

# Information Session on the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP)

For counties interested in piloting the SPEP process

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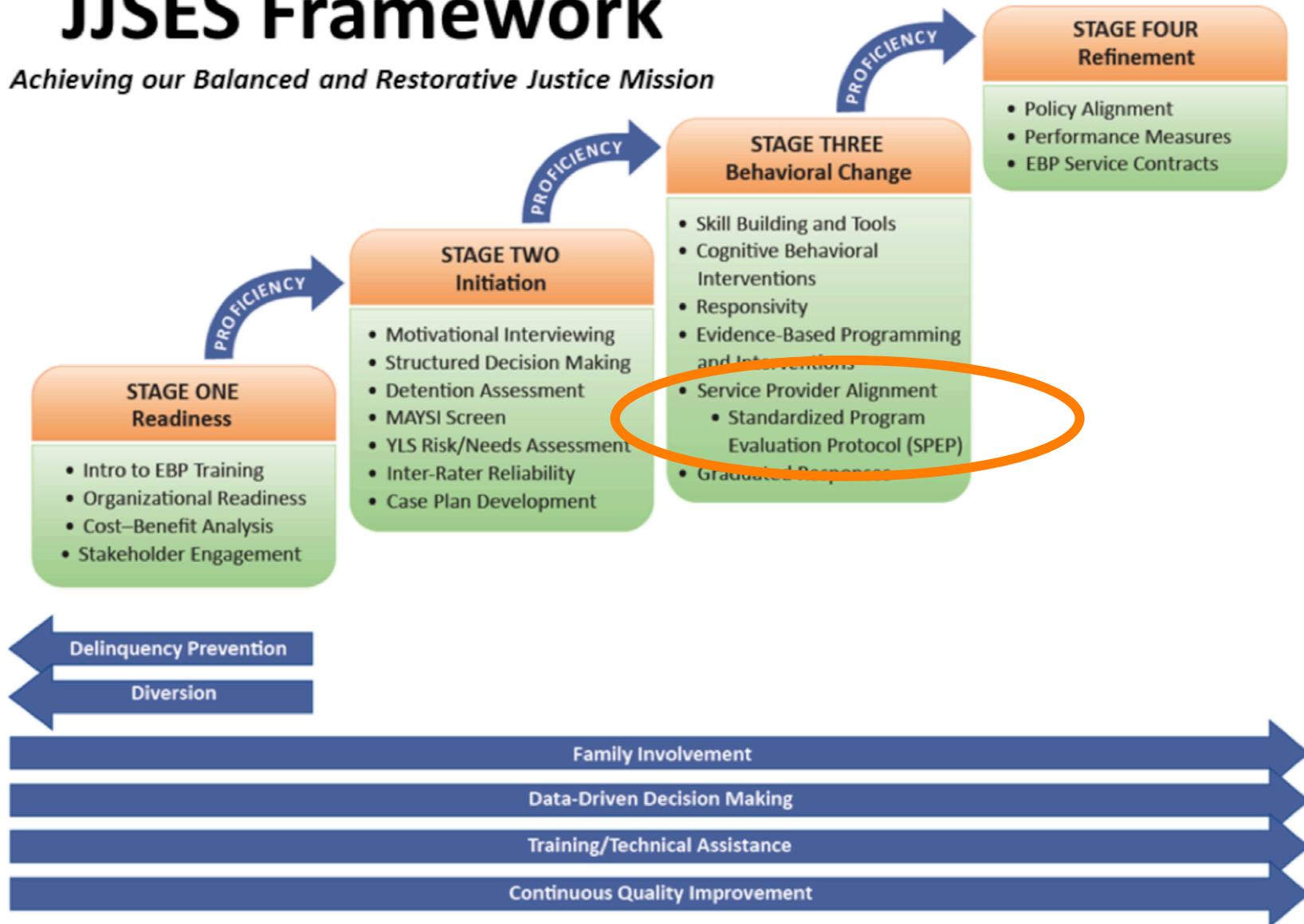
Stephanie Bradley, Managing Director, EPISCenter

