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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of the JUVENILE GUN DETERRENCE PROGRAM**

**Overview** – The San Bernardino County Probation Central Juvenile Supervision Unit implemented a new program to address the increase of youth on supervised probation for firearm related crimes in September 2021.

**Challenge** – Probation Administration noticed an increasing trend of youth being on probation for firearms related charges in the Central area, specifically, an increase in violent crimes in the San Bernardino area, which is almost four (4) times more than the average overall in the State of California and one of the highest in the nation; A trend of youth being on probation for crimes related to possession of firearms; and the increase of un-serialized Polymer 80 (Ghost Guns) in the possession of minors and the ease of acquiring such firearms. To combat this problem, Probation created the Gun Deterrence Caseload in an effort to provide pro-active supervision and offer preventative services along other county agencies to aid youth on the caseload to a path to success.

**Solution** – In September 2021, the Department started to notice an increasing trend of juvenile offenders being placed on supervised probation for possession of firearm related charges in the Central Area, which encompasses the cities East of San Bernardino to Yucaipa. A re-organizing of the caseloads was completed and all youths who were on probation for firearms related charges were placed on two caseloads.

**Innovation** – The goal of the program was to consider alternatives to detention, make referrals for services, and provide programs so the youth could be successful on probation. The caseload is not “zero tolerance” and one of the objectives was to keep the youth on the caseload for at least 90 days then transition them back to a regular caseload if warranted. Child and Family Treatment (CFT) meetings are completed when the youth is initially placed on the caseload. The youth, family members, supportive persons in their lives, the probation officer, and a representative from the Department of Behavioral Health sit down and go over the youth’s terms and conditions of probation, establish their goals, highlight their strengths and weaknesses, and to go over programming/component classes that they will be required to complete. Through the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), the youth is



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referred to Juvenile Justice Community Reintegration (JJCR) services which encompasses being assigned a case manager, referrals for weekly therapy sessions, drug and alcohol support services, and links to various other programs that DBH has to offer to allow the youth to be successful on probation. Through the Probation Juvenile Day Reporting Center (DRC) the youth can be referred to classes such as Anger Management and Weapon's Diversion class along with community service events, building skills classes, or be enrolled at the community day school located at the juvenile DRC.

**Results** – A total of ninety-one (91) youth have been supervised on the two specialized caseloads since the inception of the program in September 2021. Over the past year, there have been over seventy (70) referrals for probation component classes and seventy-one (71) referrals have been made to DBH for JJCR services. Additionally, over twenty-two (22) firearms have been confiscated either in the possession of, or in the home of, the youth on the Gun Deterrence Caseload. Six (6) of those firearms being polymer 80 (ghost guns) and one (1) assault rifle. Seventeen (17) youth have been re-arrested on new law violations relating to the possession of firearms. Eighteen (18) youth have completed probation, four (4) of which earned the ability to complete their probation term early. An additional four (4) youth were referred to other specialized supervision programs that were more appropriate to address their mental health needs.

**Replicability** – The Juvenile Gun Deterrence Program is one that is easily replicable within other Probation Departments in other counties. The program can be shaped and adapted to local needs and resources. Collaboration with agency partners and focused caseloads can result in successful implementation of a similar program.

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