

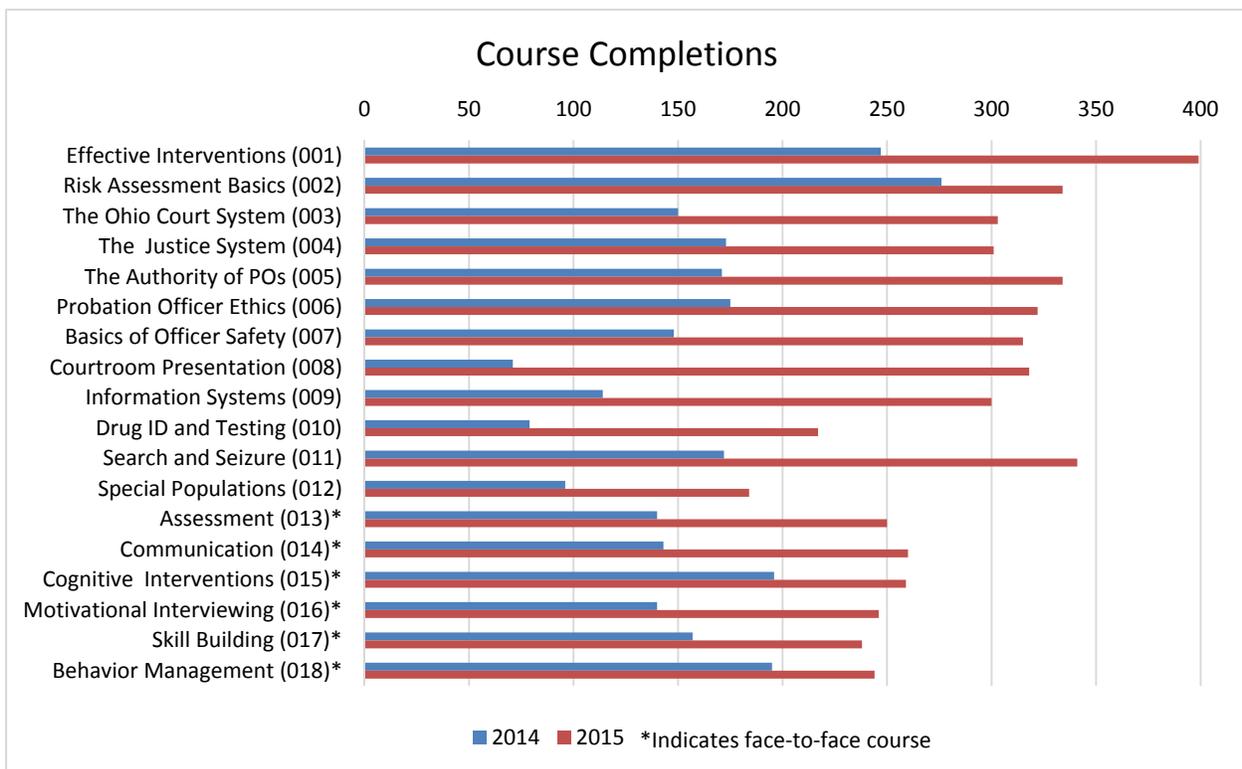
Ohio Probation Officer Training Program Data Summary 2015

In accordance with Ohio R.C. 2301.271, adult probation officers hired after January 1, 2014 must complete an introductory training program within one year of their hire date. As a result, the Ohio Probation Officer Training Program was developed through a partnership between the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction (ODRC), the Supreme Court of Ohio Judicial College (SCOJC), and the Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association (OCPOA). The program began in 2014 and consists of six face-to-face and twelve online courses.

