

Alameda County Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission

2020 - Juvenile Hall Inspection Report

Legal Authority & Mandates - Juvenile Justice Commission

Juvenile Justice Commission - Members appointed by Presiding Juvenile Court Judge

- **Annually inspect all county juvenile halls and placement facilities (WIC §229)**
 - Shall have access to all publicly administered institutions (WIC §229)
 - Shall report the results of such inspection in writing to the presiding judge of the juvenile court and to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). (WIC §229)
- **At the commission's discretion, hold hearings relevant to the administration of juvenile court law. (WIC §229)**
 - A judge of the juvenile court shall have the power to issue subpoenas requiring attendance and testimony of witnesses and production of papers at hearings of the commission.
- **Shall make recommendations and decide if those recommendations will be made public. (WIC §230)**
- Inquire into the operation of any group home in the county that serves juvenile court wards or dependent children, and review the safety and well-being of the wards and dependent children. (WIC §229.5)
- May inspect any jail or lockup facilities within the county used for confinement of any minor for more than six (6) hours.
- **Consult with the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) concerning the operation and maintenance of the juvenile halls. (WIC §1760.7)**

Legal Authority & Mandates - Delinquency Prevention Commission

Delinquency Prevention Commission - Members appointed by Board of Supervisors

WIC § 234

- To coordinate on a countywide basis the work of those governmental and nongovernmental organizations engaged in activities designed to prevent juvenile delinquency.
 - If the board so elects, it may designate the juvenile justice commission, or any other committee or council appointed pursuant to Section 232 or 235 , to serve in such capacity.
- May engage in activities designed to prevent juvenile and adult delinquency, including rendering direct and indirect services to persons in the community, and may cooperate with any other agency of government in carrying out its purposes.

2020 Juvenile Hall Inspection Report - Process

Over the course of 2020 (pre & post pandemic), Commissioners:

- Inspected Juvenile Hall (in-person & virtually)
- Observed programming and educational sessions
- Conducted formal and informal interviews and/or meetings with system partners and stakeholders
- Interviewed justice-impacted youth (pre & post incarceration)
- Interviewed families of incarcerated youth
- Formally presented report to Probation, the Court, and BSCC during audit

2020 Juvenile Hall Inspection Report - Approach

- Highlight important issues as it relates to the best interests of the youth and families
 - What's working well + Areas of opportunity
- Rooted in research and best practices
- Each Recommendation includes potential solutions - based on ACJJDP's values and commitment to Alameda County
- Commission is committed to working with Probation and system partners to support with implementation of any & all recommendations

Facilities - Context and Recommendations

- Population - Reduced number of youth detained in the Hall (avg daily population - approx 50 youth)
 - Increased needs
 - Increased length of stay for many of the youth (up to 3 years)
- Title 15 Compliance - The Facility is now considered in compliance with state and federal regulations, including all Title 15 revisions (e.g. no longer using room confinement as a form of punishment)
- Changes - Probation has made, and is in the process of making, changes to the Facility
 - Updated rooms with chalkboard paint, replaced scratched windows with tempered glass, in process of updating analog camera system with a digital recording system, purchased new furniture for the Hall, repainted units

Recommendations

- WIC 851 - “Safe and Supportive Homelike Environment” - still feels like a mini Santa Rita Jail
 - Changes should be made now that are simple and cost effective prior to embarking on a more comprehensive trauma-informed facilities plan
 - Providing culturally affirming basic necessities, carpeting in all units, thicker mattresses, comfortable pillows
 - Commission believes some of these changes will help reduce anxiety, aligned with brain development research and make for a safer environment

Staffing - Context and Recommendations

- Mandated to maintain 1:10 ratio (title 15) and 1:8 (PREA)
- Currently major staffing challenges and issues, which results in negative effects for youth (split rec time, lack of consistent programming, unsafe environment, etc.)
 - Trouble maintaining ratios due to turnover, internal promotion practices (6 months eligibility) and collective bargaining agreement provisions (shift bidding, inability to mandate overtime)

Recommendations

- End shift bidding in upcoming collective bargaining agreement
- End inability to mandate overtime in upcoming collective bargaining agreement
- Adjust hiring practices, including offering incentives for JIO's to stay and require at least one year of working in the Hall before eligible for promotion

Education - Context and Recommendations

- Remote education since the pandemic, each youth has access to chromebook and virtual instruction
- Education must be a joint effort between Probation and ACOE
- Concerns regarding transition and high drop-out rates of youth (66% of youth drop out post release)
- Lack of robust post-secondary educational opportunities for youth (major concerns as more young people are locked up longer)

Recommendations

- SEEP and College Programming
- Utilize culturally affirming curriculum to inspire youth to continue to pursue their education post release, partnership with Probation, ACBH, etc.
- Juvenile Court should order transcript and educational records to be part of the student's release hearing to mitigate transition delays

Programming - Context and Recommendations

- No clear process on Community Programming/involvement - majority of programming run by Probation staff
- Need for long-term programming, as more youth are staying longer
- More strength-based programming, in addition to EBP programming (which can be deficit based), leveraging credible messengers and community partners
- Constant program cancellations due to staffing issues
- Rarely utilizing outdoor spaces, including garden

Recommendations

- More community involvement - Rites of Passage, gender responsive and culturally affirming programming, credible messengers, etc.
- Long-term programming (partnering with community and ACBH)
- Offer more intensive programming, similar to Camp
- Utilize outdoor spaces and form partnerships (i.e., Planting Justice, gardening, etc.)

Behavioral Health - Context and Recommendations

- ACBH Provides suicidality screening, court assessments, and individualized therapy
- Established Care Coordination Meetings
- Started to provide services post release to highest needs youth (1 month of family therapy)

Recommendations

- Trauma screening and assessment
- EBP/Strengths based general assessment (e.g., CANS)
- Group Therapy sessions (e.g., anger management, art therapy, Seeking Safety, sports therapy, trauma recovery, etc.)

Looking Ahead - Additional Recommendations

- End the use of OC Spray
- SB823 Design and Implementation
- Dual Jurisdiction
- Supporting the Transition Center
- Youth Events post COVID
- Increased Community involvement and engagement with the Commission
- Increased Visitation Opportunities