

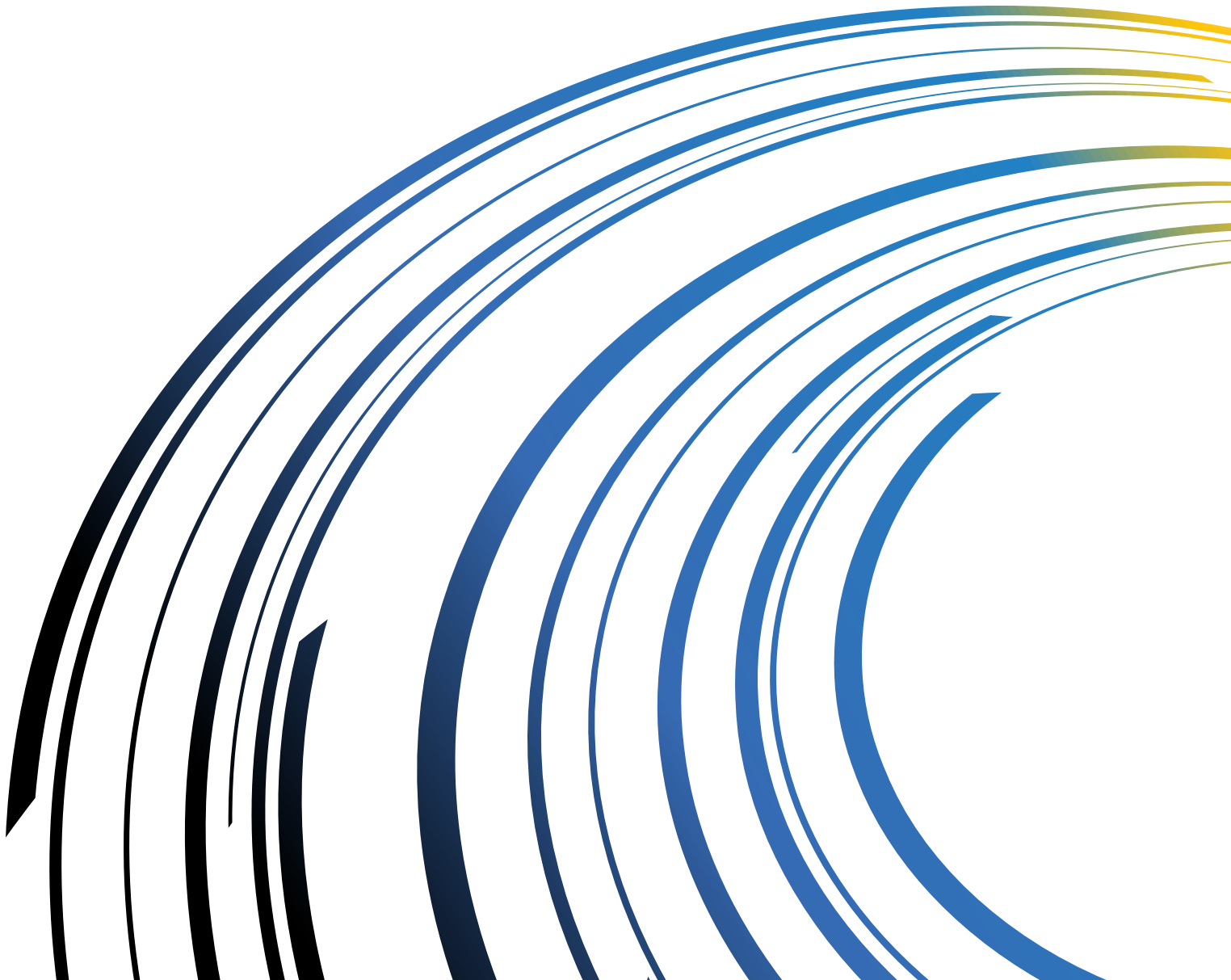


VENTURA COUNTY
PROBATION AGENCY EST. 1909

Strategic Plan Refresh

2025–2027

TRANSFORMING AND EMPOWERING LIVES TOGETHER



Message

FROM THE CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

Probation agency employees, key stakeholders, and community partners:

I am pleased to present the Ventura County Probation Agency's Strategic Plan Refresh, 2025–2027: Transforming and Empowering Lives Together. This plan continues to align with the [County of Ventura Strategic Plan 2024–2027](#) and reaffirms our agency's commitment to being a leader in community safety, innovation, and excellence.



