

Santa Cruz County Probation Department

Adult Division
Annual Report

2024

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.



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Introduction:

In the Adult Division, Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) and administrative staff collaborate with community, legal system, and law enforcement partners to enhance public safety. In felony courtrooms and specialty review courts, DPOs play a crucial role in making recommendations and disseminating information. The Investigations Unit conducts pre-plea and pre-sentence reports, providing a comprehensive overview of behavior, impact, eligibility, and potential outcomes. We oversee Success Centers in Santa Cruz and Watsonville, which serve as collaborative spaces for individuals to engage with service providers. A Mobile Success Center vehicle was received in the fall of 2024 and will be launched into the community in early 2025. By employing evidence-based assessment tools, we evaluate the risks and needs of those under our supervision, facilitate service referrals, and partner with researchers to improve probation methodologies and outcomes.

Executive Summary



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



Average Monthly Population Supervised: ### (Individuals 18+)

<p align="center">Departmental Objectives 2023 – 2025 https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/VisionSantaCruz/OperationalPlan.aspx Updated as of December 2024</p>			
<p align="center">Supervision Skills <i>Implement Coaching</i></p>	<p align="center">Technical Violations <i>Reduce Violations</i></p>	<p align="center">After Hours Programs <i>Increase Access</i></p>	<p align="center">Bench Warrants <i>Reduce Warrant Caseload</i></p>
<p><u>Status:</u> In progress</p>	<p><u>Status:</u> Completed</p>	<p><u>Status:</u> Completed</p>	<p><u>Status:</u> In progress</p>

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.

Unfunded mandates from legislation such as Proposition 63 (2018) have increased the workload for the Investigations Unit. That growing demand, along with expanded court responsibilities, requires considerable time and resources.

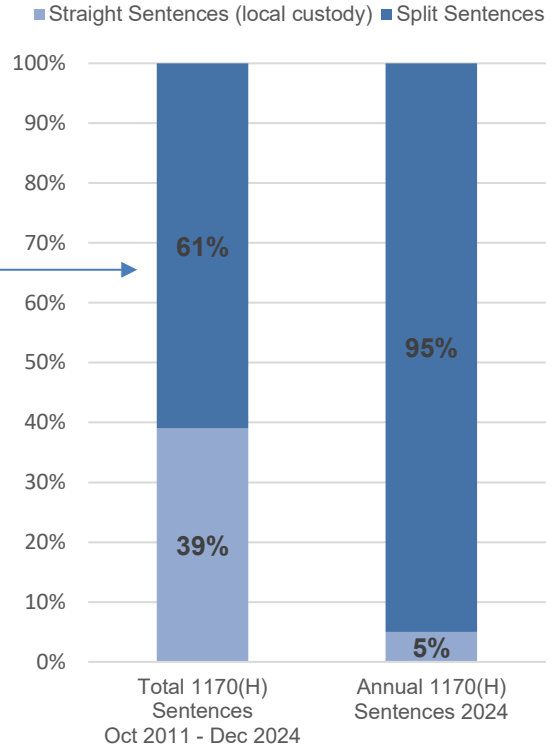
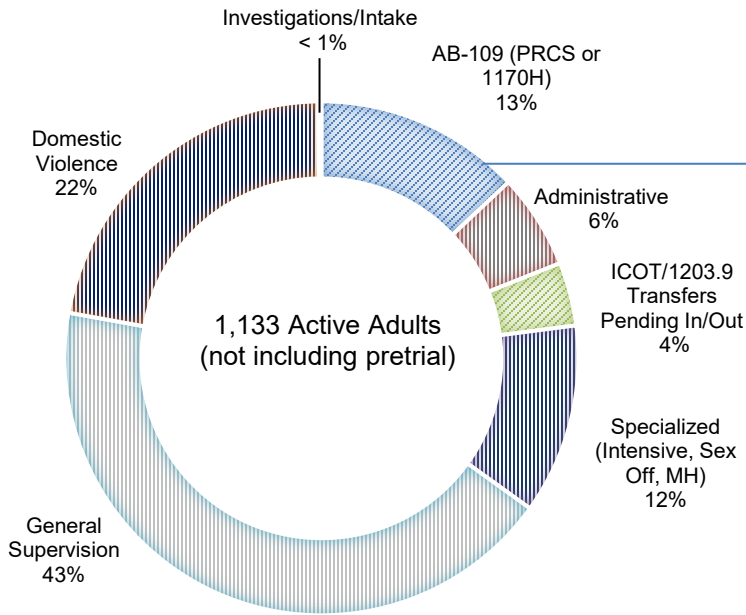
Establishing Success Centers with collaborative and co-located worksites enhances the collective impact of county-wide services and streamlines access for individuals. In the past year, the Probation Success Centers (PSC) served 686 individuals, totaling nearly 4,000 episodes (averaging approximately 5-6 visits per person).

