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NCJFCJ Supports the American Probation & Parole Association's Issue Paper Risk and Needs Assessment

(Reno, Nev.) – [The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges \(NCJFCJ\)](#) announces its support of the [American Probation & Parole Association's Issue Paper Risk and Needs Assessment](#), recognizing the need to apply science to courtroom practice and procedure to improve outcomes for those we serve.

Risk and needs assessment instruments are tools that provide data-based information to practitioners at every stage of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. “The use of tools to measure risk and needs allows us to tailor our orders to recognize strengths and support change using an individualized approach,” said Judge Peggy H. Walker, president of the NCJFCJ. “These tools give us the opportunity to identify how to best allocate the resources we have and invest in the future without compromising community safety. As we use these instruments, we must continue to collect data, analyze it, and make adjustments to drive system change,” she said.

Historically, critical criminal and juvenile justice decisions about sanctioning and treatment of individuals were guided by the personal experience and judgment of public safety professionals with limited access to information about the person’s likelihood of recidivism, a person's relapse into criminal behavior, often after the person receives sanctions or undergoes intervention for a previous crime.

Today, knowledge about both criminal behavior and effective interventions has vastly improved. After decades of experience and study, researchers and practitioners have identified key factors that can help predict the likelihood of an individual returning to crime, violence or drug use as well as the types of supervision and services that are most likely to address those risks.

“Applying science to practice shows our successes and gives us the opportunity to use judicial leadership and the wisdom of our stakeholders to improve outcomes for those we serve,” said Judge Walker.

The following organizations reflect support of the Risk and Needs Assessment.

American Probation and Parole Association
Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
Association of State Corrections Administrators
Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators
National Association of Drug Court Professionals

National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Criminal Justice Association
Pretrial Justice Institute

Founded in 1937, the Reno, Nev.-based National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, is the nation's oldest judicial membership organization and focused on improving the effectiveness of our nation's juvenile and family courts. A leader in continuing education opportunities, research, and policy development in the field of juvenile and family justice, the 2,000-member organization is unique in providing practice-based resources to jurisdictions and communities nationwide.

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