

Santa Cruz County Probation Department

Adult Division
Annual Report

2023

Our **VISION** is a safe, equitable, and thriving community.

Our **MISSION** is to contribute to community well-being through positive engagement, connection to services, and support for those impacted by crime.



Contents

Introduction:2

Executive Summary3

Operational Goals for the Division4

Success Centers.....5

Division Highlights.....6

Grants and Technical Assistance/Research Projects9

Introduction:

The Adult Division promotes public safety by supporting felony and specialty courtrooms, conducting investigations, and writing pre-sentence/pre-plea reports, as well as providing community-based supervision that contributes to community well-being through positive engagement, connection to services, and support for those impacted by crime. The Division supports successful outcomes and equitable access to resources by overseeing an array of service contracts for programming throughout the County. Two comprehensive Success Centers reduce transportation barriers by offering a north and south county hub where community providers and services are co-located.

In 2024, the addition of a Mobile Success Center, funded through a Board of State and Community Corrections grant, will improve equitable access to services and expand existing collaborations with county and community-based partners to contribute to outcomes of well-being and community safety.




Community members repaint the Black Lives Matter mural in front of Santa Cruz City Hall on Saturday. Credit: Kevin Painchaud / Lookout Santa Cruz

The image above illustrates how a collective impact can make change. Probation staff were tasked with writing the sentencing reports about the individuals charged with vandalizing the Black Lives Matter mural in the City of Santa Cruz. Funded by the AB109 Reconciliation Project, the Conflict Resolution Center worked with the Santa Cruz Equity Collab to facilitate a Restorative Justice approach to bring the responsible individuals together with impacted community members – ultimately leading to a joint effort in the restoration, the beginning of healing for some, and life-long learning and growth for others.

Executive Summary

 **Division Staffing:** 42.5 FTE (sworn and & non-sworn)

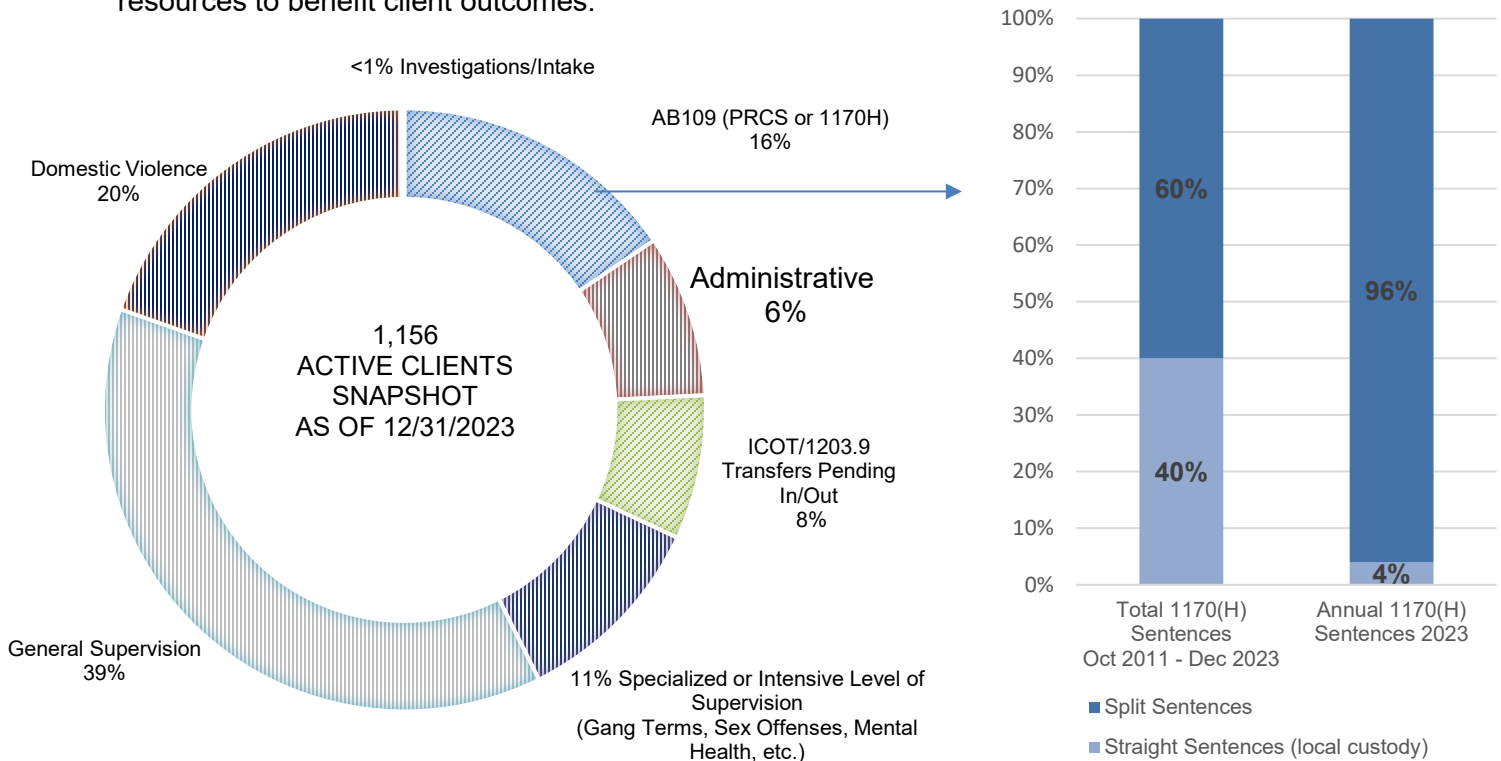
 **Average Monthly Population Supervised:** 1328 (Individuals 18+)