Throughout 2024, more than 1,900 individuals had an open case under supervision (either Formal Probation, Mandatory Supervision, or Post Release Community Supervision), with an active caseload count of 1,133 at the end of the year.

Continuing alignment with the Department’s other divisions, we maintain 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.

Division Highlights

Active Clients as of 12/31/2024



AB-109 Population

Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS)	
Active as of 12/31/2024	Change from 2023
116	↓ 8%

Court coverage –



Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) support felony courtrooms and specialty court calendars, including Behavioral Health Court, Domestic Violence Reviews, and Veteran’s Court. Their presence fosters collaborative sentencing discussions and connects individuals under supervision with immediate support. Additionally, DPOs can grant individuals the opportunity to be excused from court when they are making good progress, helping them avoid work disruptions.

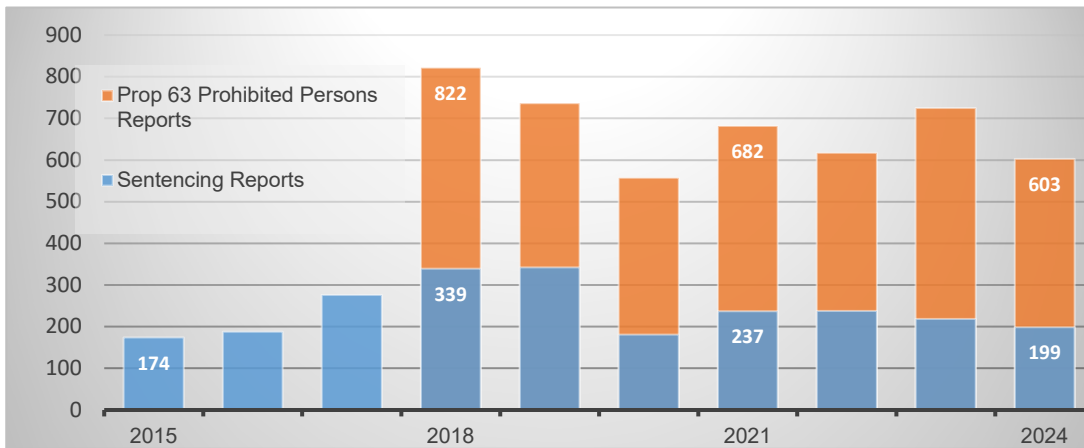
Investigations –



Penal Code Section 1203 requires DPOs to prepare detailed reports including crime circumstances, an individual’s criminal history, victim impact, and sentencing recommendations, including probation eligibility. Additionally, some individuals are prohibited from possessing items such as firearms, ammunition, and body armor, due to a felony and some misdemeanor convictions (Proposition 63, implemented in 2018). Under Penal Code Section 29810, DPOs investigate and submit a report to the court regarding compliance with the prohibition and collaborate with law enforcement to address complex cases and public safety concerns.

