

ANNOTATION:

DESIGN: State funding was mandated by the 1997 California legislature to evaluate six existing VORP programs. This report summarizes the findings across six programs in Los Angeles, Mendocino, Orange, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara and Sonoma Counties working with juvenile offenders. Each site had a comparison group of juveniles who did not go through VORP. In three of the counties, the comparison group was composed of youth who were referred to VORP but for some reason did not go through VORP. In Santa Barbara and Santa Clara counties, VORP youth were matched with a comparison group on key characteristics.

PARTICIPATION RATES: Referral rates of eligible cases were quite low across the six programs, ranging from 1.2% to 5.9% of the cases referred to probation to the study period. Most cases were entry level. Percentage of referred juveniles declining to participate ranged from 8% in Los Angeles County to 39% in Santa Barbara County. Percentage of referred victims declining to participated ranged from 10% in Santa Clara County to 32% in Mendocino County.

RESTITUTION: The average obligated restitution collected from the VORP Group was much higher than from the comparison group in five counties, ranging from +95% in Sonoma to over +1000% in Los Angeles County. These data are not available for Santa Barbara as fines and restitution are preset by the probation department or the court.

RECIDIVISM: In five of the six sites, recidivism rates were lower for the VORP group than for the comparison group, ranging from 21% to 105% less. In one site the VORP group had a higher rate of recidivism, 46%. Authors indicate that, "owing to the small sample, that result was not considered to be statistically significant." Follow-up periods varied across the sites from six months to eighteen months.

SATISFACTION: Satisfaction questions of victims and offenders varied some across sites. The authors concluded that "satisfaction with the VORPs turned out to be one of the strongest measures of success. One measures of general satisfaction, victims and offenders uniformly rated the programs above 90 percent. Parents or guardians, mediators, probation officers, judges and other justice system personnel also gave the program high marks."

KEYWORDS:

VOM
JUVENILE
PROPERTY
PARTICIPATION RATES; SATISFACTION; RESTITUTION; RECIDIVISM
VICTIM DATA; OFFENDER DATA
SURVEY; RECORD DATA; COMPARISON GROUP
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