the only program to address complicated issues presented by these children after the court has ordered them to a camp program they can not successfully complete because of issues not previously identified. It targets those children whose needs for services are not being met by juvenile camp programs, but could be more fully and properly



addressed in a suitable placement setting or other structured program in the community.

The target camp population for the Public Defender Post Disposition Program includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) children with apparent or suspected learning or developmental disabilities whose special needs cannot be accommodated in a juvenile camp program;
- (2) children with mental health issues including the need for psycho-tropic medication;
- (3) children whose age and level of maturity are not compatible with the camp population or programming;
- (4) children with physical disabilities that prevent full participation in camp programs; and
- (5) children about to emancipate from the camp program.

In this component, psychiatric social workers employed by the Public Defender work in cooperation with the Los Angeles County Probation Department to identify and reevaluate children who were committed to juvenile probation camp but whose educational and mental health needs would be better met through a less restrictive alternative. The psychiatric social workers assess the child and make an alternative recommendation for placement. Deputy Public Defenders then present the alternative plan to the Juvenile Court. Often, the Post Disposition Program is the first to address issues involving neglect, abuse, abandonment, gang affiliation, education deficits, school failure, the absence of special education services and entitlements, mental health issues and developmental disabilities.

The Public Defender Post Disposition Program likewise continues to maintain a

consistent rate of success in convincing Juvenile Court judges throughout the ten Los Angeles County Juvenile Court locations that in appropriate cases children in juvenile camps should be removed and placed in an environment more conducive to receiving necessary treatment and services otherwise not available in the camp setting. When returned to court for presentation of the alternative plan by the Deputy Public Defender and the psychiatric social worker, the Juvenile Courts granted over ninety-five percent of these motions, finding a change of circumstance in the discovery of otherwise unnoticed mental, emotional, or educational needs.

Consequently, the overwhelming majority of the Public Defender proposed alternative dispositions have been granted to remove the child from camp and place the child in an alternative setting that better addresses the child's individual needs. Of the 1,162 total cases handled by the Post Disposition Program since the program's inception in November 1999 through June 2008, the Post Disposition Program has enjoyed a ninety-seven percent (97%) success rate in convincing courts to pursue less restrictive alternative dispositions, and judges continued camp placement in only three percent (3%) of the referrals. Of the children released from camp placement, approximately sixty-eight percent (68%) were suitably placed and twenty nine percent (29%) were placed home with court conditions, and approximately three percent (3%) were placed in a mental health hospital.

Alternative dispositions involved one of the following situations:

- A less restrictive setting whereby the minor was either suitably placed in a girls' or boys' group home or the minor was sent home to his/her family with specific conditions of probation including counseling;



- The camp order remained in full force and effect; however, the minor was released home on a Court Furlough with specific conditions of probation;
- The minor was released from Camp and was placed in the Regional Center system for mental health/educational issues;
- The minor was placed in a mental health facility.

The Public Defender's Office continues to collaborate with the Probation Department in identifying children who qualify for placement in a less restrictive setting and has succeeded in returning children to the community with appropriate treatment and support in the overwhelming majority of cases. In the vast majority of cases, the Deputy Public Defenders through collaboration with Probation have convinced courts to change dispositions by removing children from the community camp placement setting into more appropriate alternative placements.

PROJECT YOUTH EMBRACE

PROJECT YOUTH EMBRACE is an innovative new collaborative made up of the Los Angeles County Public Defender, PROTOTYPES, Homeboy Industries, Probation Department, and DJJ Parole (TEAM), designed to provide comprehensive reentry services for juvenile offenders returning from custody or out of home placement. The project offers a continuum of assessment, treatment and wrap-around services that commence when the child is still in custody and continues during and following release culminating as needed in housing placement and aftercare in the community.

The project is being funded by CDCR for a two-year grant period (7/1/07 through 6/30/09). Formal implementation began in July 2007.

The goals of PROJECT YOUTH EMBRACE are to improve outcomes and recidivism reduction for children in the juvenile delinquency system by effectively implementing and delivering a rehabilitative program based on evidence-based efforts.

The project serves children ages 16 to 25 who are male and female parolees under the jurisdiction of the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), including those still in commitment or local offenders under supervision of the Probation Department. Public Defender juvenile clients at greatest risk to re-offend are prioritized. Services are on-site at DJJ institutions and probation camps (while in custody) and at three major services sites of PROTOTYPES and Homeboy Industries.

Children are clinically assessed including specialized assessments to determine the child's placement in specific program elements (i.e. education, mental health and substance abuse treatment needs). An individualized written plan is formulated by the client and the TEAM and includes treatment goals, specific objectives and activities related to these goals, as well as time frames for achievement. Assessments are conducted at the time of referral (90 to 180 days of the youth's release) and a reassessment is conducted within 60-90 days of the youth's release to determine what progress has been made while in the institution.