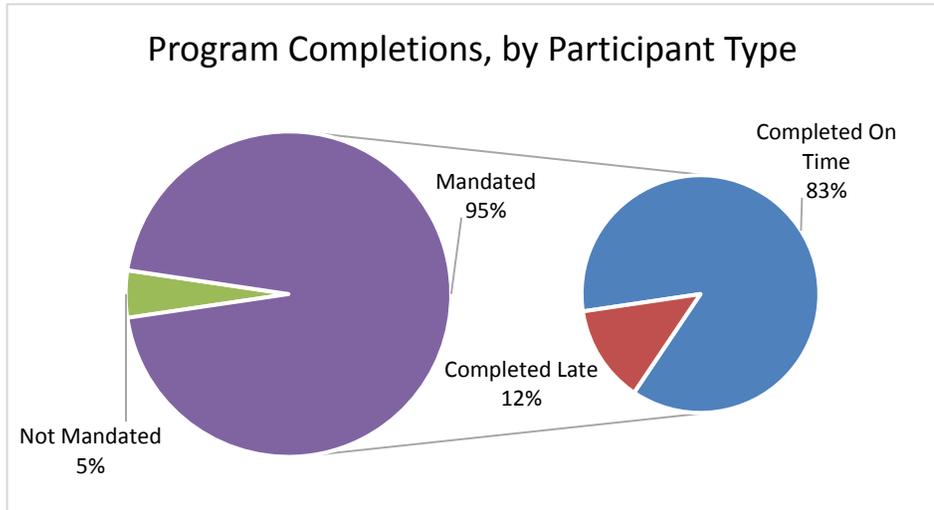
This is a summary of data from the Ohio Probation Officer Training Program, January to December of 2015.

Background

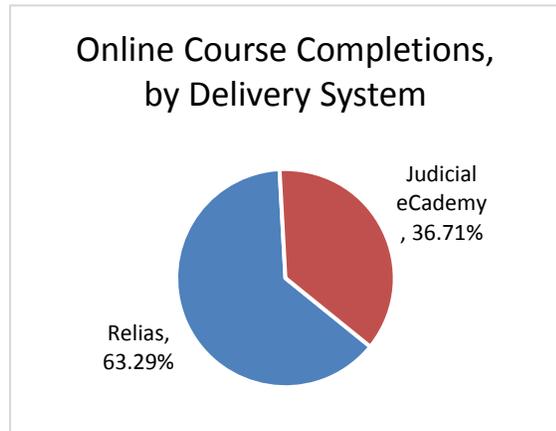
Over 1000 probation officers (n=1033) have completed a Probation Officer Training Program course since its inception in 2014. The program has continued to grow, with 5,165 courses completed in 2015 compared to 2,843 in 2014. In 2015, online courses accounted for 71% (n=3,668) of all completions.



To date, 214 officers have completed the full program, and the vast majority of those completed in 2015 (n=192, 89.7%). Of all of those who completed, nearly all (n=204, 95%) were mandated to complete. Of those who were mandated to complete, most (n=127, 83%) were able to complete the program on time. Officers who



were able to complete the program on time completed it, on average, 140 days early. Those who did not complete on time finished the program, on average, 84 days late.