Departmental Objectives 2023 – 2025 Updated as of December 2023			
Supervision Skills Implement Coaching	Technical Violations Reduce Violations	After Hours Programs Increase Access	Bench Warrants Reduce Warrant Caseload
Status: In progress	Status: In progress	Status: In progress	Status: In progress

As a highly utilized custody alternative, the Probation Department’s Adult Division is committed to research-based assessment and supervision strategies that support public safety through coaching and guiding individuals in building their individual capacity and accountability. Connection to and engagement in community-based services are aimed to reduce recidivism and future victimization. Pre-sentence investigations and reports submitted to the courts allow judicial officers to make more informed sentencing decisions such as probation eligibility, consideration of sentencing limitations, special circumstances, and victim restitution.

Establishing two Success Centers with collaborative and co-located worksites enhances the collective impact of county-wide services and streamlines access for individuals by reducing unnecessary steps or redirection. In the past year, the Probation Success Centers (PSC) served 533 individuals, totaling nearly 3,000 episodes (averaging approximately 4-6 visits per person).

Continuing alignment with the Department’s other divisions, the Adult Division has an ongoing commitment to secure grant funding, technical assistance, collaborate with organizations for program and research grants for advancing criminal justice reforms, and to assist in maximizing resources to benefit client outcomes.



Operational Goals for the Division¹

#441	Status: In Progress
By June 2025, 65% of Probation staff will report an increase in their supervision skills as a result of training and implementation of the Coaching Model in supervision practices to reduce violations for clients with substance use disorders.	
<p>Key Steps –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select Deputy Probation Officer III staff to begin the "Coaching Model" training by June 2023: <i>Completed</i> • Work with selected staff receiving "Coaching Model" training to help train colleagues who are supervisors on "coaching model skills" by December 2023: <i>Completed</i> • Utilize CAFES grant services to enhance substance use disorder treatment and access, including probation Success Centers, by October 2023: <i>In progress and ongoing</i> 	
#442	Status: In Progress
By June 2024, Probation will reduce technical violations for Black adults by 30 percent by implementing cultural responsivity to Substance Use Disorders services and practices decreasing recidivism and over-use of incarceration.	
<p>Key Steps –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise policies and procedures through the Reducing Revocations Challenge (RRC)²: <i>In progress</i> • Provide training to shift the supervision approach to a coaching model, with an emphasis on incentivizing desired behavior: <i>In progress – coaching overview presented to all staff; first cohort completed; second cohort started.</i> • Work with a pilot group of Adult Division Probation Officers to focus on alternative and non-punitive responses to technical violations involving substance use disorder behavior: <i>In progress – 55 clients enrolled in the pilot by the end of December 2023.</i> 	
#447	Status: In Progress
By June 2025, Probation will increase equitable access to treatment and intervention services for individuals under supervision and monitoring by working with contractors to provide a minimum of 20 percent of services during evenings and weekends.	
<p>Key Steps –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release a Request for Proposal for Assembly Bill 109 treatment and intervention funds with specific equity requirements. <i>In progress with anticipated release of February 13, 2024</i> • Award multi-year contracts with enhanced services on evenings and weekends. <i>Pending</i> 	
#448	Status: In Progress
By June 2025, Probation will reduce the bench warrant caseload by 20 percent.	
<p>Key Steps –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and target warrants more than 20 years old for non-violent offenses - <i>Review of cases in progress</i> • Collaborate with justice partners and community-based organizations to publicly distribute information regarding warrant recall process – <i>In progress and on track to host a warrant recall event on January 27, 2024 (emphasis will focus on warrant recall and termination when possible, or re-engagement to support successful completion).</i> 	

¹ Since FY18/19, the County has tasked each Department with creating biennial objectives to guide their work.

