

VENTURA COUNTY PROBATION AGENCY

Adult Handbook



MISSION STATEMENT

To promote effective interventions, individual accountability, and community well-being.

VISION STATEMENT

Transforming and empowering lives to build a strong community.

Case Information:

Person #: _____

Case #: _____

Assigned DPO: _____

Phone #: _____



Purpose of Handbook

This handbook has been prepared to help you be successful on supervision and answer commonly asked questions. It does not cover or include every aspect of supervision. You are encouraged to discuss any and all questions or concerns with your assigned probation officer.

What is Supervision?

There are several types of supervision.

- Formal Probation** - The Court will require you to follow a set of terms and conditions that outlines your responsibilities and the Court's expectations while you are on probation supervision. The assigned probation officer will monitor compliance with the terms and conditions of probation, work with you to develop behavioral change strategies, and report your progress and actions to the Court.
- Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS)** – PRCS is a form of supervision provided to an inmate who has been released from a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) institution to the county agency.
- Mandatory Supervision** – Mandatory Supervision is a court ordered period of time in the community under the supervision of the county probation agency following release from a felony county jail sentence.

Throughout your time on supervision, your probation officer will provide goals that will aid you in being successful on supervision and afterwards.

Supervision provides you with an opportunity to make positive changes in your life. Most supervision includes participation in counseling and programs of assistance. Supervision typically includes financial responsibilities such as court fines/fees and victim restitution. Throughout your time on supervision, you and your probation officer will work together in achieving goals.

Many people on supervision have personal challenges, such as substance use, lack of job skills, or relationship, education, and family issues. Your probation officer will work with you to overcome these challenges and make positive changes which will help you complete supervision, avoid future arrests, and find greater satisfaction and success in life.

Contact with Your Probation Officer

The frequency and nature of contacts with your probation officer (such as office and home contacts, telephone calls, or treatment provider contacts) will depend on a variety of factors and will be determined by your probation officer along with the Risk and Needs Assessment tool according to Probation Agency guidelines.

After you sign in to see your probation officer, there are times you may need to wait, as your probation officer is assisting others. You may want to bring a pen or pencil and paper to write questions, thoughts, and ideas while you wait. Collections payments may be made with any probation personnel.

We encourage you to work together with your probation officer to reach your goals. Actively engaging with your probation officer and maintaining open communication is important for successful completion of probation.

What to Expect When You Have Contact with Your Probation Officer

Your Probation Officer:

- ❖ Is interested in how you are doing at home, work, and treatment
- ❖ Will be meeting you at your home on a regular basis
- ❖ May search your person and/or property
- ❖ May also meet you at treatment
- ❖ Will monitor your payments of Court ordered victim restitution, fines and fees
- ❖ May have you submit to an oral swab, urine and/or breath test to verify you have abstained from using drugs or alcohol
- ❖ Wants you to be successful

You will be expected to:

- ❖ Be on time
- ❖ Be respectful to clerical staff, DPOs, and all other probation staff
- ❖ Arrive at your appointment ready to test
- ❖ Provide any necessary documentation

You can expect your Probation Officer to:

- ❖ Treat you with respect and dignity
- ❖ Be fair and impartial
- ❖ Be available to you by phone or in person within reason
- ❖ Discuss your activities and progress
- ❖ Communicate with the Court about your progress on supervision and your compliance with the conditions of supervision and case plans

If you feel your rights have been violated, you may file a public complaint with the Agency utilizing the public complaint forms located in any probation lobby or on the Agency website.

Assessment & Your Goals

At the beginning of your supervision, an assessment is completed to help identify your strengths and areas in which you may need assistance. You and your probation officer review the results and develop your goals together. Through this discussion, a case plan will be created to assist with meeting your goals.

During ongoing visits, you and your probation officer will talk about challenges you may be facing and your progress toward the successful completion of your case plan and supervision. Every contact with your probation officer is an opportunity to update the plan of action you have set to meet your goals.

What is a Case Plan?

You and your probation officer will work together to make a case plan to assist you in successfully completing supervision. The case plan is an outline of your goals along with the strategies to achieve them. When you meet with your probation officer, you will want to provide the documentation that supports your achievements, such as certificates of program completion, completion of post-secondary education, or pay stubs. A successful case plan is only achieved when you are able to identify areas of difficulty and you are willing to put effort towards making changes.

The Probation Agency has partnered with numerous other resources to help you be successful. A list of available resources can be located on the Agency's website using the QR code located on the face sheet of this handbook.

What if I Have a Support Network Who Wants to Help Me?

An important part of your success will be from your support network (family, friends, other supportive persons). You and your probation officer will discuss ways in which you and your support network can work together to help you succeed. However, information is confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone unless you sign a Release of Confidential Information.