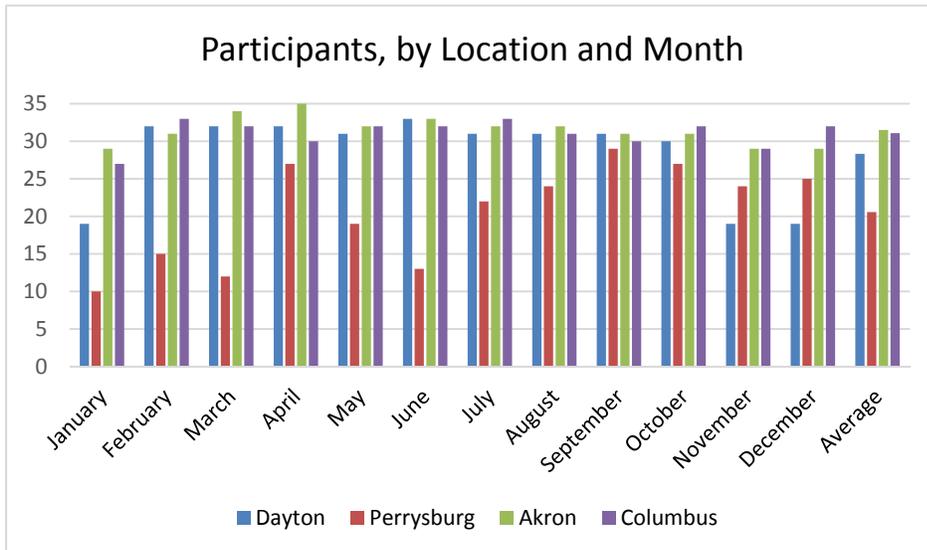


In 2015, the learning management system used to host the online courses changed. When the Probation Officer Training Program began, online courses were only available through the Relias System and required a payment. In July of 2015, the online courses became available through Judicial eCademy at no cost. The new system has been well-adopted, and there have been almost 2,000 (n=1,896) completions from July to December of 2015. While courses in Relias were completed at a higher rate, the discrepancy may be because several large departments encouraged their staff to finish courses in the Relias system.

A total of 54 face-to-face courses were offered in 2015. The courses have been offered 48 times on the planned schedule in Dayton, Perrysburg, Akron, and Columbus, and the graph below displays attendance by location. To accommodate a large increase in staffing at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, six additional course offerings were hosted at the Corrections Training Academy in Orient. At face-to-face courses, attendance has averaged 27.7 people, or 92.6% of maximum capacity. Compared to 2014, the face-to-face courses have had larger audiences. In 2014, the average attendance was 22 participants.

Registration and attendance rates varied based on location, with Akron and Columbus having higher rates compared to Perrysburg and Dayton. As a result of participants' location preference, some courses were full and had waitlists, while others had open seats. Half of the course offerings (n=27) had waitlists with an average of 10.1 people waitlisted. About 30% (n=16) of the waitlists included probation officers who are mandated to complete the program.

The program continues to be a good steward of resources by maintaining a very high ratio of registration to attendance. In 2015, attendance was at 99% of registration. There was an average no-show rate of 2.3% and an average walk-in rate of 1.3%.



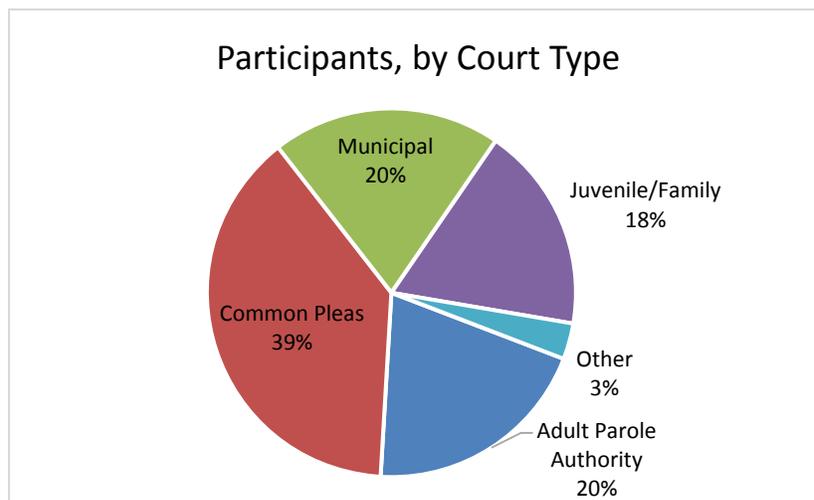
Three-fourths (n =777, 75.2%) of all participants have taken more than one face-to-face or online course. Because only 40.2% (n=416) of current participants are mandated to complete the full program, **this demonstrates that these courses are perceived as beneficial, even when not required.**

Participant Information – Face-to-Face Courses

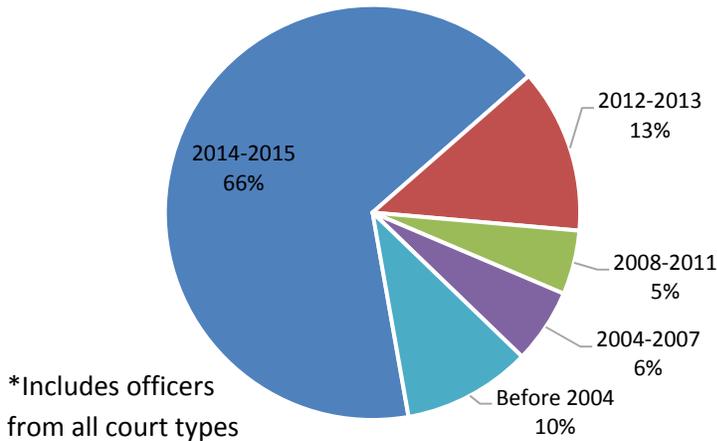
Over 600 probation officers (n=602) have completed a face-to-face course. In 2015, there were 54 offerings of courses with a total of 1497 participants for all courses.