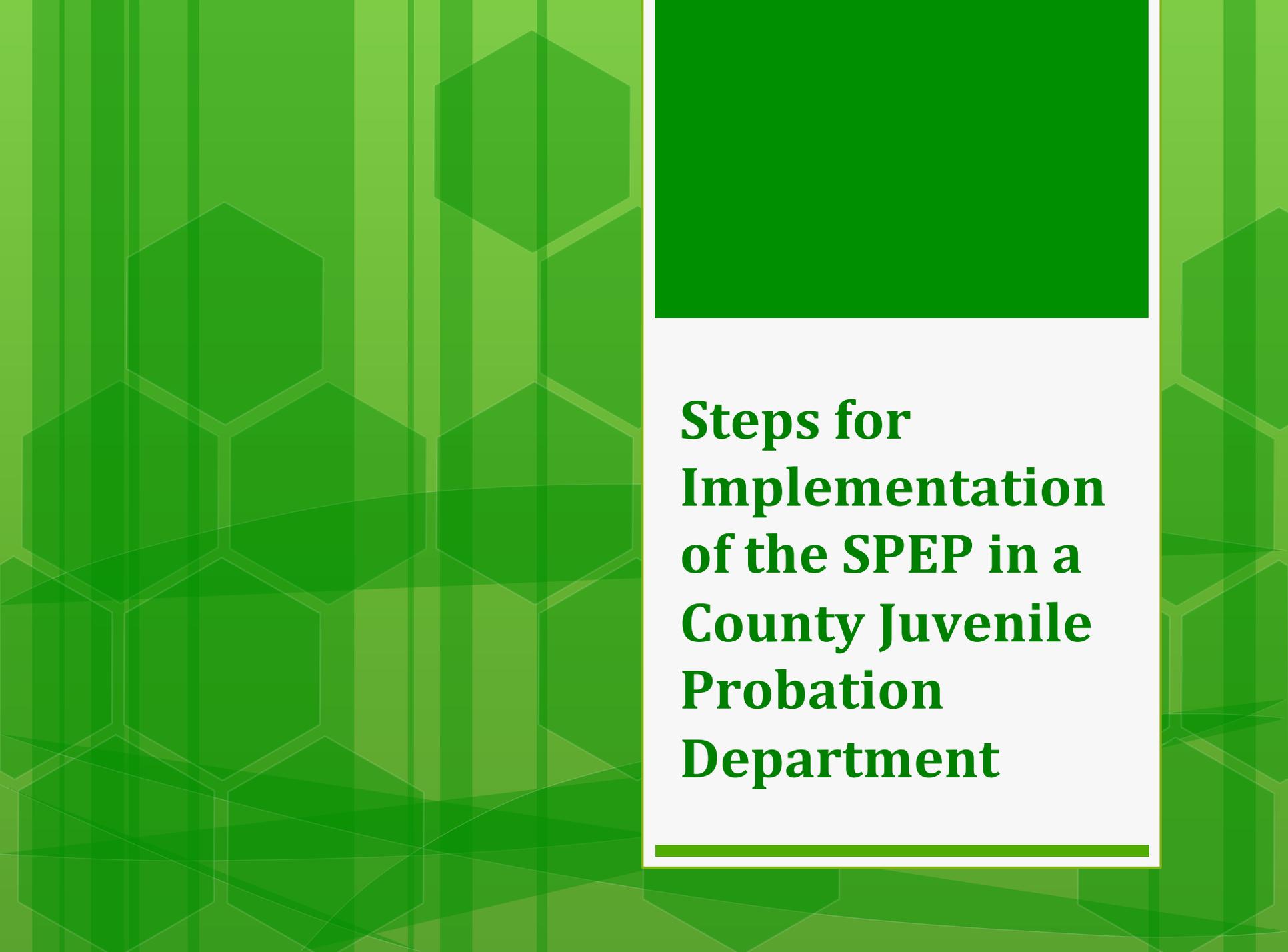


The EPISCenter represents a collaborative partnership between the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), and the Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center, College of Health and Human Development, Penn State University. The EPISCenter is funded by PCCD and the PA Department of Human Services. This resource was developed by the EPISCenter through PCCD grant VP-ST-24368.