10-Year Trends

Impacts to Reports Ordered: Prop 63 (2018 – new unfunded mandate);
 COVID19 (2020 – 2023 judicial processing slowdown)
Potential Future Impacts: Prop 36 (as of Dec 18, 2024)



Supervision in the Community –



Under Penal Code section 1202.8, the court places individuals on formal probation after they have been convicted and sentenced. Supervision is managed by the Probation Department to help them meet their requirements, build skills, and connect with appropriate resources. A vital component of supervision involves collaboration with service providers - tailored to each person's needs, and collaboration with law enforcement when necessary. Individuals can meet with their probation officers through office visits or at the Success Centers, at community programs, at home, or using virtual platforms.

The Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011, through Assembly Bill 109 (AB109), transferred the management of certain prison sentences and community supervision from the State to County

Client Spotlight –

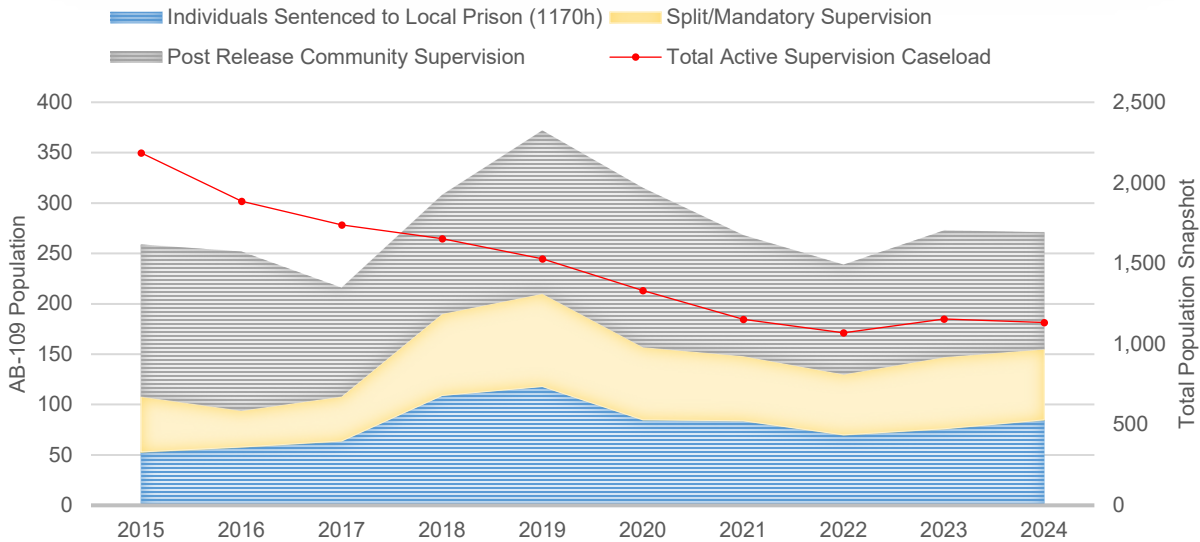
A Behavioral Health Court participant utilized community support services to set and achieve personal goals. He was nominated by peers for his contributions to the Homeless Garden Project and recently earned his high school diploma!



jurisdictions. This change also established Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS) for individuals leaving state prisons after serving time for specific offenses. Those on PRCS were previously supervised by State Parole, however, working with Probation Officers in their home communities has led to improved outcomes for many.

10-Year Trends

Impacts to Total Active Supervision Population: Prop 47 (2014 - reclassifying many felonies to misdemeanors); AB 1950 (2021 - probation length reduced)
Potential Future Impacts: Prop 36 (as of Dec 18, 2024)



After a consistent decline since 2014 (following Proposition 47 driven changes), the probation population stabilized between 2021 and 2024. Those who remain under supervision face increasingly complex needs that require more intensive case management and support. We recognize that the challenges faced by these individuals have grown, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and simultaneous local fires. At the end of 2024, the monthly population snapshot under supervision was 1,133, with a total of 1,907 individuals having cases opened at some point throughout the year. It is essential that we continue to adapt our resources and strategies to address evolving needs.