Gina Johnson,
Chief Probation Officer

Over the past year, we have made meaningful progress in bringing our strategic goals to life. I'm proud to share that we are approximately halfway through the completion of our identified projects - a testament to our team's dedication, collaboration, and follow-through. These efforts are strengthening our organizational infrastructure, enhancing service delivery, and building momentum for continued success.

As we move forward, we remain focused on key priorities, including leadership and professional development, succession planning, and ensuring employee wellness and safety. These areas are vital to sustaining a high-performing agency that is responsive to community needs.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to our staff for their professionalism and perseverance in advancing this work. Your contributions make a difference, and I look forward to the continued progress we will make together in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gina Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light blue background.

Gina Johnson, Chief Probation Officer
Ventura County Probation Agency

Agency **Vision, Mission, and Values**

Vision

TRANSFORMING AND EMPOWERING LIVES TO BUILD A STRONG COMMUNITY.

Mission

**TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS, INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY,
AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING.**

Values

■ **COLLABORATION**

We actively build networks of support and strive to create shared solutions on issues impacting our communities.

■ **DEDICATION**

We demonstrate the highest level of integrity, professionalism, and compassion as a committed workforce.

■ **EMPOWERMENT**

We connect people to resources and opportunities to encourage change and personal responsibility, which are cornerstones to building safe communities.

■ **EXCELLENCE**

We are innovative, adaptable, and determined to continuously improve.

■ **RESPECT**

We believe in a positive, empowering, and supportive work environment that encourages the sharing of diverse opinions.

■ **SUPPORT**

We focus on restoration by providing access to trauma-informed services and facilitating healing.

Overview:

Strategic Goals

GoalOne

■ PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Programs, services, and practices that encourage positive life changes and support community well-being

GoalTwo

■ DATA

A data-driven and strategic agency that is continually improving

GoalThree

■ COMMUNICATION

Transparent communication within the agency, with stakeholders, and with the community at large

GoalFour

■ WORKFORCE

An inspired and diverse workforce, united in purpose, and dedicated to excellence

GoalFive

■ LEADERSHIP


A culture where leaders inspire, engage, mentor, and celebrate the personal and professional development of staff

Strategic Planning Process

The Ventura County Probation Agency's strategic planning journey began in 2020. Staff and stakeholders were invited to participate in surveys, focus groups, and committees. Together, they helped define a new mission, vision, and set of priorities for the agency.

The plan is structured around five goal areas, each supported by specific objectives and tasks. Workgroups made up of staff from across the agency carry out these tasks, with oversight and guidance provided by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. The strategic plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure the agency remains focused, accountable, and committed to ongoing improvement.

This document summarizes each goal area. It highlights key accomplishments, outlines current initiatives, and identifies tasks scheduled to begin in the next couple of years. It also incorporates updates made during the most recent annual review, reinforcing a clear path forward that aligns agencywide efforts with strategic priorities.



**THE PLAN IS STRUCTURED
AROUND FIVE GOAL AREAS, EACH SUPPORTED BY
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND TASKS.**



GoalOne

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Programs, services, and practices that encourage positive life changes and support community well-being

This goal reflects the agency's core purpose: helping individuals make meaningful, lasting changes that improve their lives and strengthen community well-being and safety. We know that when people receive the right support - from structured programs to practical services - at the right time, they're more likely to succeed. While many of these elements exist today, we are continuing to build our capacity to deliver them with greater consistency and quality. Through this goal, we're enhancing how we engage clients, match them to services, and apply evidence-based practices.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Implement protocols to ensure fidelity to evidence-based practices that promote client success and community safety**
- 2. Incorporate families and other social supports in clients' care and treatment plans**
- 3. Ensure the effective use of high-quality risk reduction programs**

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

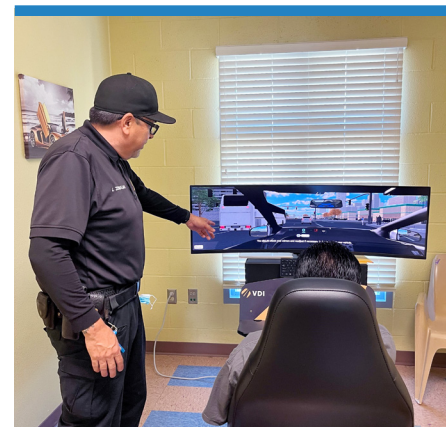
- **Established an Evidence-Based Practices Steering Committee**
- **Assessed agency progress in becoming an evidence-based practices organization**
- **Aligned behavioral matrices with research/evidence and uniformly applied them across the agency**
- **Expanded the use of youth advocates**
- **Hired a contractor for program management at the Juvenile Facilities**
- **Improved youth care assessments**
- **Expanded child and family team meetings for youth residing in the Juvenile Facilities**
- **Created an inventory of evidence-based/informed programs**

