



**TO:** Sentencing Commission Members & Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Sara Andrews, Director

**DATE:** September 19, 2019

**RE:** Juvenile Probation Study by Case Western Reserve University

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For several years, much of the work of the Sentencing Commission's Juvenile Justice Committee has focused on developing a better understanding of probation practices and outcomes in Ohio. As you have heard so often about the adult system – we need to tell the story of what happens when youth leave court after being placed on probation. Plenty of information exists about youth sentenced to a Department of Youth Services (DYS) facility, but our lack of statewide data on juvenile probation makes it difficult to assess what is working and to make recommendations to improve the system.

To that end, researchers at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) presented to the Committee and discussed cost and feasibility to study juvenile probation practices in Ohio. Notably, researchers at CWRU have conducted evaluations of the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice Initiative (BHJJ) for over a decade, and have established relationships with many of the juvenile courts throughout the state. CWRU proposed a study of courts in four counties – Montgomery, Lucas, Ashtabula, and Marion –reporting the youth placed on probation, the programming offered them, and rate of recidivism. The study hopes to provide insight regarding the risk level and needs of youth on probation the probation process n those jurisdictions, and to evaluate the availability and dearth of criminal justice data in those (juvenile) courts. While the researchers initially identified the four counties as a cross section of urban and rural counties, members of the Committee suggested including additional courts within counties not currently participating in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) could provide a more complete picture of the juvenile justice system in Ohio. Thus, CWRU suggested including juvenile courts in either Hamilton or Lorain County, Clark County, and Richland County in the study.

We are pleased to inform you that this summer DYS agreed to fully fund the study and CWRU researchers are already contacting participating courts. They expect to collect data from those courts in September 2019, with an eye toward a completed study in late summer 2020. We've agreed to assist them in identifying a graduate student in central Ohio to help with data collection. We'll remain in contact with the CWRU researchers and provide updates to the Committee and Commission on the study as it progresses. Attached is a copy of the study as well as the responses from CWRU to the questions posed by the Committee after its initial review of the proposal.