

# Methods, Limitations, and References

## 1. Program Service Data

### a. Methods

Program service data include the number of unique individuals served and number of hours of service delivered. Program outcome data includes both measures of change in behavior, skills, knowledge, or attitude (self-reported and staff observation); as well as the attainment of specific benchmark measures such as employment, high school diploma, or completion of prescribed treatment plans or court-ordered terms and conditions. Program service and outcome data is submitted monthly by each service provider, using standardized reporting forms. Once data is validated by comparison with the Probation Department's online referral and service tracking system, it is uploaded to a database linked directly to the County Dashboard.

### b. Limitations

- i. Data entry and validation delay may result in dashboard data that is one or more months behind actual service provision.
- ii. Data entry errors may include incorrectly assigning service hours; failure to note absences or program termination; and duplicate counts from individuals who enter a given service more than once in a given year.
- iii. Program outcome data that relies on self-reported changes may include post-only assessment and attribution of change, which may under- or over-represent actual changes in behavior, skills, or knowledge. Pre/post data may not include intact data sets for individuals who leave the program prior to completion, and so may exaggerate the average levels of success by participants.
- iv. Achievement of specific benchmark indicators may not be readily traced to the intervention of any single program: often there are many supports and services lying outside of this data collection process which contribute significantly to these milestones.

### c. References

The network of local services funded through AB109 is based on the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model promoted by the National Institute of Corrections as well as the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) and which is specifically referenced in the enabling legislation.

A compendium of evidence-based practices and supporting research can be found at the NIC website:

<https://nicic.gov/evidence-based-practices-ebp>.

Information about the RNR Model can be found at the BSCC website:

<http://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Principles-of-Effective-Interventions.pdf>

Additional research summaries can be found at the following links:

[https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/RS\\_No88/No88\\_10VE\\_Latessa\\_Designing.pdf](https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/RS_No88/No88_10VE_Latessa_Designing.pdf)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4045616/>

The Santa Cruz County AB109 Request for Proposals for the current services was released in January of 2019 and can be downloaded at the following link:

<https://santacruzcountyca.ig2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=4&ID=18615&MeetingID=1710>

## **2. Criminal Recidivism Data**

### **a. Methods**

Recidivism is defined as conviction a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within three years of release from custody or placement on supervision for a previous criminal conviction ([https://www.bscc.ca.gov/s\\_recidivism/](https://www.bscc.ca.gov/s_recidivism/)). Source data for measuring the recidivism rate is obtained from the Superior Court's electronic data system. All AB109 participants are tracked to identify new convictions for offenses that occurred within three years of their originating AB109 release, with the rate equal to the number of those who recidivate divided by the total number of AB109 participants within three years of their originating AB109 release. Data reporting is based on the rate of recidivism at two years, rather than three, in order to match the statewide comparison data from the Public Policy Institute of California: (<https://www.ppic.org/publication/realignment-and-recidivism-in-california/>)

### **b. Limitations**

- i. Researchers and policy leaders are increasingly questioning recidivism as a sole measure of success in the criminal justice system. In general, rates of recidivism reflect law enforcement priorities and activities, and comparison of rates

between groups and communities may fail to account for issues of equity and community-wide systemic racism.

- ii. The State definition of recidivism is based on conviction rather than arrest to partly control for differential law enforcement as well as to uphold the constitutional presumption of innocence. Because it is limited to criminal behavior that results in both arrest and conviction, this rate should not be understood as a direct measure of crime and victimization in the community.
- iii. Data from the local court system only reflects local offenses: criminal behavior committed and convicted in other jurisdictions is not captured in the recidivism rate.
- iv. Although data is collected and tracked based on the three-year time frame from the State's definition of recidivism, data reported through these dashboards is based on an assessment of new convictions within two years in order to compare with the current comparison rates developed by the Public Policy Institute of California.

c. References

Recidivism is one measure under the broader goal of increased community safety over time. The collective impact of multiple services and supports provided to the AB109 population are one factor contributing to this goal, along with in-custody practices, probation monitoring and supervision, law enforcement surveillance and searches, and the processes and practices of the Superior Court. Below are some articles that describe the uses and limitations of recidivism data.

- M.D. Maltz, 1984 Recidivism, Academic Press, Inc.  
Abstract: <https://www.ojp.gov/ncirs/virtual-library/abstracts/recidivism-1>
- National Institute of Justice "Measuring Recidivism"  
<https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/measuring-recidivism>
- J. Butts & V. Schiraldi, 2018. "Recidivism Reconsidered: Preserving the Community Justice Mission of Community Corrections"  
[https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/wiener/programs/pji/files/recidivism\\_reconsidered.pdf](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/wiener/programs/pji/files/recidivism_reconsidered.pdf)
- R. King & B. Elderbroom, 2014. "Improving Recidivism as a Performance Measure"  
[Improving Recidivism as a Performance Measure | Urban Institute](#)

- J. Butts & V. Schiraldi, 2018. "The Recidivism Trap: Counting failure is no way to encourage success"

[The Recidivism Trap | The Marshall Project](#)