

2021-113 AUDIT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Local Government Batterer Intervention Programs

The audit by the California State Auditor will provide independently developed and verified information related to batterer intervention programs (BIPs) in Los Angeles, Contra Costa, Alameda, Del Norte, and San Joaquin counties. The audit's scope will include, but not be limited to, the following activities:

1. Review and evaluate the laws, rules, and regulations significant to the audit objectives.
2. Evaluate the counties' probation departments' roles in approving and monitoring BIPs by doing the following:
 - (a) Assess what criteria and data probation departments use when deciding whether to approve or re-certify a BIP. Identify the reasons that BIPs have been denied by these departments.
 - (b) Evaluate the extent to which the probation departments review the performance of BIPs, and determine how BIP standards established by probation departments compare across jurisdictions and to state-level standards.
 - (c) Determine what data probation departments collect from BIPs and how they use the data.
3. Assess the probation departments' oversight and monitoring of program fees, including fee waivers and sliding scales, to ensure compliance with state law. Analyze whether program fees pose barriers to program completion. As part of that review, consider fee transparency, costs per class and for registration, and the availability of fee waivers and payment plans.
4. For a selection of BIPs operating in Los Angeles, Contra Costa, Alameda, Del Norte, and San Joaquin counties, assess program outcomes by doing the following:
 - (a) Determine the percentage of people who fail to complete BIP courses. To the extent possible, identify the reasons that participants fail to complete courses.
 - (b) To the extent possible, evaluate the effectiveness of BIPs at reducing future incidents of violence among participants who complete the full program, as well as those who fail to complete the full course.
 - (c) Analyze the demographics and income levels of BIP participants and identify any correlation with course completion and recidivism rates.
5. Evaluate whether the State's requirements for BIPs sufficiently address the causes of intimate partner violence and its public health impacts by doing the following:
 - (a) Determine the extent to which the BIPs reviewed under Objective 4 are informed by public health data and address the impacts of trauma, mental illness, substance use disorder/addiction, social determinants of health like poverty and structural racism, and concepts like patriarchy, misogyny, and gender-based violence.
 - (b) Assess how BIP requirements, such as concurrent counseling for substance abuse—including detoxification and abstinence—and the exclusion of family counseling, impact programs.

- (c) To the extent possible, assess whether BIPs are meeting the needs of people who voluntarily seek help—those who are at risk of causing harm but are not engaged with the criminal legal system.
- 6. Assess whether the probation departments' administration of BIPs meet the needs of participants with different backgrounds, including gender, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity.
- 7. To the extent possible, determine whether the effectiveness of BIPs would be improved if they were overseen by a public health- or human services-oriented agency rather than probation. As part of this analysis, evaluate, to the extent possible, whether such a shift may improve prevention of violent incidents, increase the number of people who voluntarily seek treatment, and increase program completion rates.
- 8. Review and assess any other issues that are significant to the audit.