Course participants have been diverse and representative of the population of probation officers we aim to serve, train, and educate. While many face-to-face participants are from large counties with populations over 200,000 (n=360, 60%), almost half work in rural (n=120, 20%) or mid-sized (n=122, 20%) counties.

There have been greater changes in the demographics of course participants, as relates to the type of court or department that employs them. In 2014, less than ten percent of participants were from the Adult Parole Authority (APA) and almost half were from a common pleas court. (See 2014 report for more information.) In 2015, the representation from the APA increased significantly. The greater representation of APA officers is likely due to a round of large hiring at the end of 2014. Unfortunately, because there is no centralized information about hiring for probation officers, it is unclear if any court type is under-represented or these participation rates reflect actual differences in the numbers of new officers in each type of court.



Participants, by Hire Date*

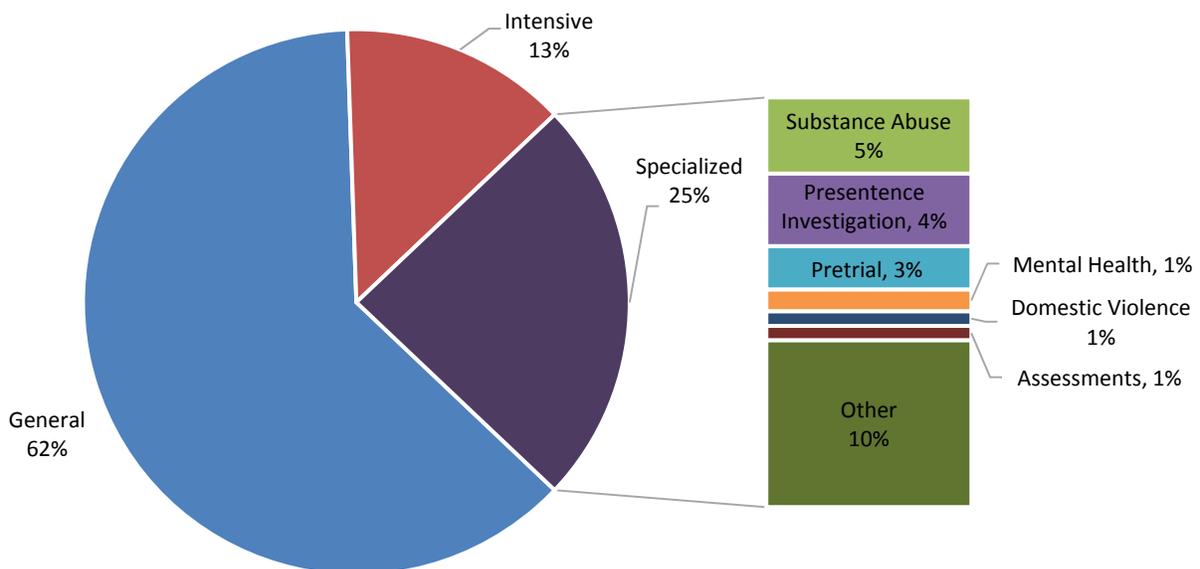


While both seasoned and newly hired probation officers continue to participate in the program, more than half (n=362, 60.2%) of participants are adult probation officers hired in 2014 or 2015 who are required to complete the training. Demand for classes has increased, and newer officers who are mandated to complete are given priority. As a result, they represent a much larger percentage than they did in 2014.

Caseloads vary widely across departments, with about a third of probation officers reporting caseloads of less than 40 (n=157, 31.5%), about a third reporting caseloads more than 40 and less than 100 (n=184, 36.9%), and about a third reporting caseloads greater than 100 (n=157, 31.5%).

