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October 23, 2017

Terri L. McDonald, Chief Probation Officer
County of Los Angeles Probation Department
9150 East Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242

RE: Response to Audit request of the use of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funds by the County of Los Angeles

Dear Chief Probation Officer McDonald:

Thank you for your response letter dated August 28, 2017 regarding my request for the Joint Legislative Audit Committee to conduct an audit of the use of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funds by the County of Los Angeles.

I want to begin by welcoming you as the new Chief Probation Officer of the County of Los Angeles and acknowledging some of the challenges you and the department face in light of the recent leadership changes. However, I am confident that, with your extensive background in corrections and rehabilitation, the department will work diligently to address these challenges, especially related to the accumulation of unspent JJCPA funds and questions about the Probation Department's (Department) contracting processes.

If you recall our phone conversation in late August, the administration of JJCPA funds is of particular interest and concern to me. I agreed to suspend my audit request to allow you time to respond to growing concerns that my constituents and I have over the use of funds. While your response letter briefly describes some of the key strategies undertaken by the County of Los Angeles to implement the JJCPA, several of my concerns remain unanswered.

The intent of Assembly Bill 1913 (2000) was to provide a stable funding source for local juvenile justice programs aimed at reducing crime and delinquency among at-risk youth. Studies have consistently illustrated that community based organizations (CBOs) effectively reduce delinquency and recidivism among adolescents because they cultivate a less-threatening approach to resolving issues in at-risk communities. Unfortunately, CBOs in the County of Los Angeles that serve these at-risk communities have not seen the level of funding that the bill intended to provide.



As a result, my constituents are being directly and adversely affected by the lack of implementation of funds from your department. I feel an obligation to my constituents to continue with the audit request if our questions and concerns are not sufficiently addressed. Below are those concerns and questions that are important to me and to the constituents that I represent. Although I agreed to delay my earlier audit request, answers to these questions in full would be appreciated by the start of the 2018 legislative year, so that I can make a decision about pursuing a state audit.

1. Your response letter states, "*Although there is a current unspent balance of approximately \$31 million, these funds have already been allocated to existing or new services and are pending CBO contact selection/designation.*" What was the process for selecting new services and deciding to continue funding existing services? Please provide a breakdown, by amount and percentage, detailing to which services these funds were committed. Please provide a breakdown, by amount and percentage, which clearly illustrates the amount of funding dedicated to CBOs, versus other county-operated services.
2. What are the major reasons for the high balance of unspent funds and why has that balance continued to grow? What will the Department do in the future to ensure funds do not accumulate?
3. Each year, to receive the next year's funding, counties either update their plan or reapply for continuation funding for the same programs from the prior year. Has the County modified or redesigned its annual plan to identify sufficient programs, strategies, or system enhancements for the funding it receives?
4. Your letter further states that, "*On June 9, 2017, Probation released a request for State of Qualifications for the Juvenile Justice Social Program Services Master Agreement (MSA). As of August 22, 2017, Probation has received 64 responses and is currently reviewing the Statement of Qualifications. Of the Statements of Qualifications reviewed thus far, 28 qualify. [. . .] The Department anticipates seeking Board approval in September 2017, to manage the MSA to establish and maintain a pool of qualified contractors that can provide services throughout the County.*" How often will the Department release the MSA? How often are responses to the MSA requests reviewed and evaluated? Will the MSA be reviewed periodically? Please provide a list of approved and rejected contractors for the MSA.
5. According to a May 17, 2017 letter written to the County Board of Supervisors, you indicated that a new JJCPA Accountability Committee was established in March 2017 to track monthly referrals, monitor spending trends and provide regular reports regarding operational and fiscal activities that identify underspending, unmet program needs, and provided recommendations to utilize projected unspent funds. What are the committee's findings and recommendations? What progress has the Accountability Committee made in improving operations of the program? How often will the Accountability Committee meet and review JJCPA programs? Will it be directly responsible for reviewing CBO contracts and practices?

6. Your letter to me further mentions that the Department is pursuing the option of public-private partnerships with foundations to utilize JJCPA funding. Please elaborate. What types of partnerships are being considered? How will contracting with a third party help expedite the distribution of funds? Would those partnerships replace CBO partnerships?
7. While not required under the Crime Prevention Act of 2000, local matches illustrate a county's commitment to preventing at-risk youth from entering or re-entering the justice system. To what extent does the County of Los Angeles provide a local match for the money that they receive from the state each year?
8. The intent of the Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000 was to ensure that funds were being allocated equitably to non-profits and community-based organizations (CBOs), and to county government agencies (such as Sheriff Departments and Probation Departments). Of the JJCPA funds allocated to Los Angeles County each year, how does the county allocate that funding? What steps are taken to ensure that unmet program needs are being met? Does the Probation Department or the County utilize program need or gap of service data when making allocation decisions?
9. In your letter to the County Board of Supervisors from May 17, 2017 you reference "Attachment 1," which includes charts about the funding breakdown for JJCPA. Chart 3, titled "Chart 3: FY 2016-17 Ongoing Budget & Estimated Program Expenditures," indicates that \$13,216,363 are allocated towards probation services while only \$3,841,089 are allocated to CBOs. Why is there such a disparity between the funding levels for CBOs and probation services? What steps is the Department taking to ensure that CBOs obtain a fair share? What type of monitoring will the Department do to ensure that CBOs continue to receive their fair share? How will the Department ensure that equal funds are distributed between CBOs and public agencies, in line with the goals of the Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act?
10. Is the Department using JJCPA funds to pay for programs authorized under WIC 236? What is the amount and percent breakdown allocated to non-profits and/or community-based organizations, other government agencies, etc. including programs authorized under WIC 236? Please provide historical data for at least the past 5 years.
11. Is the County complying with the laws and requirements related to the multiagency juvenile justice plan, funding, assessment, and monitoring of the programs funded? For example, what steps does the County and Probation Department take to ensure that funds are being allocated to programs and non-profits/CBOs that have proven solutions for achieving the goals of the JJCPA (i.e. curbing and preventing youth crime, delinquency, and recidivism)? How does the County and/or the Probation Department monitor program funding? If the County is funding programs under WIC 236 with JJCPA funds, to which organizations or agencies is that money going?

12. How has the County of Los Angeles addressed the issues identified in either the internal Los Angeles County Probation Department review (2015) or the County of Los Angeles Department of Auditor-Controller's review (2017)?

I appreciate the open line of communication, as this is a significant concern to me and my constituents. I look forward to working together to identify and address the issues at hand to better serve our at risk youth in the County of Los Angeles. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at (916) 319-2039.

Sincerely,



Raul Bocanegra
Majority Whip
Assemblymember, 39th District

Cc: The Honorable Al Muratsuchi, Chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee
The Honorable Richard Roth, Vice Chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee
Sheila Mitchell, Chief Probation Officer, County of Los Angeles
Felicia Cotton, Deputy Director, Los Angeles County Probation Department
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