# JJSES Framework

*Achieving our Balanced and Restorative Justice Mission*





**Steps for  
Implementation  
of the SPEP in a  
County Juvenile  
Probation  
Department**

# Phases for Implementing SPEP

- Readiness and Stakeholder Engagement

- The SPEP Process (ongoing) 

- System Improvement 

# Readiness and Stakeholder Engagement

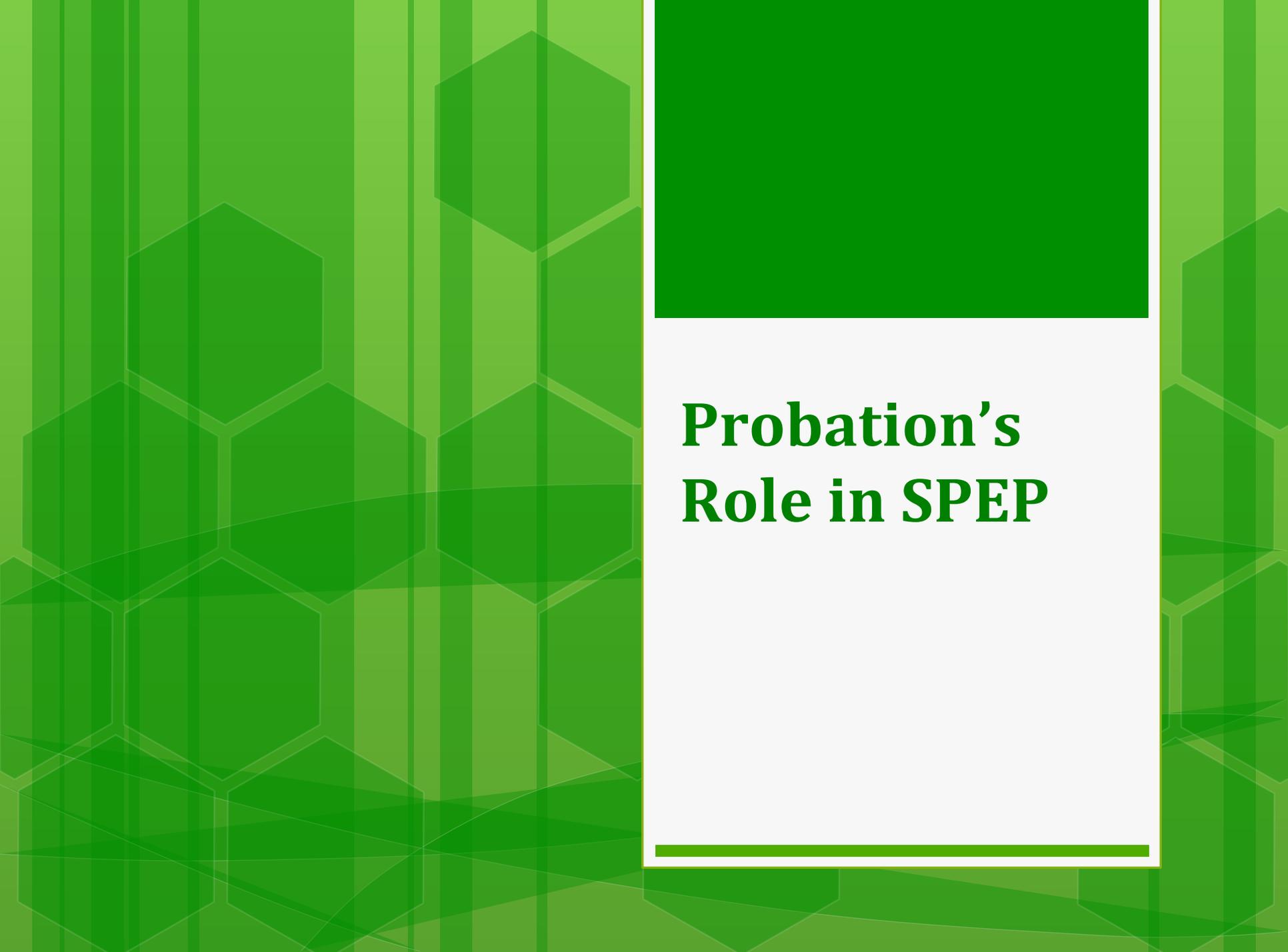
- Train juvenile court personnel on evidence based practices [1]
- Train county juvenile probation officer to become SPEP Specialist [2]
- Develop a Continuum of Services (list of contracted services and programs) [2]
- Communication and outreach:
  - Key Leader Orientation and planning [3, 4]
  - Kickoff meeting: Community Stakeholder Orientation and information session(s) [5]
- Collect county specific data [6]

# The SPEP Process (ongoing)

- Prioritize services/programs for going through the SPEP process [7]
- Prepare provider for the SPEP process [8, 9]
- Conduct service categorization & quality of service interviews [10]
- Compile interview findings, complete program profile [11]
- Collect and analyze duration, dosage, and risk data [12]
- Develop and deliver feedback report, discuss implications for performance improvement [13, 14, 15]

