



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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**RAY LEYVA**

Interim Chief Probation Officer

July 9, 2020

Linda Penner, Chair  
Board of State and Community Corrections  
2590 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95833

## **SUBJECT: CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING PROGRAM**

Dear Chair Penner:

As the Interim Chief Probation Officer of the County of Los Angeles Probation Department (Probation), I write in response to the Board of State and Community Corrections' (BSCC) request for comment about allocation criteria for Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (CESF). I appreciate the BSCC's proactive effort to coordinate with counties, and the opportunity to provide comment on key programmatic areas that would benefit from this funding.

Probation has taken action to mitigate COVID-19 transmission risk, safeguard our employees and clients, and continue services to our communities. Below we highlight priorities we believe need to be components of CESF funding criteria:

- *Juvenile Institutions Tele-Visiting, Tele-Court:*
  - Our Department has implemented technologies and practices to facilitate ongoing connections between detained youth and their family support structure. We implemented similar methods for detained youth interacting with the Court and/or their counsel, and for community-based organizations providing reentry transition services.
- *Enhanced Supervision Services - Juvenile Field & Institutions Bench Warrant Protocol:*
  - In collaboration with Superior Court, Probation implemented a Temporary Bench Warrant Protocol that permits the Department to exercise discretion for detention decisions for non-violent probationers in warrant status to be cited

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to court cite for future court hearings while community-based Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) provide supervision and case management services. Superior Court has agreed to recall the warrants upon receipt of the citation pending the next hearing date. Youth are being cited by the Field DPO or by intake officer if transported to juvenile hall by law enforcement.

- *Mutual Aid Contacts (Out of County Youth) Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP):*
  - We have maintained face to face contact with all youth placed in STRTP or in relative non-relative settings. Additionally, we implemented a protocol to provide face to face contact with youth placed in STRTPs in Los Angeles County by other Probation Departments throughout the state of California that meet Division 31 requirements. Case note summaries of each contact is also provided to Probation Departments for each youth contact.
  - We provide mutual aid coverage (24-7), specifically DPO supervision of youth housed locally at STRTPs sites when staffing shortages arise due to COVID-19 related issues.
- *Juvenile Services: Supporting Services Provided to Youth in Juvenile Facilities:*
  - Probation departments have in many cases needed to increase staffing at juvenile facilities to directly deliver services where providers were no longer providing instruction or facilitating instruction. Additionally, facilities required increased staffing to bring additional units online in order to facilitate public health directives and address needs related to social distancing, or isolation and/or quarantine when needed.
- *Sanitizer and Personal Protective Equipment:*
  - Probation has implemented precautions to ensure enhanced cleaning services and the prodigious availability of hand sanitizer, including:
    - installation of free-standing touchless sanitizer delivery devices,
    - distribution of personal sanitizer dispensing bottles, face masks, and disposable gloves,
    - enhanced frequency of custodial services including focused attention to common touch points, and rapid-response deep cleaning if a potential COVID exposure is identified,
    - installation of plexiglass shields for lobby receiving points and interview rooms, and
    - way-finding signage, aisle demarcation, floor stickers to highlight standing points.

- *Pretrial Services:*

- Prioritization of funding is needed to address pretrial services and needs. Working with the Courts and other County agencies, we have implemented a Bail Reform Pilot Program and are utilizing various options to facilitate in-community supervision and supports designed to promote public safety, assist in managing jail space, and facilitate clients return to court timely.
- In order to increase the opportunity of placing more clients onto pretrial supervision, and ensuring their success while on supervision, the ongoing ability to communicate with the client is a need that must be addressed. Clients that have no permanent housing to return to upon release are difficult to serve as they often have no reliable method of contact. Inexpensive, pre-paid cell phones to be distributed upon release will ensure that clients can stay connected with their pretrial supervision case worker as well as community-based organizations that can provide other vital services. The initial cost of one device is considerably less than the cost to house a person in county jail for one day. While there are other programs designed to assist with free or low-cost devices, there is still an application process and the critical opportunity to provide a device in hand will have passed once the client is out in the community. Providing opportunities for increased pretrial release will assist in maintaining lower overall jail populations, thus reducing the spread of COVID-19.