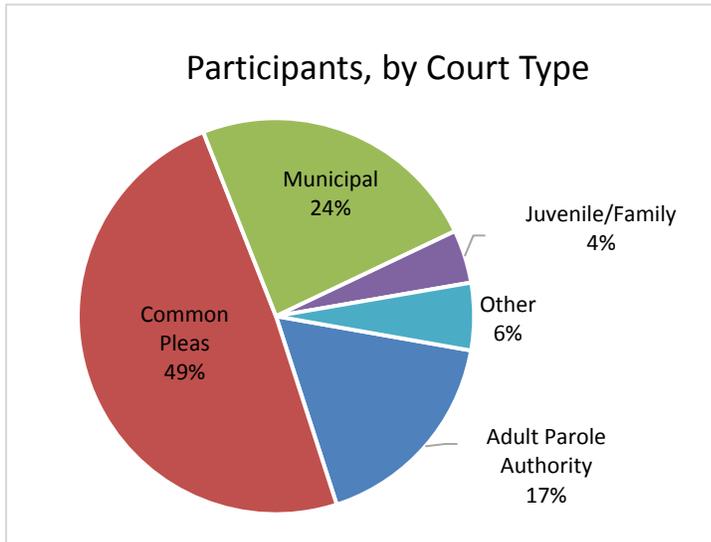
The type of caseload that officers supervise also varies widely based on the department and other factors. Most probation officers surveyed have a general case load (n=292, 62%). A significant number also have specialized case loads (n=113, 25%) or intensive case loads (n=63, 13%). Of those with a specialized case load, the areas of speciality most highly represented were pre-sentence investigation (n=20), pre-trial (n=12), and substance abuse (n=21). It should be noted that this survey is likely to be unrepresentative of all probation officers. Because this program targets recently-hired officers and intensive or specialized officers are more likely to be experienced officers in many departments, those intensive or specialized officers are likely underrepresented in our sample.

Participants, by Caseload Type



Participant Information – Online Courses

Nearly 800 probation officers have completed an online course (n=793) While there were some significant demographic differences between online and face-to-face course participants in 2014, these differences have narrowed in 2015. Because full information is not available, note that the statistics in this section include only those officers whose information is available.



Similar to face-to-face course participants, online course participants are likely to be from a large county (n=492, 62.4%), compared to a rural (n=158, 20.1%) or a mid-sized county (n= 158, 17.5%). They are also likely to have been hired in the 2014 or 2015 (n=413, 66.8%).

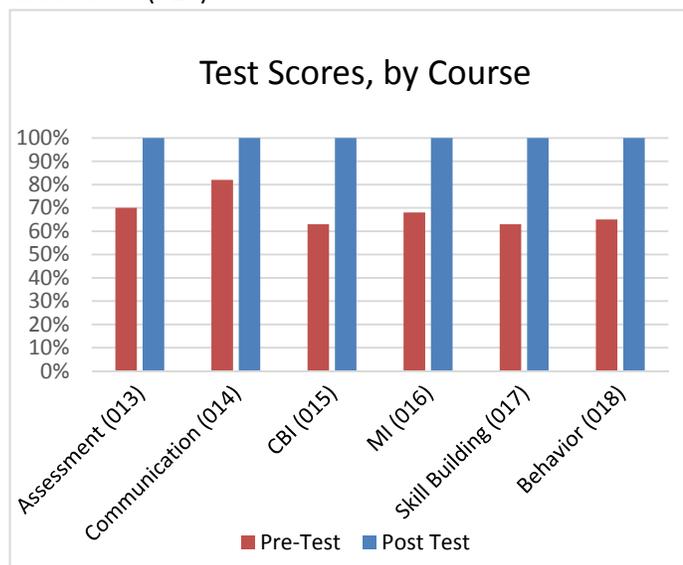
The primary demographic difference is that online course participants are less likely to be from a juvenile or family court. Only 4% (n=34) participants were juvenile probation officers. This is likely because Relias was only open to adult probation officers.

