

## TRADITIONAL VS. EFFECTIVE PROBATION

Probation should focus on the right youth and partner with families and communities to promote behavior change and long-term success.

	TRADITIONAL PROBATION	EFFECTIVE PROBATION
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No consensus around mission and goals</li> <li>• Approach varies widely from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and from officer to officer</li> <li>• Priority often placed on compliance and/or punishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear agreement that the mission is to promote long-term personal growth and foster positive behavior change</li> </ul>
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Default disposition for youth at all risk levels</li> <li>• 63% of all adjudicated youth get probation</li> <li>• Imposed on many youth not adjudicated delinquent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No youth assessed as low risk for rearrest on probation</li> <li>• No youth with low-level offenses</li> <li>• Diverting a far greater share of youth allows for officers to oversee much smaller caseloads (8–12)</li> </ul>
Role of Juvenile Probation Officer (PO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PO focused on surveillance and compliance, monitoring adherence to long lists of conditions/rules</li> <li>• Case plans often developed without input from youth and family</li> <li>• Required activities focus on accountability and treatment</li> <li>• Sanctions/incarceration for noncompliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PO as coach, focused on progress and growth</li> <li>• Relationship-based intervention</li> <li>• No court-ordered conditions</li> <li>• Individualized case plans developed in partnership with youth and family</li> <li>• Focus on achievable goals</li> <li>• Incentives to motivate behavior change</li> <li>• No placements to punish rule violations</li> </ul>
Families and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family members minimally engaged</li> <li>• Lack of family involvement viewed as family's fault</li> <li>• Families seen as part of the problem</li> <li>• Few partnerships with community organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families seen as partners</li> <li>• Family members treated as experts and involved in all key decisions</li> <li>• Extensive partnerships with community organizations, especially those rooted in neighborhoods where large populations of court-involved young people reside</li> </ul>
Racial/Ethnic Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racial/ethnic equity not a high-priority, everyday concern for many probation administrators</li> <li>• PO's rarely discuss data on disparities or explore underlying reasons and potential solutions</li> <li>• Assumption that "rising tide lifts all boats" (no special focus needed to address needs/barriers facing youth of color or to root out "implicit bias" in officers' responses to youth of color)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reversing racial/ethnic inequities viewed as core responsibility for probation and other system leaders</li> <li>• Issues of racial and ethnic equity freely and openly discussed</li> <li>• Extensive data analysis and geo-mapping to identify points of disparity</li> <li>• Ongoing efforts to pinpoint problematic practices and to brainstorm and experiment with new approaches</li> </ul>
Results Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal attention to youth development outcomes</li> <li>• Focus on contact hours, compliance with conditions</li> <li>• Inconsistent measurement of reoffending</li> <li>• Placements stemming from rule violations represent failure by youth not probation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and measurable goals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– limiting the probation population</li> <li>– shifting diversion to non-court partners</li> <li>– eliminating placements for technical violations and minimizing placements generally</li> <li>– taking aggressive action to redress disparities</li> <li>– providing youth development opportunities</li> <li>– forging community partnerships</li> <li>– earning high marks from youth, families, victims</li> <li>– addressing youths' delinquency-related risk factors</li> <li>– achieving realistic goals for reducing reoffending</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

To learn more about the Casey Foundation's vision for transforming juvenile probation, please visit [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