# System Improvement

- Service provider and juvenile probation collectively determine improvement priorities [16]
- Develop performance improvement plan [16]
- Identify needed resources, obtain approvals, implement plan [17]
- Quarterly contact for updates and technical assistance [17]
- SPEP Re-assessment [18]

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# **Probation's Role in SPEP**

# Probation's Role in SPEP

## Planning

- Head-up communication(s) plan for SPEP in the county
- Engage core stakeholders for SPEP (courts, key JPO staff)
- Understanding the research, strengths & weaknesses
- Identifies and prioritizes service providers for SPEP
- Connects the SPEP consultant with the provider – relationship liaison

# Probation's Role in SPEP

- Helps prepare the provider for the SPEP process

Participates in the SPEP interviews, facilitates the conversation, provides probation perspective on program role in service matrix

- Administers the YLS and provides assessment to provider
- Shares YLS scores with SPEP consultant for calculating risk component of SPEP
- Contributes to or fully writes the feedback report

# Probation's Role in SPEP

## Policy

- Determine policies and procedures related to SPEP, including:
  - Office procedures for providing information and updates on SPEP
    - Sharing insights into what providers are really offering
      - Internal with staff, external with courts
    - Changes related to how youth are referred to services
    - Updates to service matrix
  - Incorporating SPEP into job descriptions, program descriptions, and provider contracts

# Probation's Role in SPEP

- Determine policies and procedures related to SPEP, including:
  - Whether provider participation in SPEP is mandatory
    - If so, what will be the policy in rare cases of refusal?
  - Who will have access to SPEP scores?
  - How will scores be used?
  - How will probation office support provider in performance improvement?
    - Including rate increases, contract renegotiations

# Probation's Role in SPEP

## Practice

- Acts as an equal and collaborative partner in performance improvement
- Understands performance improvement is shared ownership
- Consistent messaging about the initiative
- Becomes a member of SPEP Learning Community



**EPISCenter's  
Role in SPEP**

## **Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center (EPISCenter)**

- Statewide technical assistance provider, funded by the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and PA Dept. of Human Services Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF)
- Supporting evidence-based programs and practices since 2008 to ensure:
  - Broad-scale dissemination
  - High-quality implementation
  - Valid impact assessment
  - Long-term sustainability

# SPEP Technical Assistance

- Three full-time staff at EPISCenter, certified SPEP trainers
- Every SPEP county has a designated SPEP contact at EPISCenter
- We provide tailored support according to each county's unique strengths and capacity
- Training coordination
- SPEP coordination throughout the entire improvement lifecycle (e.g., first SPEP to re-SPEP)
- Resource development (website, logic model, manuals, fact sheets, data templates, etc.)
- Learning Community planning and coordination
- Data collection, aggregation, summarization for SPEP project

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# **Lessons Learned and Preliminary Findings**

# Lessons Learned

- Clear, consistent communication is key
  - Partnership
  - SPEP in BARJ/JJSES context
  - Value of locally-developed programs
  - Role of SPEP in supporting those programs
  - When services can't be SPEP'd (application of SPEP still valuable, services still valuable)
  - Policies (internal and external)
    - Between SPEP'r and Chief
    - With probation staff and judges

# Lessons Learned

- The right person for the job
  - SPEPr should be:
    - Experienced and confident JPO
    - Broad understanding of JJSES
    - Have good relationships and understanding of provider network
    - Able to clearly explain the research and respond to challenges against the research
    - Comfortable dealing with ambiguity and pilot nature of project
    - YLS Master Trainer brings added value

# Lessons Learned

- Can be a significant time investment
  - JPO – commitment of their time to SPEP'ing
  - Providers – data collection
  - Residential services – long process (~4mos)
  - Resources and materials still need to be developed – SPEPr commitment to committee work to represent needs and views of the county

