

**VENTURA COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY  
PREVENTION COMMISSION (JJDC)**

**DECEMBER 2022 INSPECTION REPORT OF THE VENTURA COUNTY  
PROBATION AGENCY (VCPA) JUVENILE FACILITIES COMPLEX**



**Inspection Date:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022

**Last Ventura County JJDC Inspection Date:** December 7, 2021

**Address:** 4333 Vineyard Avenue, Oxnard, CA 93036 **Phone Number:** 805-981-5527

**Chief Deputy:** Tim Dowler, Chief Deputy Juvenile Services Bureau

**Division Manager:** Sandra Carrillo

**Presiding Juvenile Court Judge:** Judge Tari L. Cody

**JJDC Inspection Team Commissioners:** Valerie Salazar (Chair), Cheryl A. De Bari, Esq. (First Vice Chair), Gina Petrus, Ph.D. (Second Vice Chair), Jennifer Lopardo (Secretary), Daisalyn Chan, David Lopez-Lee, Ph.D., Kate English, John A. Horton, M.D., James Ramos

## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF INSPECTION**

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJJPC) is authorized through the provisions of §§226 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code, et. seq. The responsibilities of this Commission are broadly defined in §§229 and 233, and the standards set forth by the California Board of State and Community Corrections. The general purpose of the Commission is to “inquire into the administration of the juvenile court law in the county” (§ 229) and “coordinate on a countywide basis the work of those community agencies engaged in activities designed to prevent delinquency”. (§233).

The Ventura County JJDPC conducted its annual inspection of the Ventura County Juvenile Facilities Complex (JF) for 2022 in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code §229 and Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations, “Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities.”

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The JJDPC wants to commend Ventura County Probation Agency (VCPA) for their prompt attention to correcting three outstanding items of noncompliance in detention and commitment with the BSCC on an unannounced inspection on August 9, 2022, for Staffing (Section 1321), Classification (Section 1353), and Programming (Section 1371). The JJDPC looks forward to a continued partnership to prevent noncompliance in the future.
2. The JJDPC would like to commend VCPA for their support in keeping the Commission current by financing two commissioners to attend the California Probation, Parole, & Correctional Association’s Training Conference (CCPCA) in Newport Beach September 6<sup>th</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup>, where we were able to get an overview from the Office of Youth and Community Restoration regarding realigned youth and the SB 823 grants, as well as a JJDPC commissioner training with the BSCC. In addition to the September conference, VCPA also supported the Chair (Salazar) in attending the BSCC’s Title 15 & 24 Regulations revisions on November 5 and 6 in Sacramento. This has helped the Commission stay on top of a landscape undergoing a lot of changes, and it’s been appreciated to build a stronger partnership with VCPA as we understand and revise our procedures in response to new legislation.
3. Finally, the JJDPC wants to commend VCPA innovativeness in their very own rock band, Hellfire, who gave a few performances over 2022. In allowing staff to share their skills and passions with the youth, they’ve inspired new musicians and we enjoyed their performance and the efforts in equipment and costumes that went into them. The overall response to the realigned youth has been very positive by Ventura County, and we see and acknowledge all the efforts by JF staff. In addition, the latest SB 823 plan submitted to OYCR for 2023 is thoughtful, progressive, and we’re looking forward to seeing it implemented for our young people so they can thrive upon release in our communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS (listed in order of appearance throughout report)**

**JJDCP Recommendation on Staffing.** The JJDCP recommends implementing an internship program, considering hiring part-time clinicians, working with the County of Ventura to offer more competitive salaries, and most importantly prior to approving the transfer of clinical staff to other county programs, ensuring adequate staffing is already in place.

**JJDCP Recommendation on Substance Abuse Services.** Since there is only 1 full-time equivalent (2 part-time counselors) responsible for providing substance abuse services for all youth/young adults at the JF, it is recommended that additional staff be hired. A review of existing outpatient substance abuse treatment and residential treatment programs should be conducted to determine if there are adequate resources for Ventura County youth and young adults.

**JJDCP Recommendation on Re-Entry Services.** The JJDCP recommends more housing programs, job training programs and placement, transportation assistance, and access to a greater variety of options for substance abuse treatment including both outpatient and residential treatment.

**JJDCP Recommendation on Grievances:** The JJDCP noticed words like "Canteen" and "Kite" being normalized in the JF. We recommend renaming them to something else like "Market" and "Request" going forward to get away from language that could be perceived as grooming for adult jail and prison.

