



**National Association of Probation Executives**  
**Supporting Executives in Community Supervision Agencies**

Collecting data is something probation executives do daily. With so much data, sharing the findings in an impactful way can be difficult. By improving the manner in which data is shared, probation executives will be in a better position to demonstrate quality assurance.



## What's Your Story?

Data storytelling—presenting data in a way that includes narrative and visuals—engages multiple areas of the brain, increasing the likelihood that someone will remember the information shared. In addition, by learning data through storytelling, the information is more likely to resonate and stay with the person. Originally pioneered by statistician Edward Tufte, data visualization builds insight and understanding.

Data storytelling/visualization can be used whether preparing for a budget presentation, changing internal processes, sharing information with the media and public, or working on an elevator pitch. To get started, it is important to ask a few questions:

- What is the end goal?
- Who is the audience?
- Why does this matter to the audience?
- How does the data reinforce the point being made?
- What is the current situation?
- If there is a problem, what is it?
- How can the problem be solved?
- How does the community benefit from the solution/change?
- What visuals can be used to complement the data/highlight the issue?

With these questions answered, infographics and dashboards can be designed to provide a visually appealing, relatable story that simultaneously advises the public of critical data points and positive outcomes.

For example, the Chief Probation Officers of California created an [infographic](#) to bring attention to the probation workforce, emphasizing the professionalism and diversity of officers. The association used the infographic in budget and policy discussions.

Data dashboards are another way to tell a story. The [Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Data Dashboard](#) displays key juvenile justice trends, with the ability to explore detailed information about these trends. The [County of Santa Barbara Probation's data dashboard](#) displays a 12-month snapshot of supervised adults, their geographic location, and supervision levels among other data elements. The [Harris County Juvenile Probation Department's dashboard](#) displays referral information and includes videos that provide more insight into the department's work and impact.

Making data accessible and presenting it in dynamic and interesting formats improve interest in and understanding of the complex work of community corrections.



## Albert Bañuelos

Superintendent, Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall  
Los Angeles County Probation Department

"The use of data is a pivotal tool in our mission to create better outcomes for youth under our care. I encourage every leader in our field to actively seek out and engage in data

collection tools or develop internal technological tools to aid in the collection of data. By doing so, we ensure that the insight we gain from such tools are put to optimal use."

-- Albert Bañuelos

The Los Angeles County Probation Department is at the forefront of an exciting transformation in the ever-evolving landscape of probation services. We are embracing technology and data-driven methodologies to achieve our mission of rehabilitation and positive youth development more effectively. One of our most significant recent advancements is the implementation of the Developmental Stage System Application (DSS APP), a tool developed in-house that has revolutionized our ability to collect, analyze, and leverage data to produce positive outcomes for our youth.

### **The Power of Data in Probation Services**

Tracking the data collected through the DSS APP, specifically around cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) dosage, has been a game-changer in L.A. County Probation. By recording this vital information, we can now draw meaningful correlations between the dosage of interventions and youth incidents. This data-driven approach is essential for our mission, allowing us to make program adjustments.

### **Embracing Technology for Enhanced Accountability**

The introduction of the DSS APP not only streamlines data collection but also promotes a higher level of accountability among our probation officers. With this tool, we can track dosage more accurately, ensuring that our youth receive the necessary support. Our goal is to provide our youth with CBI responsive to the skill deficits identified through our risk assessments.

This level of accountability empowers us to identify areas where we are succeeding and areas where additional attention or modifications are needed. It also fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement. By consistently evaluating the data, we can make informed decisions that enhance the overall efficacy of our LA Model skill-building approach.

### **Resource Allocation and Program Evaluation**

Beyond improving the quality of our services, the DSS APP plays a pivotal role in resource allocation and program evaluation. With the strategic goal of obtaining a wealth of data, we can allocate resources more efficiently, ensuring they are directed toward areas where they can have the most significant impact. These resources would include training focused on the facilitation of our tools, Motivational Interviewing techniques, additional CBI materials, or analyzing the current curriculum in efforts to ensure we are administering the most effective approach for our population.

Moreover, program evaluation becomes more straightforward and accurate with data availability. It allows us to measure the long-term effectiveness of our interventions, identify trends, and adapt our programs accordingly. This approach is key to staying relevant and effective in our ever-changing field.



## Quality Assurance Q&A

Intentional and ongoing research review, as well as implementing quality assurance practices and procedures, are integral to enhancing the professionalism and effectiveness in the field of community corrections. Below are a few questions and answers specific to quality assurance:

**Q:** Why does quality assurance matter?

**A:** Quality assurance matters because failing to meet and exceed performance standards can negatively impact the public's confidence in community corrections, as well as the ability for people on supervision to experience positive outcomes.

**Q:** How often should data and practices be reviewed?

**A:** Review of agency data and practices should occur regularly. Whether reviewing actual numbers or observing interactions between staff and people on supervision, frequent reviews inform next steps and critical agency practices and procedures.

**Q:** Is it necessary to hire an outside entity to conduct a review?

**A:** A lot of reviews can be conducted internally and review tools may be built into software solutions. Having a credible outside entity assist with or lead this process can be beneficial because it frees staff of the duties and they can provide a neutral perspective.

**Q:** How do I find a trusted contractor?

**A:** One of the greatest values of NAPE is the ability to network with and learn from other executives. Connecting with other executives and discovering how they're

conducting research and implementing quality assurance practices and procedures is one of the best ways to identify a trusted contractor.

We invite members to share information about NAPE with other community supervision executives to help expand our network and strengthen our opportunities, data, and expertise. Affordable annual NAPE membership options are available and can be purchased/renewed at [napehome.org](http://napehome.org)

- Individual (recurring discount available)
- Retired
- Organizational
- Corporate

NAPE is dedicated to enhancing the professionalism and effectiveness in the field of community corrections by creating a national network for executives, bringing about positive change in the field, and making available a pool of experts in community corrections management, program development, training, and research.

Learn more: [napehome.org](http://napehome.org)

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