TASKS IN PROGRESS

- Create a plan to align supervision caseloads with research and standards
- Create procedures for needs assessment tools
- Explore the possibility of replacing the Juvenile Facilities' Detention Risk Assessment Instrument
- Train supervisors and senior deputy probation officers in core correctional practices
- Update/create evidence-based practices and policies and procedures to effectively support core correctional practices and case management standards
- Develop a coaching plan to help probation officers understand and use core correctional practices effectively
- Develop and implement an evidence-based practices training plan
- Provide staff with family engagement training
- Create a webpage where clients and their families can find updated handbooks and other helpful resources
- Create a service delivery checklist that supports the use of core correctional programming and the priority areas of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Master Plan, and use the checklist when developing a purchase requisition
- Develop an evidence-based practices messaging plan

UPCOMING TASKS

- Create a comprehensive, trauma-centered plan to address victims' needs
- Expand and improve the agency's current incentive policy



A VCPA officer assists a youth in our interactive driving simulator.



GoalTwo

DATA

A data-driven and strategic agency that is continuously improving

Data drives better outcomes for clients, staff, and the agency. Through this goal, we're strengthening our ability to collect accurate data, analyze it effectively, and share it in meaningful ways. We aim to become a truly data-driven agency that continuously improves operations and allocates resources wisely.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Collect accurate data to measure the impact of agency performance and progress toward achieving our vision**
- 2. Enhance agency capacity to analyze data, create dashboards, and report outcomes**
- 3. Use data to establish budget priorities and allocate resources effectively**
- 4. Implement a comprehensive continuous improvement process**

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Created a plan to mitigate the need for person merges in our new case management system**
- **Identified required data, its use, and collection processes**
- **Expanded the Research and Evaluation Division**

TASKS IN PROGRESS

- **Create a plan to train and coach staff on how to enter data in our case management system**
- **Develop a plan to perform systematic data cleanup before conversion to our new case management system**
- **Launch the new case management system by 2027**
- **Develop internal dashboards on key data and performance measures, as well as public-facing dashboards to share relevant information externally**

UPCOMING TASKS

- **Automate monthly workload statistics in our new case management system**
- **Use data for internal decision making, including establishing budget priorities and allocating resources efficiently**
- **Create a continuous improvement plan to advance and support the agency's goals and achieve its mission**



Goal Three

COMMUNICATION

Transparent communication within the agency, with stakeholders, and with the community at large

This goal focuses on building a culture of open, honest, and timely communication. We are expanding tools and structures to support two-way dialogue, as well as creating opportunities to hear from staff, stakeholders, and the community. These efforts strengthen relationships, increase transparency, and foster a more responsive agency.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Strengthen relationships with the community and stakeholders by enhancing two-way communication**
- 2. Expand the agency's communications infrastructure**
- 3. Address structural barriers to effective communication at the Juvenile Facilities**

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Created an agency calendar listing community, recruitment, and other agency events and involved staff in those events**
- **Redesigned the agency's internal and external websites**
- **Increased social media presence and agency presence at community events**
- **Increased branding efforts in a variety of ways**
- **Established expectations for the Executive Team to visit worksites under their scope of authority**
- **Hired a Public Information Officer**
- **Created a process for the effective use of the Juvenile Facilities' message boards**
- **Established procedures and a form to streamline shift briefings at the Juvenile Facilities**
- **Established Juvenile Facilities town hall meetings**
- **Implemented an annual survey to continuously evaluate communication barriers**
- **Moved senior deputy probation officer offices to the housing units to increase leadership presence**
- **Developed an annual report**

Goal Three continued

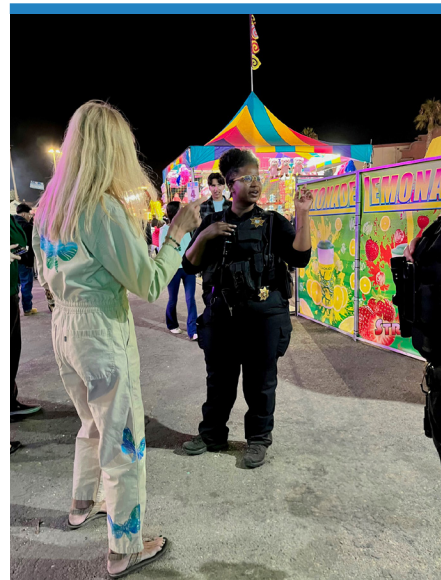
COMMUNICATION

TASKS IN PROGRESS

- Shift oversight of the Public Relations Committee to the Public Information Officer, and define roles and responsibilities
- Create a streamlined process for sending agencywide emails from the Chief Probation Officer that highlight key accomplishments and work being done across the agency