**JJDCP Recommendation on Education:** JJDCP recommends working with an Independent Living Program for additional life skills for youth 16 and over. We also recommend exploring programs like the Prison Education Project which can bring life skills to youths, taught by formerly incarcerated persons. JJDCP also recommends working with the local Department of Rehabilitation who might be able to assist with more programming and higher education, especially for SYTF youth who may be in the care of VCPA long enough to complete a 4-year degree or more. We also encourage working with Oxnard College for in-person courses for youths who may be eligible to furlough for them.

**JJDCP Recommendation on Statewide Youth Overdoses:** As a general recommendation, and with overdoses in facilities throughout the state reaching all-time highs, we recommend considering reviewing visitor and employee entry processes, and even bringing in dogs trained for narcotics on walk throughs of the site if not already happening.

## **2021 RECOMMENDATIONS & VCPA UPDATES**

1. In its 2021 Inspection Report regarding the Grievance Forms Process, the JJDCP recommended that *“staff receive additional training on how to respond to youth grievances and effectively document those interactions.”* Have any changes been implemented in 2022?

**VCPA Response:** All grievances are logged and reviewed for trends by the JF Housing Division Manager to identify areas of facility improvement and to ensure grievances are responded to properly, thoroughly completed and signed. Reviewed grievances that are determined to need follow-up are sent back to the supervisor with an explanation for follow-up. Direction and guidance on completing, responding, and documenting grievances were provided to JF supervisors and 45 CSO staff attended Trauma Informed Care training during 2022.

2. In its 2021 Inspection Report regarding Emergency Plans, the JJDPC recommended *“that VCPA permanently stage at the JF enough vehicles to evacuate active JF population to eliminate/cut down on any potential wait time for vehicles in a high traffic evacuation emergency, or one in which communication or roads have become compromised.”* Have any changes been implemented in 2022?

**VCPA Response:** The process was reviewed on 3/9/22, during an annual security review of the facility. The State Fire Marshall completed an inspection on 11/15/22, where they advised for emergency situations; the best option would be to shelter in place. However, if there is need to evacuate, there are seven county vans assigned to different units that are based at the JF. In addition to the vans, there are five county vehicles available for a total on-premises capacity of 82 persons. The off-site Work Release vans add an additional capacity of 75 for a total capacity of 157. The Agency has mutual aid agreements with the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office and southern California probation agencies that may also be able to assist. The agency also has the resources and responses available to them by the Sheriff’s Office of Emergency Services in emergency situations.

The feasibility of staging vehicles at the JF for evacuation only was explored. County Fleet Services requires a minimum mileage usage of over 7,000 miles a year per vehicle staged for an emergency. We would not be able to meet this requirement.

3. In its 2021 Inspection Report regarding the Incident Reports Process, the JJDPC recommended that *“A more detailed explanation or suggestion for referrals by the reporting officers would be helpful in the reports, as well as a designation for violent offenses. Specifically recording incidents as violent or non-violent would seem beneficial in tracking specific youths’ behavior, as well as the overall state of the facility.”* Have any changes been implemented in 2022?

**VCPA Response:** No changes have been made since receiving the report in December of 2022; however, we are actively reviewing their documentation of incidents.

4. In its 2021 Inspection Report regarding DJJ Realignment SYTF, the JJDPC recommended *“continued monitoring of the programs being implemented, mental health of the youths, and reentry processes being put in place.”* Have any changes been implemented in 2022 specific to this population?

**VCPA Response:** The implementation of DJJ Realignment is an ongoing process. Several new programs were implemented during 2022 and more programs are in the

process of being added. We have a programming schedule that is actively being updated when new programs are implemented. The programming schedule is posted in the units so the youth can see their daily/weekly schedule. Regarding Mental Health, we have hired a consultant (Health Management Associates) to assess our current services delivered through VCBH and identify gaps in services as well. They will be developing a Request for Proposal that will advertise the comprehensive mental health services needed by vendors to provide these services. Re-entry processes have been developed and transitional housing options explored (pending contracted services for housing). The STEPS-Y (Specialized Training Employment Program for Success-Youth) program is already in place and involves assistance with resumes, interviewing, job applications and job placement. A multi-disciplinary team will also convene to develop the reentry plan with the youth, the youth's family, the field probation officer, and any other providers who will be involved with ongoing services to ensure a smooth transition for reentry. The re-entry process was reviewed for feedback by a lived-experience community member which added value to the established process.