Programming and Resources –

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



Using evidence-based tools, we assess individuals to identify their risks and needs. Those requiring evaluation for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) or Behavioral Health services benefit from our partnerships with Health Services and local community organizations. After assessment, individuals under supervision may be referred to various programs, funded through MediCal, AB109, or the Proposition 47 CAFES Program. While these resources help eliminate financial barriers, challenges in community capacity, hours of

operation, and information sharing can hinder timely service delivery. Our extensive local collaborations aim to develop new solutions, especially with the introduction of CalAIM.

Community Corrections Partnership - AB109 funding:

The Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) releases a request for proposals on a four cycle, with the most recent solicitation completed during in 2024, to begin FY24/25.

Service areas are identified through an analysis of multiple client needs assessments, input from criminal justice stakeholders, current and former clients, and service provider staff. Initial allocations for each service area are based on prevalence of need, cost per treatment episode, and public safety priority. A panel of local and regional stakeholders review and score proposals based on criteria including:

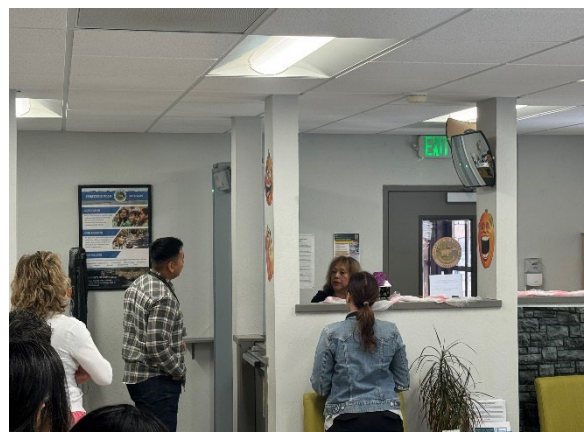
- Evidence-based program design targeted to specific criminogenic needs
- Organizational capacity and history of service in the criminal legal system
- Alignment with the AB109 multidisciplinary service delivery model
- Demonstrated cultural competence and responsiveness
- Commitment to ongoing staff training and continuous program improvement

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 / Domestic
Violence Classes
Education Resources
Clothing Closet / Personal Hygiene
Supplies

Success Centers

In 2024, we witnessed a remarkable increase in the utilization of our Probation Success Centers (PSC), particularly in South County, where growth was most significant. To further enhance our capacity to meet the unique needs of individuals in the community, we are excited to introduce the Mobile Success Center. This innovative vehicle, received in the fall of 2024, is currently