UPCOMING TASKS

- Establish expectations around the use of Outlook's calendar for management staff
- Research training on how to write effective emails
- Consider conducting focus groups at the Juvenile Facilities regarding opportunities to improve communication



A VCPA officer engages with community members at the Ventura County Fair.



Goal Four

WORKFORCE

An inspired and diverse workforce, united in purpose, and dedicated to excellence

Our ability to serve the community depends on the strength of our workforce. This goal prioritizes the employee experience through a range of initiatives, from recruitment and retention efforts to professional development opportunities. We are dedicated to creating an environment that values staff safety and well-being. By supporting both professional growth and personal wellness, we enable employees to thrive and contribute to meaningful, lasting change in the community.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Recruit, recognize, and retain talented and motivated staff**
- 2. Cultivate a supportive workplace that honors diversity and fosters respect, unity, engagement, safety and well-being**
- 3. Establish pathways for advancement, continuous learning, and professional development**
- 4. Build and sustain high-performing, collaborative teams**

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Acknowledged employee award nominees in an awards program**
- **Participated in the County internship program and continue to explore internship options for the agency**
- **Developed a comprehensive retention plan**
- **Created the new practice of sharing training and conference opportunities with staff**
- **Created a link on the intranet to HR resources and information regarding the promotional process**
- **Hired a project manager to oversee the strategic plan and other agency projects**
- **Include employee “shout outs” in a variety of email communications to staff**
- **Created a Safety and Wellness program**
- **Expanded the Peer Support program**
- **Hired a Safety Officer for the agency**

TASKS IN PROGRESS

- Assess and improve the pre-employment background investigation process
- Develop a comprehensive recruitment plan
- Improve the employee performance review process
- Increase high school outreach efforts to share information about careers in probation
- Refine the agency's training requirements to address any emerging training needs of staff
- Evaluate the agency's reassignment policy and recommend needed improvements
- Create a framework and consider expanding the Service Excellence program
- Adopt standardized project management practices for the agency

UPCOMING TASKS

- Explore strategies for improving the onboarding process for new hires
- Provide Implementation Leadership Academy training — delivered by the Alliance for Community and Justice Innovation (ACJI) — to management staff



VCPA's Chief administers the oath to welcome new team members and celebrate recent promotions.



Goal Five

LEADERSHIP

A culture where leaders inspire, engage, mentor, and celebrate the personal and professional development of staff

Strong leadership is essential to the success of any organization. This goal emphasizes leadership's role in fostering a healthy organizational culture, empowering staff, and guiding the agency with integrity and vision. It also highlights the importance of succession planning—ensuring we are continuously mentoring and preparing the next generation of leaders. We aim to cultivate leaders who are engaged, thoughtful, collaborative, and committed to uplifting those around them.

OBJECTIVES

1. Cultivate and maintain a thriving, healthy organizational culture
2. Ensure agency policies and personnel practices are clear and consistently carried out
3. Equip and empower staff at all levels within the agency to fully and independently exercise their responsibilities
4. Develop and implement a strategic succession plan to ensure continuity of strong leadership

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Administered an annual staff survey
- Added two positions to the Legal Affairs Division
- Reinforced the expectation that staff review new or modified policies within 10 days of posting
- Created a process for reviewing and updating policies on a regular basis
- Implemented training bulletins as a way to ensure that important agency policies and procedures are reviewed annually
- Updated agency meeting guidelines
- Created a desktop guide template and established procedures for its use

GoalFive continued

LEADERSHIP

TASKS IN PROGRESS

- Establish a Succession Planning Workgroup to prioritize efforts around succession planning
- Create a formal mentoring program
- Offer leadership development training opportunities to staff at all levels of the organization

UPCOMING TASKS

- Develop and implement Stay Interviews to increase staff engagement and retention
- Explore offering mock interview training



VCPA staff discuss department updates.



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If you have any questions or would like additional
information regarding our strategic plan, reach out:
vcpastrategicplanning@ventura.org.