Community reentry services are guided by an updated treatment plan that reflects the child's living situation after release (housing, family support) as well as treatment and service needs. The youth is a case manager at one of the service sites who monitors and revises the plan to reflect the client's progress and changing needs, and keeps the youth linked to needed services and resources.

Services provided include: mental health and substance treatment (intensive outpatient



and/or residential treatment settings) motivational enhancement intervention, individual group and family counseling, peer support groups, substance abuse counseling, life skills training, employment assistance and other services guided by the treatment plan.

Job training and employment assistance provided by Homeboy Industries includes comprehensive services ranging from employability assessments and job readiness supports to placement in occupations including the organizations' own small businesses. Job developers work with local employers searching out available jobs and talking with employers about the unique challenges and rewards of hiring reentry youth. Job developers work one-on-one with clients developing their resumes, honing their interviewing skills and finding promising employment matches. An on-site educational curriculum provides classes in math, computer, and G.E.D. preparation and other skills important to securing and maintaining employment. Tattoo removal services are offered to gang members with visible tattoos that inhibit their ability to secure employment.

The project offers a curriculum of life skills education with classes in parenting, personal development, basic finances and budgeting and household management. Health education is a part of the life skills curriculum and covers such relevant subject areas as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, personal hygiene, and community health resources. Transportation services are arranged to and from the treatment site and to and from ancillary services for clients who do not have their own transportation. Residential housing and other housing assistance are also provided.

The Project Youth Embrace targets were 100 camp and 200 DJJ cases for the first year, which covered fiscal year 2007-08.

The Public Defender referred 103 camp girls and 193 DJJ cases (10 girls, the rest boys (the target for girls was 10) as of June 30, 2008. These figures were accomplished despite the fact that screening began only in August 2007 and access to any DJJ facility became fully operational only as early as October 2007.

THE DJJ UNIT

The passage of SB 459, effective January 1, 2004 (Chapter 4, Statutes of 2003), gave the Juvenile Court continuing jurisdiction over minors sent to the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). SB 459 was a legislative attempt to ensure that courts take an active role in supervising minors who are committed to DJJ by mandating the following:

- 1) Juvenile Courts are now required to set a maximum term of confinement (Welfare and Institutions Code §731);
- 2) DJJ is required to set an initial parole consideration date within 60 days of the commitment of a ward Welfare and Institutions Code §1731.8); and
- 3) DJJ must prepare a treatment plan for each ward, provide these reports to the Juvenile Court and to the Probation Department, and provide written periodic reviews at least annually (Welfare and Institutions Code §1766).

The Public Defender now has the duty to monitor treatment provided at DJJ. Three experienced Deputy Public Defender resource attorneys have been assigned to the Department's DJJ unit created in the summer of 2005.

The Public Defender DJJ Unit serves approximately 100 clients currently housed at DJJ institutions throughout the state. All clients are visited by their Public Defender DJJ Unit attorneys. They also may reach their



lawyer by telephone. The attorneys have developed working relationships with the clients' DJJ counselors, as well as with other staff at the institutions. They work to obtain their clients' prior mental health and education records, and they also review DJJ documents in order to assess current services.

Advocacy within the institution may bring a change in the services provided to the client. The attorneys have participated in obtaining special education services for their clients inside DJJ and have attended IEP meetings on behalf of their institutionalized clients. They have ensured that clients were transferred to facilities where specialized counseling was available, thus enabling the clients to receive services necessary for them to successfully reintegrate into the community upon parole.

Public Defender DJJ Unit attorneys also research and prepare motions pursuant to WIC §731, requesting that the judge set a determinate term for the sentence. WIC §731, which states that minors may not be held in physical confinement for a period longer than the maximum adult sentence, has been amended. The additional language now states that "[a] minor committed to... the Youth Authority also may not be held in physical confinement for a period of time in excess of the maximum term of physical confinement set by the court based upon the facts and circumstances of the matter or matters which brought or continued the minor under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, which may not exceed the maximum period of adult confinement as determined pursuant to this section."

The lawyers also pursue relief pursuant to WIC §779, which gives the Juvenile Court discretion to remove clients from DJJ institutions in cases where appropriate services are not being provided. While current law allowed

the Juvenile Court to modify or set aside a DJJ commitment, WIC §779 has been amended to state that "[t]his section does not limit the authority of the court to change, modify, or set aside an order of commitment after a noticed hearing and upon a showing of good cause that the Youth Authority is unable to, or failing to provide treatment consistent with section 734." Courts have granted these motions after holding hearings and finding that DJJ services were inadequate. A number of clients have been moved from DJJ Youth Correctional Facilities to local suitable placements where their special needs can be addressed.