Testing and Evaluation Results – Face-to-Face Courses

Face-to-face courses have received high marks and have been well-received by both new and more experienced officers. Face-to-face courses consist of the following:

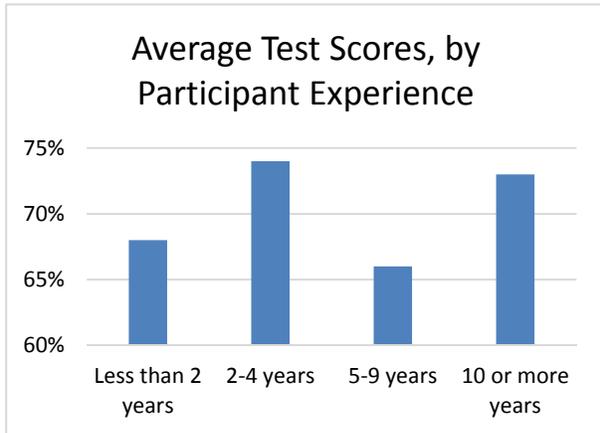
- Introduction to Assessment and Case Planning (013)
- Professional Communication: Oral and Written Communication Skills (014)
- Introduction to Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (015)
- Introduction to Motivational Interviewing (016)
- Introduction to Offender Skill Building (017)
- Introduction to Offender Behavior Management (018)

Each course begins with a pre-test that consists of 10 multiple choice questions. These same questions are given at the end of the course as a post-test. The average pre-test score for all courses has been 69% with no significant difference between participants based on court type or county size. The average score on the post-test has been 100%, resulting in a 31% average



increase in test scores across all six courses. An individual did not pass the post-test initially 0.2% of the time (n=3). However, with remediation, each person was able to pass the test before leaving the course. There has been some variation in pre-test scores based on the course.

In the past, there has not been a difference in pre-test scores between participants based on experience level. However, this year participants with 10 or more years of experience and participants with 2-4 years of experience over-performed on the pre-test compared to those with 5-9 years or less than two years of experience. While it is tempting to draw conclusions based on this, it is likely that this results from the small number of officers with more than 2 years of experience who are taking courses. There are 1,414 test results for officers with less than two years of experience, while there are 31 test results for officers with 2-4 years of experience, 29 results for officers with 5-9 years of experience, and 31 for officers with 10 or more years of experience. Because we have so few tests for more experienced officers, the average is more readily skewed by one or two very low or high scores.



After completing the post-test, participants complete an evaluation that allows the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Data has been provided by 1,474 participants. Quantitative data is scored on a 5-point scale, and responses have continued to be positive. The average scores for all courses has been unchanged from 2014 to 2015.

	Average for All Courses
What was the overall quality of the course?	4.6/5.0
Were the learning objectives for the course fulfilled?	4.7/5.0
How likely are you to apply what you learned at this course?	4.5/5.0
What was the overall quality of the presenters?	4.7/5.0

While there is some variation between courses, the scores have been high for each course with no significant difference between participants based on court type, county size, or experience level.



In addition to the quantitative data, probation officers are invited to share their comments on the course and describe how participating in it will impact their work as a probation officer. Below is a small sampling of some of their responses:

- “Sharing **examples of reinforcers and punishers** with other agencies” was the most impactful part of the program. – Probation officer from an mid-sized common pleas court with less than one year of experience
- After participating in this course, I will use “**more positive reinforcement**, instead of constantly being on the negative.” – Probation officer from an rural common pleas court with less than one year of experience
- After participating in this course, I will use “**thinking reports**. Never used, really like them!” – Probation officer from an urban common pleas with less than one year of experience
- After participating in this course, I will “remember to be clear and pay attention to **potential barriers which may affect rapport**.” – Probation officer from an urban common pleas with less than one year of experience
- After participating in this course, “I have a better understanding regarding **the specifics of case plans**.” – Probation officer from an urban municipal court with 2-4 years of experience

Officers were also invited to share any critiques of the program. The most commonly cited critiques were that the program was repetitive or that they already had the skills or used the techniques taught. The concern about program repetitiveness was expressed in about 0.8% of responses (n=12), while about 2.2% (n=33) said they already knew everything the course taught. Although a relatively small portion of respondents expressed these concerns, it is worth noting that these may be issues for further consideration when looking to improve the program.