### **MAJOR FOCUS AREAS FOR 2022 JJDCPC VISIT**

- 1. Re-entry Services**
- 2. Substance Abuse Services**
- 3. Grievances**

### **GENERAL AREAS FOR INSPECTION**

#### **I. POPULATION**

In 2022, the total admissions and/or bookings as of December 5, 2022, was 525 young people. The maximum census was 75 youths in April, and the minimum census was 54 youths in January. The total population on December 6, 2022, in detention, commitment, and SYTF combined was 67 youths. The breakdown on the day of the inspection was as follows:



**Detention:** Detention had 26 males, 3 females, 0 transgender, and 0 non-binary/gender non-conforming youths.

**Commitment:** Commitment had 17 males, 7 females, 0 transgender, and 0 non-binary/gender non-conforming youths.

**SYTF:** SYTF had 13 males, 1 female, 0 transgender, and 0 non-binary/gender non-conforming youths.

The age breakdown for the total number of minors (under 18) at the time of inspection was 41, total number of 18-year-olds was 15, and total number of young persons over 18 was 11.

**Percentages of Population by Race for 2021:**

African American	Hispanic	Native American	White	Other
<b>4.9%</b>	<b>77.5%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

**Percentages of Population by Race for 2022:**

African American	Hispanic	Native American	White	Other
<b>6.5%</b>	<b>84.5%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

Since the last inspection, there have been 0 suicides, 6 attempted suicides, and 0 deaths from other causes. There have also been 0 escapes.

**II. STAFFING**

At the time of inspection, the total current number of staff was 166, up from 150 in 2021. The number of sworn staff was 134, up from 115 in 2021. This is an encouraging trend as staffing shortages have been a nationwide epidemic.

**Diversity of Staff:**

African American	Hispanic	Native American	White	Other
<b>5 %</b>	<b>66 %</b>	<b>0 %</b>	<b>24 %</b>	<b>5 %</b>

**Staff to Youth Ratio**

Detention Awake: **1:10** Sleeping: **1:30**

Commitment Awake: **1:15** Sleeping: **1:30**

**Please list and briefly describe any new staff programs or special trainings instituted during the current year?**

Per VPCA, due to staffing shortages, we had to re-allocate DPO staff to come in and assist with unit coverage. We have typically brought in DPO staff who have previously worked at the Juvenile Facility and had completed Juvenile Correctional Officer Core training (168 hours). The next phase of re-allocation (beginning in January 2023) will involve utilizing some DPO staff who have never worked in the Juvenile Facility. Anyone being re-allocated will complete 40 hours of training which includes the following: an orientation, emergency response training, youth engagement, professional boundaries, officer safety training, and policy review. They will also have to participate in on the job

training that involves the following: youth supervision duties; scope of decisions they shall make; identification of their supervisor; identification of persons who are responsible to them; persons to contact for decisions that are beyond their responsibility; ethical responsibilities; individual and group supervision techniques; regulations and policies relating to discipline and rights of youth pursuant to law; basic health, sanitation and safety measures; suicide prevention and response to suicide attempts; policies regarding use of force, de-escalation techniques, chemical agents, mechanical and physical restraints; review of policies and procedures referencing trauma and trauma-informed approaches; procedures to follow in the event of emergencies; routine security measures, including facility perimeter and grounds; crisis intervention and mental health referrals to mental health services; documentation (incident reports, log books, movement tab); and fire/life safety training.

**What efforts are being made to recruit and train staff to fill vacancies?**

Per VCPA, we have a Public Relations Committee that attends career fairs, provides presentations at high schools/colleges and participates in community events. This committee also has a social media team who sends out regular posts and videos on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Tik Tok advertising that we are hiring. Regarding training, all newly hired staff participate in 40 hours of training and then two weeks of on-the-job training. They also have to attend a minimum of 168 hours of Juvenile Core Training within their first year on the job. As mentioned above, we are currently re-allocating DPO staff to assist with daily coverage. All of these staff have to complete 40 hours of training which is outlined in the response above.

**JJDCPC Recommendation:** The JJDCPC recommends implementing an internship program, considering hiring part-time clinicians, working with the County of Ventura to offer more competitive salaries, and most importantly prior to approving the transfer of clinical staff to other county programs, ensuring adequate staffing is already in place.