- *Staff and Client Wellness:*

- We have implemented or enhanced our wellness program, including recruiting staff who train and serve as needed as wellness ambassadors and respond to incident locations or individuals as needed.
- Prioritization of funding to support staff and client wellness in the community and in facilities. Examples include:
  - Additional sanitary supplies for juvenile facilities to allow for increased and enhanced cleaning of the facility; face masks for youth, staff and visitors.
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff going out in the field and for staff and youth in juvenile facilities.
  - Support for staff for contact tracing and related training.

- *Adult Investigative Services:*

- Prioritization of funding to augment existing adult investigation services during the COVID-19 crisis to satisfy existing court reporting responsibilities and ensure victim's rights pursuant to Marsy's Law. Examples include:
- The COVID-19 crisis resulted in the mandated statewide reduction of Superior Court proceedings which, in effect, created a serious backlog of criminal cases awaiting requisite calendaring, processing and disposition.
- The Superior Court has now proceeded with their own reintegration plan and the resumption of modified court operations consistent with CDC guidelines for safe distancing.
- The noted resumption of modified court operations and backlog of cases is exacerbated by a 2018 workforce reduction of thirteen (13) adult investigation DPO positions. Therefore, we are requesting funding for these positions to: mitigate the need for OT and provide much-needed casework relief for scheduled and unscheduled absences; ensure that adequate victim contacts and services are realized and maintained pursuant to Marsy's Law; and hasten the successful processing of backlogged criminal cases in keeping with the Superior Court's current reintegration plan.

- *Adult Field Services (SB 678 and Felony Supervision):*

- During this critical period, the Adult CORE Bureau is implementing a series of supervision practices consistent with public health guidelines designed to facilitate public safety, protect of crime victims; and address health risks for probation staff and clients. To the extent practicable, face-to-face contacts will be minimized. Probation Officers will utilize telephonic contacts in the enforcement of court ordered conditions. This approach may potentially involve seeking funding to purchase cell phones for our homeless client population to facilitate communication between the client and the probation officer.
- In addition, the Adult Field Services Bureaus will be reconfiguring current office space and looking to expand into outdoor areas to safely conduct client orientation and engagement for those higher-risk clients who need to be seen face-to-face. Expansion will include the creation of mobile teams that will be making contact with the higher-risk populations in the community facilitating physical distancing insofar as practical and enforcing supervision compliance and providing need-based referrals for resources. The needed funding will support efforts to obtain additional resources for our high-needs clients such

as housing, drug testing and supportive services such as credible messenger programs.

- *AB 109 Services:*

- Funding support would increase AB 109 Supervision effectiveness and further enhance public safety. AB 109 needs additional financial support to sustain the comprehensive services it provides to supervised clients, especially since approximately 1,200 PSPs plan to be early released from prisons this year. These funds could allow AB 109 to establish COVID-19 testing at pre-placement facilities/locations throughout the County.
- When field offices re-open, funding is needed for masks, disinfectants, gloves, plexiglass partitions, bio-hazard trash receptacles, and any other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or safety measures, to ensure that our staff and the approximately 6,500 clients that report to AB 109, are safe and healthy as possible.
- Furthermore, the purchase and implementation of new technologies that allows staff to conduct video-style appointments with clients, would increase rapport, facilitate the learning of pro-social skills, and minimize the spread of the virus. These resources could also be invested for the latest technologies to enhance the Probation Department's current case management system and allow more "real time" data to be more easily and quickly extrapolated and analyzed, thus enhancing service delivery.

- *Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ):*

- My Department initiated development of community-based capacity for transition services for youth and young adults returning from DJJ facilities to Los Angeles County communities. These services may include, but are not limited to, housing insecurity, family reunification, education/trades, employment, substance use disorders, and mental and medical health care.
- We implemented Web-Ex format for re-entry DJJ hearings to be held from DJJ facilities. Upon release, the Department transports youth/young adults' home or we provide transportation assistance to families who now pick-up youth/young adults from DJJ facilities.

Our Department and its talented staff continue to innovate to maintain and improve client services during these challenging times. Each of our efforts is grounded in an overarching theme of safety and security for all of our fellow community members.

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My staff and I appreciate the opportunity to support the BSCC's noble endeavor. We join with other counties to ensure the CESF funds target the highest priorities and greatest community benefits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Leyva', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

RAY LEYVA  
Interim Chief Probation Officer

RL:REB:HW:rp