What Do I Tell My Support Network About Probation?

It is generally best to be open and honest with your support network about why you are on supervision. When you explain what supervision entails, including the expectations set by the Court and the conditions you need to meet, your support network can better understand the process and how to provide support. Additionally, it's also important to discuss home visit expectations with everyone residing in the home and highlight the various services available, such as Telecare, Ventura County Behavioral Health, etc., as well as your case plan goals, which can benefit not just you but the entire household. These services offer resources and support that encourage your support network participation and collaboration from everyone in the home. By working together, you can create a supportive environment that enhances your chances of success.

Information related to supervision is considered confidential to protect your privacy. Only you will have access to records, test results and progress on supervision unless you sign a Release of Confidential Information naming a specific individual or agency. However, crime victims are entitled to information regarding your case and supervision.

What Should I Expect When Probation Visits My Home?

The safety of the probation officer, as well as members of the household, is a priority; as such, probation officers do not work alone. At least two or more officers will be present when you are contacted outside of the office. Probation officers will be clearly identifiable as they will always have a badge visible identifying them as a probation officer. Local law enforcement officers, such as the police department or Sheriff's Department, will often join probation officers to perform home contacts. There may be times when the other occupants of the home will be asked to join you in a common room while officers search the area. Doing so is not meant to inconvenience you or your household, it is meant to maintain everybody's safety and to expedite the search. Home visits and searches may also be conducted without your presence in the home.

Officers may look in all rooms of the home to ensure safety while they are performing their duties. Once all rooms are clear, the officers may search your belongings, sleeping area and common areas (i.e. kitchen, vehicles, garage, etc.) according to your terms and conditions to verify your compliance. You should expect the probation officers that visit your home to be respectful to you, members of your household, and your belongings. Likewise, they appreciate you and your household's cooperation.

Tips for Success

- ❖ Be open to guidance from your Probation Officer
- ❖ Review and understand all of your conditions of supervision
- ❖ Think before you act. Slow yourself down and think a few steps ahead
- ❖ Surround yourself with law abiding people who really want to see you do well, such as friends, family, co-workers, and formal support groups
- ❖ The responsibility for making changes in your life is yours
- ❖ See your probation officer as a resource; share successes and challenges

What Documents Should I Have Available?

There are some important documents your probation officer may ask you to make available. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ❖ Employment verification (i.e. Paycheck stubs)
- ❖ Residence verification
- ❖ Financial records (i.e. Collections)
- ❖ Vehicle information (Make, model and license plate number)
- ❖ Documents showing proof of attending or completing programs of assistance, vocational classes, or education programs
- ❖ Medication information (i.e. prescriptions or the actual bottle of medication)
- ❖ Proof of community service hours
- ❖ Any additional information you would like to share or needed to provide proper supervision.

Security at Office Locations

For your safety as well as all visitors and employees, security personnel, security cameras, and metal detector screenings are present in area offices. Do not bring the following items to the office:

- ❖ Purses
- ❖ Backpacks
- ❖ Wallets with chains
- ❖ Diaper bags
- ❖ Brief cases
- ❖ Boxes and packages
- ❖ Pets (unless it is a certified service animal)

Any and all items brought to the probation office are subject to full search. Weapons and items that could be used as a weapon are prohibited and may be confiscated. Drugs and alcohol are prohibited as well. Children should not accompany you to any office appointments and may not be left unattended in the lobby.

In keeping with the values of the Probation Agency and in the interest of treating all people with dignity and respect, Probation asks that you refrain from inappropriate or abusive language and behavior that could result in dismissal from the office.

Can I Earn a Lower Level of Supervision or an Early Termination of Formal Probation Supervision?

Lowering supervision levels and determining suitability for early termination is a possibility when you make considerable positive progress toward case plan goals and comply with your conditions of supervision, including restitution payments. Your probation officer, in accordance with Probation Agency policies and procedures, will determine the appropriate level of supervision and if/when it is appropriate to lower the level of supervision.

However, it is important to remember that although probation can recommend to the Court that probation supervision terminate early, the final decision for early termination of probation is up to the Judge.

If Serving a Jail Sentence While on Supervision

You may have opportunities to participate in counseling and/or educational programs while in custody. Consult with the correctional staff and/or Inmate Services regarding these programs and your eligibility to participate.

If you are not provided with reporting instructions in custody, you are to report to your probation officer no later than 48 hours upon release from custody. Further, if you are arrested for any new law violations or returned to custody for any reason while on supervision, you are required to report to probation within 48 hours of release.

Incentives

You may be eligible to receive incentives based on your progress and compliance. There are three levels of incentives – low, medium and high based on your accomplishments. Ask your Probation Officer about incentives.