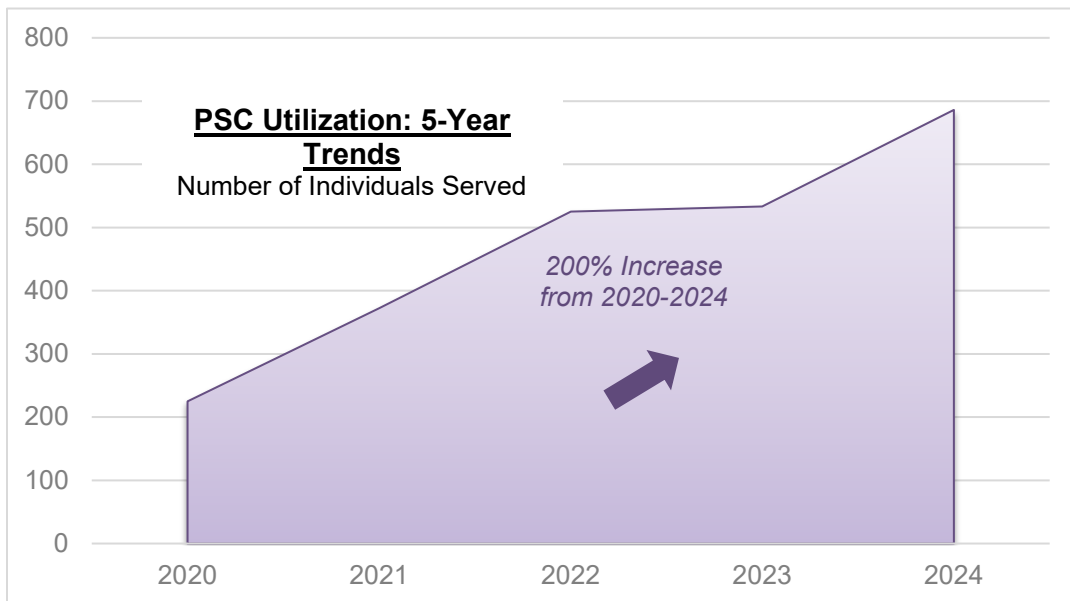
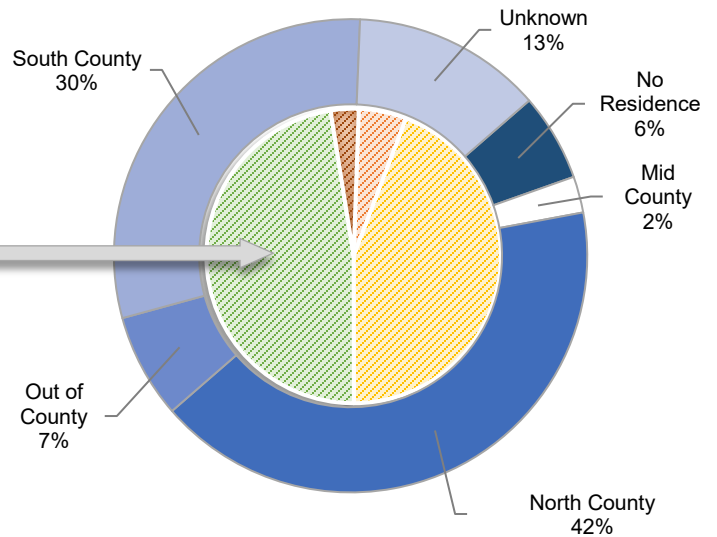
undergoing see PSC staff and partners coming together for training, networking, role-playing, and scenario discussions. During their time together they learn about services provided, legal system process, review the collaborative space and expectations.

necessary upfitting and equipment installations and is set to launch early 2025. This enhanced accessibility will allow us to provide more direct support within the community, reinforcing our commitment to reducing revocations for technical violations. Over the past five years, we have seen a consistent upward trend in the number of clients (more than 200% increase since 2020) and episodes of service at our centers. Achieved through collaborations and co-located services, this trajectory reflects our growing collective impact, and the increasing trust placed in our services.

2024 PSC Demographics

Individuals Served by Area of Reported Residence & Racial Demographics in 2024
686 Total Individuals Served
 (3,936 visits or episodes)
 Average Client Age: 40

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



Grants and Technical Assistance/Research Projects

Assembly Bill 372 – Year 4 Report:¹ Applying Evidence Based Practices to Batterers Intervention Programs:

(Key Partnerships - The California State Association of Counties and the California Policy Lab at the University of California, Berkeley, funded by the Blue Shield of California Foundation.)

In 2019, six counties launched a pilot program to improve support for individuals convicted of crimes associated with domestic violence. The initiative aimed to use evidence-based practices to address intimate partner violence (IPV) more effectively, as statutory requirements (per Penal Code 1203.097) had remained stagnant since the 1990s. The new approach (now outlined in Penal Code 1203.099), supported by all of our local justice partners, offers flexible options focused on changing harmful behaviors and promoting accountability. The pilot seeks to identify effective strategies for reducing IPV and uses risk assessments to connect individuals with programming and services. Throughout the project, Streets2Schools (S2S) has been the primary provider of programming to address IPV, with curriculum delivered virtually. This was particularly helpful during pandemic restrictions. While AB 372 primarily targets domestic violence programming, it also highlights the need to address other factors, particularly in light of unemployment or under-employment and behavioral health / Substance Use Disorder prevalence.