² RRC Phase II Report available to view at:

https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/0/County/prb/pdfs/Santa%20Cruz_Reducing-Revocations-Challenge_Phase2-FINAL-Report_20230927_STC.pdf

Success Centers

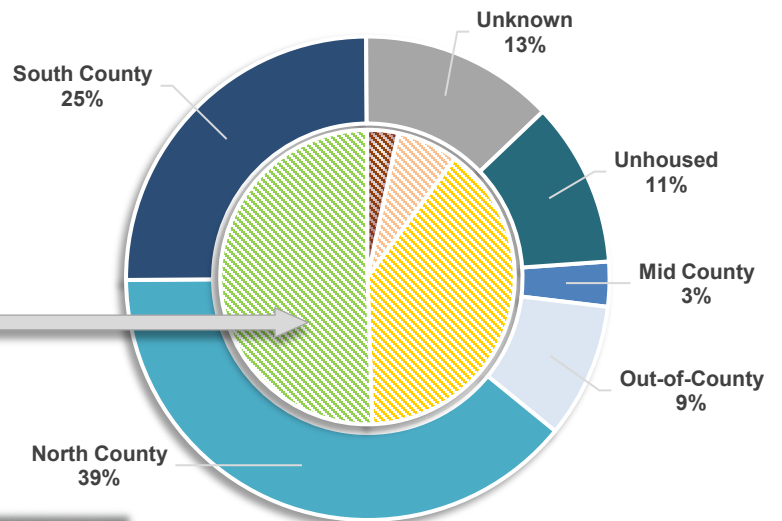
With both the north county and south county Probation Success Centers (PSC) fully functioning, you can see that residents in closest proximity to their locations were the highest utilizers during the past year. The implementation of the Mobile Success Center in fall 2024 is anticipated to bring more capacity to meet individual needs directly in the community. The unincorporated areas make up just a fraction of clients, compared to the City of Santa Cruz and the Watsonville/Freedom area. More direct access in the community will also support our efforts to reduce revocations for technical violations, as often a failure to report leads to warrants when individuals become scared or discouraged..

PSC usage for black individuals on supervision in 2023 increased 33% from 2022. This is significant, as it supports one of our Operational Objectives noted in the previous section that is specifically focused on reducing revocations for this population, which is overrepresented in violation rates.

Probation Success Centers

Individuals Served by Area of Reported Residence in 2023
& Racial Demographics
533 Total Individuals Served
(2,956 visits or episodes)

- African American - 7%
- Latinx - 39%
- White - 50%
- Other - 3%



Each month PSC providers and probation staff take turns hosting social events to bring staff, partners, and clients together in a shared experience to foster rapport building and encourage an increased level of engagement. Above you will see the boat trip around the Santa Cruz Harbor and Monterey Bay, sponsored by MENtors and hosted by a local captain.

Division Highlights

Court coverage -



Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) cover multiple felony court arraignment calendars four days a week and various specialty post-adjudication review calendars including Behavioral Health Court; Domestic Violence; and Veteran’s Court reviews. Their courtroom presence enables collaborative sentencing discussions, leveraging Probation’s unique expertise, and providing immediate connection for individuals under supervision. DPO presence for review calendars, their presence also affords individuals an opportunity to be excused, such as to avoid missing work, if they are doing well.

