

VENTURA COUNTY PROBATION AGENCY

Youth 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 probation and answer commonly asked questions. It does not cover or include every aspect of probation. You are encouraged to discuss any and all questions or concerns with your assigned probation officer.

What is Probation?

There are several types of probation. The Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) are the laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to youth. The prominent difference between the following types of probation is non-wardship vs wardship. Non-wardship probation does not allow the Probation Agency to remove youth from their home. Wardship Probation means that the Court has jurisdiction over the youth as if the Court was the youth's parent. In addition, wardship probation allows the Probation Agency to remove a youth from their home if necessary.

- **654.1 WIC & 654.2 WIC – Informal Probation:** The District Attorney's Office has filed a formal petition with the Juvenile Court; however, the Court has decided that instead of proceeding with disposition, the case is placed on hold to allow the youth to participate in a six-month program with the Probation Agency. If the youth successfully completes the program (which could consist of attending classes, completing community service hours, paying restitution, and any other orders made by the Court or the Probation Officer), the Court dismisses the alleged charges and the case is closed and sealed. If the youth fails to successfully complete the program, the Court proceeds with disposition of the case.
- **725 WIC – Probation Without Wardship:** The Court found that the youth did violate the law and was placed on probation for a period of six months only. The Court imposes a series of terms and conditions that must be followed to successfully terminate the probation grant. If the youth successfully completes probation, the case is then closed and sealed.
- **790 WIC – Deferred Entry of Judgment (DEJ):** The Court determines that the youth did in fact commit a felony and places them on probation. This type of probation lasts 36 months. A review is held at 18 months, at which point the Probation Officer prepares a report that documents the youth's progress on DEJ, which could result in early termination if all requirements are met and there are no additional concerns. However, the youth must meet certain criteria before they can be placed on this type of probation.
 - The youth has not previously been declared a ward of the court and the pending matter is the first felony adjudication.
 - The offense charged is not a serious and violent offense (707(b) WIC offense).

- The youth has not been committed to the Secure Youth Treatment Facility.
 - The youth is at least 14 years of age at the time of the hearing.
 - The youth’s record does not indicate that probation has ever been revoked without being completed.
 - The youth is eligible for probation pursuant to Section 1203.06 of the Penal Code.
- 602 WIC – **Wardship “Formal” Probation:** The Court determines that the youth violated the law, places them on formal probation under the supervision of the Probation Agency and declares the youth a ward of the Court. The Court may maintain jurisdiction of the youth up to age 21; however, if the youth sustained a 707(b) WIC offense, they could be on probation until the ages 23 and 25 depending on the offense. If the youth has been committed to the Secure Youth Treatment Facility, then jurisdiction may remain until the youth is age 25. Youth on formal probation may be taken into custody by law enforcement or the probation officer for violations of Court orders and terms and conditions of probation.

Any form of supervision may require the following:

- 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 court compliance, work together to develop behavioral change strategies, and report your progress and actions to the Court.
- Most probation grants include participation in counseling and programs of assistance.
- Probation grants typically include financial responsibilities such as victim restitution.

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

Probation provides you with an opportunity to make positive changes in your life. Throughout your time on probation, you and your probation officer will work together in achieving goals.

Many people on probation 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 probation, 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, family contacts, school visits, 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, school, and treatment
- ❖ Will be meeting you at your home on a regular basis
- ❖ May search your person and/or property
- ❖ May also meet with you at your school
- ❖ 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

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 probation and your compliance with the conditions of probation 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 supervised probation grant, 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 probation. 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 probation. 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, school records 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 into making positive 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 or your parent/guardian sign a Release of Confidential Information.

What Do I Tell My Support Network About My Probation Grant?

It is generally best to be open and honest with your support network about why you are on probation. When you explain what probation 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 Wraparound and Network of Care, 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 juvenile probation cases is considered confidential to protect the privacy of the youth involved. Only the youth's parents or legal guardian(s) will have access to records, test results and progress on probation unless they 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.

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 make certain you are in 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 probation**
- ❖ **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:

- ❖ Address verification (i.e. utility bill, rental agreement)
 - ❖ Birth certificate or proof of parental guardianship
 - ❖ School attendance, grades and transcripts
 - ❖ Documents showing proof of attending or completing treatment programs, vocational classes, or educational programs
 - ❖ Proof of community service hours
 - ❖ Medication information (i.e. prescriptions or the actual bottle of medication)
 - ❖ Employment verification (i.e. Paycheck stub)
 - ❖ Vehicle information (Make, model and license plate number)
 - ❖ 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
- ❖ Briefcases
- ❖ 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 my Probation Grant?

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 probation, 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.

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.