Reducing Revocations Challenge²:

(Key Partnerships – Arnold Ventures, CUNY ISLG, Justice System Partners)

Nationwide, nearly 25% of probation violations stem from technical issues like missed appointments or failed drug tests and data often lacks the detail needed to identify effective solutions. To tackle this, the Reducing Revocations Challenge (RRC) launched in 2019. The RRC aimed to uncover the reasons for revocations through research in ten jurisdictions across the country and implement strategies for better probation outcomes. One local project outcome indicated terms and conditions related to Substance Use Disorder (SUD) were a significant driver of technical violations and return to custody. As a result, a SUD Pilot was developed, leveraging strength-based and incentive-based strategies to increase engagement with relevant programming and resources. Early indicators showed lower violations found for new offenses, compared to similar cases not in the pilot, and lower rates of technical violations filed.

As of 12/31/2024

*80 clients
were actively enrolled
in the SUD Pilot
(up from 54 in 2023)*

In 2024, our collaborative effort continued to involve staff, experts, and researchers working to transform organizational practices. Our focus areas include a strategy lead and a co-design team:

1. Implementing the Coaching Model (see more detail below under Justice System Partners)
2. Incentive-based behavior change and alternative behavior responses
3. Expansion of the SUD Pilot
4. Continued revision of policies and practices for supervision

¹ AB 372 – CSAC Year 4 Report:

<https://www.counties.org/csac-bulletin-article/csac-releases-year-4-legislative-report-ab-372-piloting-alternative-domestic>

² Transforming Local Approaches to Probation with the Reducing Revocations Challenge:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fcea962a1b4d771ad256fcc/t/66998f166c891b6ec50099f1/1721339706340/From+Research+to+Action+to+Successful+Outcomes+-+Full+Report+July+2024.pdf>

Justice System Partners³ – Coaching for Success:

Bridging the gap between evidence-based tools and their delivery is essential for positive outcomes. To better support individuals under supervision, we need to shift our approach, from simply monitoring to helping people change their behavior through coaching. With guidance from Dr. Brian Lovins, a second group completed the training in 2024. Next year, we plan to expand this project across the department and involve partner agencies.

“Because of how we supervise in Santa Cruz County, I already had a good understanding of this approach going into the Coaching Network for Change training. But the experience helped me gain a better understanding and gave me new tools to connect with clients in a more meaningful way.”

-Probation Officer

Proposition 47 – Cohort 2 & 3 , Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Grants⁴:

The Probation Department has successfully secured nearly \$12 million for Santa Cruz County through Proposition 47 grants, funded through the BSCC. The project, called Coordinated Access for Empowering Success (CAFES), targets individuals committing lower-level crimes who also face substance use or mental health challenges. This trauma-informed model enhances services via community organizations, restorative justice practices, and support for treatment and housing. Implementation began in August 2019, with direct services available through February 2026. Statewide data showed that the services offered are effective at reducing recidivism, particularly for individuals receiving ongoing support rather than one-time interventions.

A report completed in October 2024, outlining efforts from November 2022 – June 2024, highlighted the following accomplishments:

GOALS 1 & 2: Increasing Diversion Opportunities and Reducing Recidivism

- Providing Much Needed Services/Linkages to Services
- Reaching People Sooner/Earlier in System Involvement
- Partnership & Collaboration

GOAL 3: Improving Existing Systems and Collaboration Efforts for Those in the Criminal Justice System

- Building Relationships and Partnerships
- Improving Communication and Collaboration
- Building Project Partner Capacity
- Community Outreach and Education

³ Justice System Partners: <https://justicesystempartners.org/coaching/>

⁴ 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>