Collaborative Courts –

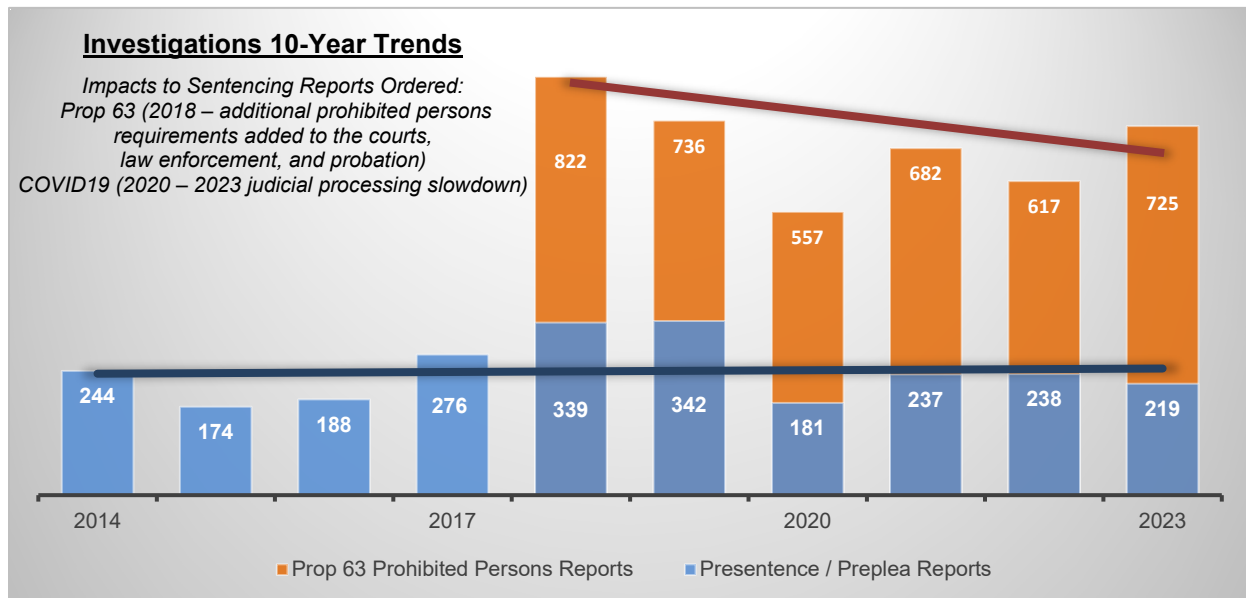
- Behavioral Health Court (BHC)
- Veteran’s Court
- Domestic Violence Review Court

Investigations –

Penal Code Section 1203 mandates Probation to prepare a comprehensive report detailing the crime’s circumstances, the individual’s criminal history, victim impact, and sentencing recommendations, encompassing eligibility for probation and sentencing considerations. Probation Officer training emphasizes familiarity with court rules and sentencing intricacies.

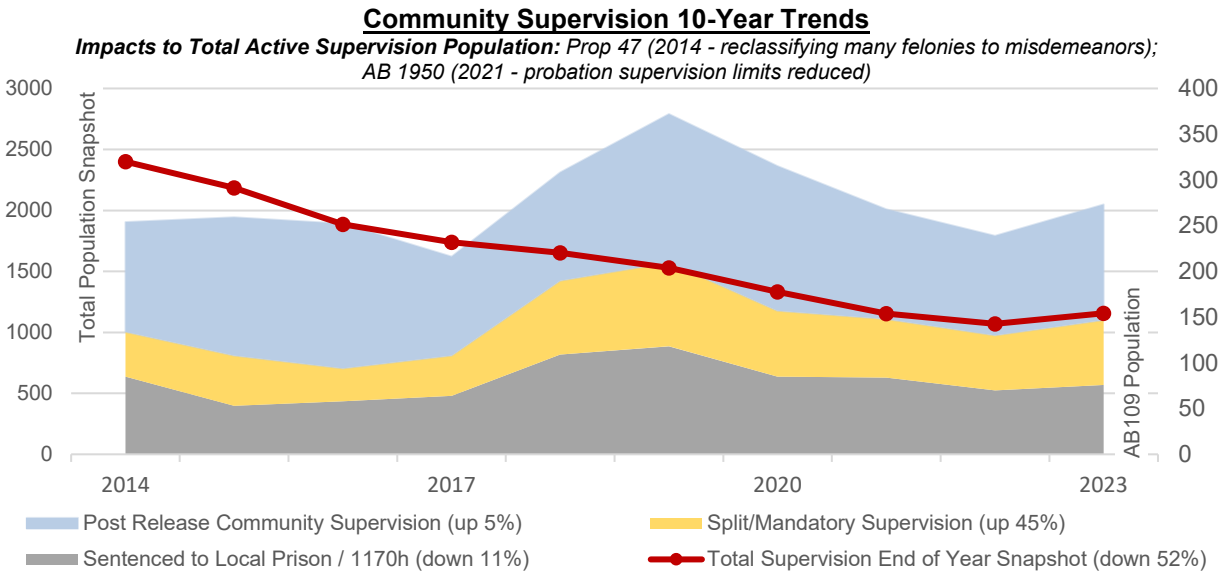
Additionally, under Penal Code Section 29810, Probation conducts investigations and reports for individuals who are ineligible to possess firearms, ammunition, and body armor due to felony or misdemeanor convictions. Most individuals comply with the prohibition requirement. When necessary, probation officers collaborate with law enforcement and host quarterly meetings to discuss complex cases and arrange searches when warranted.