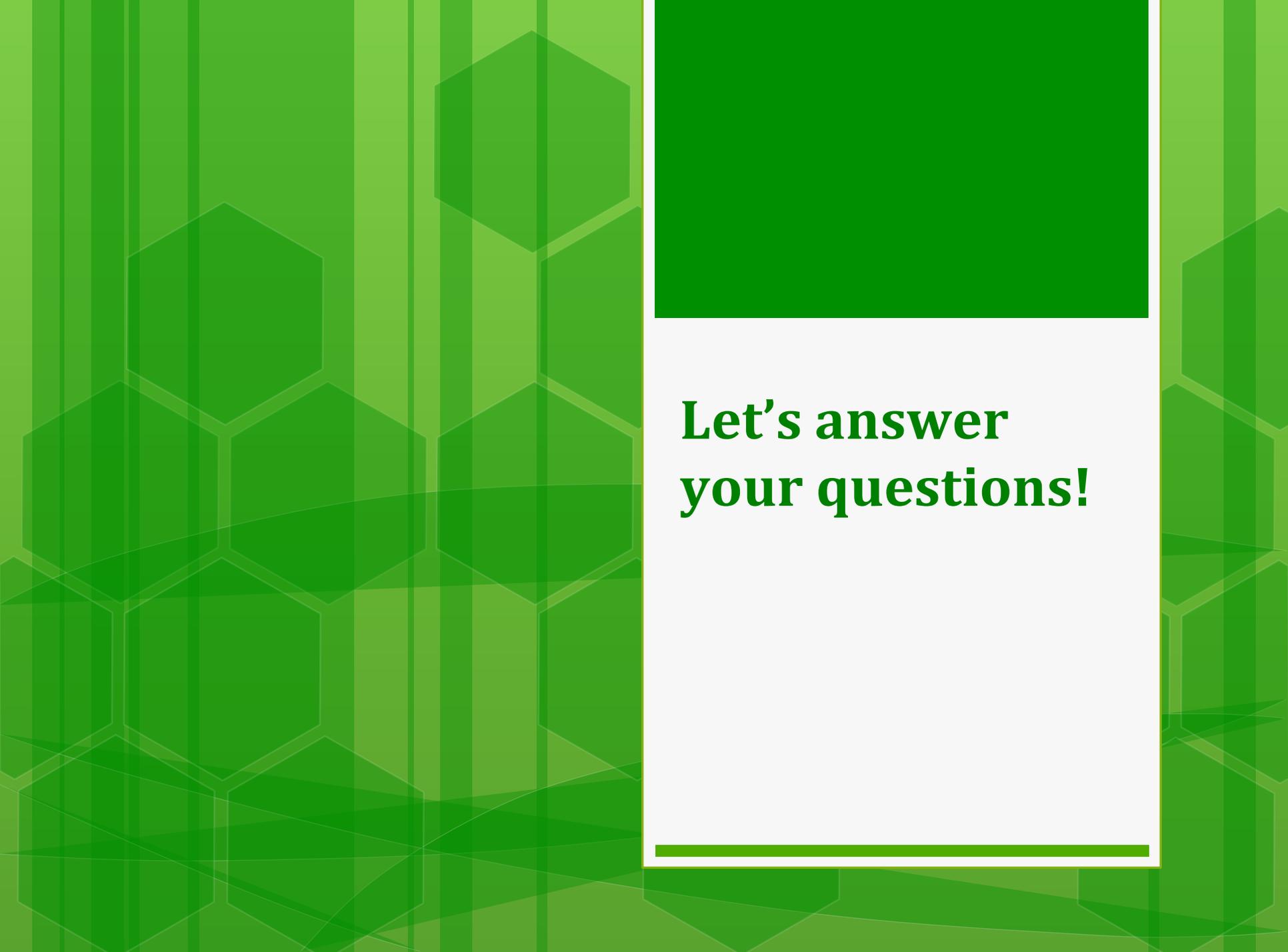
# Preliminary Findings from PA SPEPs

The most frequently reported changes shared by both probation departments and service providers are:

1. Clearer understanding of the importance of **prioritizing services for moderate to very high risk youth** (78%).
2. **Working more closing** with probation/program partners to ensure performance improvement (70%)
3. Implementing **organizational policies to support SPEP** (changing job or program descriptions, including regular SPEP updates at meetings) (67%)
4. Developing or **enhancing data collection methods** for tracking youth participation, service weeks/and/or service hours (65%)
5. Developed and begun **implementing a performance improvement plan** with probation/provider partners (60%)
6. Improved probation understanding of/program **definition of intended target population** (56%)
7. Increased **sharing of the YLS case** plan by probation with providers (54%)

# Preliminary Findings from PA SPEPs

According to the survey **94%** (52/55) of probation officers and juvenile justice service providers would recommend SPEP to a juvenile justice colleague.



**Let's answer  
your questions!**