Evaluation Results – Online Courses

The online program consists of 12 courses that are through Judicial eCademy, using Blackboard as the learning management system. Online courses consist of the following offerings:

- The Principles of Effective Interventions (001)
- Risk Assessment Basics (002)
- The Ohio Court System (003)
- The Ohio Criminal Justice System and Its Partners (004)
- The Authority of Probation Officers and their Role within the Court (005)
- Probation Officer Ethics (006)
- The Basics of Officer Safety (007)
- Courtroom Presentation Basics (008)
- Electronic Offender Information Systems (009)
- Drug Identification and Testing (010)
- Search and Seizure for Probation (011)
- Special Populations (012)

A new and updated version of Courtroom Presentation Basics (008) was launched in July of 2015. Drug Identification and Testing (010) and Special Populations (012) are currently being updated to better suit the needs of probation officers. Probation officers who are mandated to complete the program have been given an extension to allow them to complete the two courses when they become available.

After completing each course, participants are invited to complete an evaluation that collects quantitative and qualitative data. Please note that the evaluation data below is only from July to December of 2015 and is from the courses hosted on the new learning management system. In Relias, courses were scored on a 4-point scale. Courses are now scored on a 5-point scale, as the other courses in the program are scored.

	Average for Courses
How would you rate the overall quality of the course?	3.9/5.0
How would you rate the overall quality of the course content?	3.9/5.0
Were the learning objectives for the course fulfilled?	4.1/5.0
How likely are you to apply what you learned from this course?	4.0/5.0
How would you rank the ease of use of the online course delivery system?	3.9/5.0

Because of the change in questions and scaling, it is difficult to compare the scores from 2014 to those in 2015. However, in 2014, the first two courses, Principles of Effective Interventions and Risk Assessment Basics, were scored significantly lower than the rest of the online courses because of navigation issues and confusing test questions. In response to these concerns, changes were made to the courses in July of 2015. The first two courses now rank more evenly with the other online courses.



In addition to the quantitative data, probation officers are invited to share their comments on the course. Below is a small sampling of some of their responses:

- After completing this course, “I am going to look at the various types of treatment differently, knowing that there should be **different types of treatment for high and low risk offenders.**” – Probation officer who completed The Principles of Effective Intervention (001)
- After taking this course, I will “**give less attention to the minor risk factors** when conducting pre-sentence interviews.” – Probation officer who completed Risk Assessment Basics (002)
- After completing this course, “I think I will be able to **assist offenders better by helping them understand the court process**, structure, and intent of the courts. I think offenders are often confused, by the court process and the intention of the courts, by helping them understand the system it may in turn assist with easier cooperation and rehabilitation.” – Probation officer who completed The Ohio Court System (003)
- “It helped me to realize **ALL that probation officers do.**” – Probation officer who completed Authority of Probation Officers (005)
- After completing this course, I “will do home visits differently. **This pointed out a lot of things I was unaware of** and what I didn’t even think of. Even a fellow co-worker I don’t think has thought about some of these things. I will pass along for them to take this course so they can be better informed as well.” – Probation officer who completed Basics of Officer Safety (007)

Qualitative remarks also indicated that the largest concerns continue to be related to ease of use and test questions that are considered confusing or misleading. Some participants have also pointed out typos and other errors. Qualitative comments related to these issues included the following responses:

- “There are a lot of punctuation issues, as well as the misuse of their and there.” – Probation officer who completed The Ohio Court System (003)
- “I do really well on self-checks and then struggle with the actual test. The use of ‘trick’ questions, or poorly worded questions frustrating.” – Probation officer who completed Authority of Probation Officers (005)
- “This course was somewhat difficult to use. In certain sections when I clicked on tabs, I could not navigate back to the course, I had to go back to the beginning and page through previous information to find my current page.” – Probation officer who completed Search and Seizure for Probation Officers (011)

It may be necessary to develop plans to update or correct courses to ensure that participants continue to view them as high-quality and professional.

Conclusions

In its second year, the Ohio Probation Officer Training Program has continued to deliver high-quality education to more than 1,000 officers. Courses have served a much broader audience than only new adult probation officers, and audiences have been diverse with respect to court type and county size. Despite the large scope of the program, evaluations are consistently high, and course statistics demonstrate the ongoing perceived value of the program.