As illustrated below, the unfunded Prop 63 mandates has added an enormous amount of work to the Investigations Unit in recent years, while overall sentencing reports have remained fairly stable. This work, combined with growing court coverage, takes a considerable amount of time.



Supervision in the Community –

Under Penal Code section 1202.8, the court places individuals on probation, with their supervision determined by the Probation Department to facilitate completion of their terms and conditions. Supervision efforts include partnerships with law enforcement and service providers, tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of each case. Individuals on supervision engage with their probation officers through various means, including visits at offices or Success Centers, program sites, or at community locations including their homes. The Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011, enacted through Assembly Bill 109 (AB109), shifted the responsibility for managing certain prison sentences and the community supervision of specific individuals from the State to County jurisdictions. This realignment also introduced Post Release Community Supervision for individuals exiting state prisons after serving time for designated offenses (formerly parole).



Despite a decrease in the Formal Probation population, the remaining individuals under supervision present complex needs, necessitating intensified case management and resources. Achieving smaller caseloads, essential for adequately addressing client needs, has been partially realized in certain case types and specialty areas. In 2023, the average monthly population under formal supervision was 1,328, though 1,967 individuals had cases initiated at some point during the year, indicating a need for varying degrees of intervention or response. This marked a minor increase from 2022 (1,307 and 1,947 respectively).



Probation Officers and Leadership collaborate with legal system partners, community providers, and individuals on supervision to discuss the advancing of probation practices using the Coaching Model.



Deputy Probation Officers collaborate with local law enforcement during an operation to reduce and prevent gang violence and firearm possession.

Programming and Resources –

The Adult Division strives for culturally responsive community-based supervision to enhance well-being by engaging individuals, connecting them to services, and supporting their needs. The Division oversees diverse service contracts countywide, including those located at the Probation Success Centers.



Utilizing evidence-based tools we assess individuals to identify risk and need areas.³ Those in need of assessment for Substance Use Disorder or Behavioral Health services benefit from Probation’s collaborations with Health Services and several community partners throughout the county and on-site.

Following assessment, individuals under supervision may be referred to a variety of programs, predominantly funded through MediCal, AB109, or by the Prop 47 CAFES grant (discussed in further detail on page 10). While these resources remove many financial barriers, community capacity and information sharing continue to be hurdles for timely service delivery. The extensive collaborations locally are working towards finding new solutions, particularly with the emergence of CalAIM.

Community Providers & Services

Re-entry Services
Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
Assessments
Mental Health Support
Peer Navigation
Women’s Supportive Services
Parenting Classes / Mentoring
Anger Management
Education Resources
Clothing Closet / Personal Hygiene
Supplies



Each month PSC providers and probation staff take turns hosting social events to bring staff, partners, and clients together in a shared experience to foster rapport building and encourage an increased level of engagement. Above you will see the Corazon en Flor, Folklorico group perform at the North County location following their performance up at the Juvenile Hall facility in Felton.

³ Correctional Assessment and Intervention System (CAIS): <https://evidentchange.org/assessment/correctional-assessment-and-intervention-system-cais/>

ODARA: <https://pathssk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Waypoint-ODARA-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Static-99R: <https://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/mobile/Static-99R.aspx>

Grants and Technical Assistance/Research Projects

Assembly Bill 372⁴:

Santa Cruz County continues to participate in the Domestic Violence Pilot, which has been extended beyond the original period (2019 – 2021). Using an alternative model for providing interventions to individuals convicted of domestic violence offenses and/or sentenced pursuant to Penal Code Section 1203.097, the model established a matrix framework for identifying appropriate types and intensity of services. Streets2Schools (S2S) is the primary provider of programming in Santa Cruz for the past couple of years. In 2023, 160 individuals enrolled in the S2S program, with 102 completions by the end of the year. The average attendance rate was 78%.