JUVENILE MENTAL HEALTH COURT

The Office of the Public Defender also continues to be actively involved in Juvenile Mental Health Court (JMHC). JMHC which began operating in October 2001, is a comprehensive judicially monitored program for juvenile offenders with diagnosed mental health disorders or learning disabilities and whose crimes demonstrate a link to the disorder or disability. A collaborative inter-agency team consisting of a judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, Department of Mental Health psychologist and a Los Angeles County Office of Education liaison develops an individualized case plan for each eligible child referred to JMHC. The plan includes home, family, therapeutic, educational and adult transition services. A Deputy Public Defender with the assistance of psychiatric social workers advocates on behalf of the child to secure mental health services from all available community resources.

The Deputy Public Defender works with the family, local mental health organizations, school districts, the Regional Center system, the Probation Department and DCFS to obtain for the child every benefit to which he or she



is legally entitled. Implementation of the plan is monitored intensively on an ongoing basis for two years or as long as the minor remains on probation. One goal of JMHC is to reduce recidivism in the mentally ill population. Since its inception in October 2001, JMHC has accepted 292 children, and the Public Defender represented 279 of those children. In fiscal year 2007-08, the JMHC program accepted 55 new cases, with 36 of those children being represented by the Public Defender.

JMHC also acts as a referral court for all minors found to be incompetent in Los Angeles County, and is the only Delinquency Court in California that specifically accepts children who have been found incompetent by the referring court.

JUVENILE DRUG TREATMENT COURT

Juvenile Drug Treatment Court attempts to resolve underlying problems of drug and alcohol abuse and is built upon a unique partnership between the juvenile justice community and drug treatment advocates. The courtroom atmosphere is non-adversarial, with a dedicated team of court officers and staff, including Deputy Public Defenders who strive together to break the cycle of drug abuse. The Los Angeles County Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Programs are supervised, comprehensive treatment programs for non-violent children. The programs are comprised of children in both pre-adjudication and post-adjudication stages as well as high risk probationers who are sometimes placed in a 26-week residential facility.

Children participate in the program voluntarily. In the pre-adjudication program referred to as Drug Court Lite, charges are suspended during the child's participation while children in the post-adjudication program admit charges in the petition prior

to participation. Most children participating in the pre-adjudication program are charged with committing offenses involving possession of narcotics or being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Children are generally eligible to participate in the post-adjudication program so long as they have no prior sustained or current petitions for sex offenses, crimes of violence or possession, or use of a firearm. The requirements are waived on occasion to allow some otherwise ineligible children to participate in Juvenile Drug Treatment Court when the interests of justice are served.

Upon a finding of eligibility and suitability, the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court judge provisionally accepts the child into the Juvenile Drug Court Treatment Program. After the child is accepted into the Program, Deputy Public Defenders continue representation throughout the child's participation in Drug Court. Successful completion and graduation will result in the dismissal of charges in the pre-adjudication program and the termination of probation in the post-adjudication program. Failure or dismissal from the program will result in the reinstatement of criminal (delinquency) charges and subsequent prosecution on the pre-adjudicated charges or continuation on probation on the post-adjudication charges. Success in the Juvenile Drug Court Treatment Programs is not solely measured by the number of graduates from the program, but rather whether the Drug Treatment Court curriculum favorably impacted the children to the extent that they are now considered drug-free.

Juvenile Drug Court Treatment providers direct participating children through a 52-week curriculum which includes drug treatment, drug testing, frequent court appearances and individual as well as group counseling. The programs are divided into three phases: 1) phase one focuses on stabilization, orientation



and assessment, 2) phase two emphasizes intensive treatment, and 3) phase three focuses on transition back to the community.

A counselor or probation officer also assists with obtaining education and skills assessments. Referrals for vocational training or job placement services are also provided. Participants are required to attend school on a regular basis with enrollment in Independent Studies allowed only with the court's approval. The child's parents and family members are encouraged to participate in appropriate treatment sessions. Deputy Public Defenders receive training regarding addiction, treatment, and related issues which constitute an ongoing part of the therapeutic environment fostered in the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court.

There are currently three Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts operating in juvenile court locations; Sylmar in operation since 1998; Eastlake which began operations in 2001; and Inglewood which began operations in April 2004. Both Eastlake and Sylmar have pre-adjudication as well as post-adjudication Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts in place. Inglewood's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court is pre-adjudication only. For fiscal year 2007-08:

- Sylmar Court accepted 66 new Drug Court participants, 14 Drug Court Lite participants and graduated 28 participants;
- Eastlake Court accepted 53 Drug Court participants, 70 Drug Court Lite participants and graduated 10 participants from Drug Court and 9 from Drug Court Lite, respectively.
- Inglewood Court accepted 12 new participants and had 18 graduates. Note that participants must reside in the Centinela Probation Area to qualify.