Reducing Revocations Challenge:

(Funded by Arnold Ventures (AV) and administered through the City University of New York’s Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG))

Santa Cruz County continued to implement Phase II of the Reducing Revocations Challenge (RRC) to minimize the impact of probation on jail and prison admissions. A collaborative effort involving staff, experts, and researchers aims to transform organizational practices. In November 2023, Probation hosted a one year follow up to the retreat held in November 2022 which focused on probation's purpose and proposed policies for community service and racial equity. A pilot program developed through the RRC offers individualized support and incentives for those with substance use terms, leading to improved collaboration with probation staff. More than 50 individuals have been enrolled in the pilot program.

“I relapsed the first week [in the pilot] and came straight to [my PO]. I was afraid I would get violated but she didn’t violate me. I have been clean ever since. I used to feel like I was trying to run from probation and not get caught when I was struggling . . . it was like catch me if you can . . . Now it feels like you can run to your probation officer when you need help.”

- Pilot Participant

In October 2023, a Santa Cruz County team participated in the AV-ISLG Supervision Summit 2023 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The team, comprised of the Chief Probation Officer, a Division Director, a supervisor, a caseload Probation Officer, and a researcher, presented insights gained and future directions during a breakout session. They also engaged with experts and learned from other national site projects.

Justice System Partners⁵ – Coaching for Success:

Bridging the gap between evidence-based tools and their delivery is essential for positive outcomes. To effectively address the needs of those under supervision, we must align our system and agency structures with change-oriented approaches. This requires rethinking the role of probation officers, shifting from surveillance-focused and compliance-focused to those centered on facilitating behavioral change. Successful coaching organizations empower supervisors and administration to foster a coaching environment and support staff in delivering change-oriented interventions. Driven by the work of Dr. Brian Lovins, the first group of probation supervisors participated in the Coaching Network, with the second group starting just before the end of 2023.

⁴ AB 372 – CSAC Year 3 Report: https://www.counties.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ab372_year_3_legislative_report.pdf

⁵ <https://justicesystempartners.org/coaching/>

Proposition 47 – Cohort 2 & 3 , Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Grants⁶:

The Probation Department led a collaborative effort to secure nearly \$12 million for Santa Cruz County, funded through the Board of State and Community Corrections Prop 47 grants (cohorts 2 and 3). The project, Coordinated Access for Empowering Success (CAFES), focuses resources on individuals committing lower-level crimes who also have either substance use or mental health needs. This trauma-informed model expands services through community-based organizations, restorative justice practices, and access to treatment and housing support. Implementation began in August 2019, with services available from January 2020 to December 2022. The final evaluation was completed in May 2023. Building on Cohort 2's success, Cohort 3 of CAFES increases community-based agency allocation from 66% to 72%. It aims to reduce recidivism by expanding treatment options, Neighborhood Courts, early representation by the Public Defender, and early interventions. Direct client services will run through February 2026, with the final evaluation to follow.

Overall, based on the data from the first two Cohorts of the Proposition 47 grant program, the types of services offered through these grant projects appear to be effective at reducing recidivism rates in program participants. Not surprisingly, the outcomes were more positive for individuals receiving ongoing services versus those only receiving a one-time intervention. Santa Cruz County had 631 participants in cohort 2, with a recidivism rate of 19.6%. While this rate was higher than the average for the project as a whole (15.3%), it is still significantly less than statewide recidivism rates generally reported and significantly less than the recidivism rate reported for those released from state prison.

Shared Safety Work Group (SSWG):

The Shared Safety Work Group (SSWG), a subcommittee of the Community Corrections Partnership, completed a victim services mapping project, facilitated by the Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center and the State Attorney General's Office. This resource will be accessible through the County's 211 information system, providing crime survivors with access to various support services, including basic needs, legal aid, counseling, and medical assistance. Additionally, the SSWG created infographic brochures, organized stakeholder meetings to improve victim restitution practices, and conducted research on trauma recovery centers to inform local service planning. Over twenty-five local organizations, including probation, law enforcement, courts, and non-profit providers participated in SSWG meetings and events.

MediCal Administrative Activities (MAA):

The Probation Department has been receiving ongoing technical assistance and support from County Departments and representatives of other jurisdictions with successful revenue collection. Since our exclusive focus shifted to MediCal Administrative Activities (MAA) in 2019, revenue from reimbursable activities generated across all divisions has steadily grown.

⁶ BSCC Statewide Evaluation for Cohort 2: <https://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/H-2-Proposition-47-Cohort-2-Final-Evaluation-Report-FINAL-1.pdf>