**How often are staff trained in LGBTQ+ cultural sensitivity and which staff are trained?**

Per VCPA, Developing Cultural Competency and Inclusion is mandatory training for all staff and completed within 30 days of hire and biennially thereafter.

Beginning 2023, all Probation staff will be required to participate in Diversity Equity and Inclusion training from BiasSync. BiasSync is a science-based training tool, using data and expert learning strategies to help assess and manage unconscious bias in the work environment. The purpose is to create fair and respectful workplaces. All sworn staff are required to participate in at least 8 hours of cultural diversity/competency training every year, which can include different courses such as: “Tools for Tolerance” (at the Museum of Tolerance), “Diversity, Now What?”, “Hate Crimes and White Power Movement”, “Cultural Considerations in Facilities and Field”, “Multicultural Competence and the Workplace”, “Cultural Diversity Issues”, “Gay, lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgendered Youth; Problems with Incarceration” and a number of other classes they can choose from.

**List trainings (with titles, trainers, dates) on trauma informed and ACES approaches in which staff are trained.**

Per VCPA, all staff attend 8 hours of Trauma Informed Care training within their first two years of hire. We currently use ACE Overcomers to provide “Trauma Informed and Beyond.” All corrections staff are also required to take Mental Health Curriculum for Juvenile Justice. They are required to take this 8-hour course once within their first 12 months of employment. This course covers key factors in adolescent development, common mental health and substance use disorders, how trauma impacts adolescent development, and ways that staff can work with youth with mental health or substance use disorders. Additionally, staff can select from courses such as: “Identifying and Assessing Trauma Impact”, Impact of Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment”, “Adolescent Brain Development and Adverse Choices”, and numerous other trauma informed courses.

**Have there been any changes this year to how interpreting and translation services are offered?**

Per VCPA, there have been no changes to these services. We have staff who are bilingual, on-site interpreters who can read, write and speak Spanish, and also have access to a 24-hour phone translation service (Interpretalk) where a variety of languages can be translated.

**III. PROGRAMS**

**Describe any changes to the JF programs instituted in 2022, including any new and/or discontinued programs, and the reasons for those changes.**

Per VCPA, one of the new programs added includes the use of mentors with lived experience. These 4 mentors also provide the ARISE gang prevention program to facility youth. A youth automotive tech program was added to enhance our vocational and re-entry services. We will also now offer a Dating Matters group which promotes healthy relationships. Our screen-printing class has been resurrected and facility youth have access to tablets for education, reading or self-help programming. The Boys and Girls Club re-opened, and we polled youth on equipment they wanted to have in the Boys and Girls Club Gym. The equipment they requested was purchased and installed. The JF Career Center was completed and has been used for presentations and tutoring. There are five computers in the Career Center that can be used for vocational training, resume building and for college tutoring.

Interface Children and Family Services now delivers a variety of new programs. Reducing Risk for Girls is gender-based programming aimed at providing prevention and early intervention services to females confined in the JF to reduce recidivism through the reduction of risk factors (anger management, mindful management of addiction, avoidance of future exploitation) and promotion of protective factors (e.g., positive peer group, positive/resilient temperament, problem-solving skills.)

The “Second Chances” Community-Based Youth Reentry Project in partnership with VCPA, proposes a reduction in the number of rearrests among Ventura County at-risk youth. The project fills a critical need for high-quality anti-recidivism programming occurring in the community and in juvenile facilities using an integrated community-based set of services and suite of evidence-based practices. Interface seeks to change the life trajectory for the youth served by Second Chances, assist in the transition youth make from juvenile residential facilities to the community so that the transition is successful and promotes public safety, learn from a rigorous evaluation of their outcomes, and strengthen the community.

And lastly, Transforming Harm to Healing project provides restorative justice conferencing for first-time and repeat offending youth ages 12-21 years who commit an eligible misdemeanor or felony offense.

Ventura County Behavioral Health reinstated the delivery of Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). MRT is an evidence-based program that uses a cognitive-behavioral approach. MRT fosters moral development in youth and adults through education, group counseling, and structured exercises. Moral reasoning is how people make decisions about what they should or should not do in a given situation. Youths are confronted with the consequences of their behavior and the effects it has on their family, friends, and community. MRT addresses beliefs and reasoning. It is designed to alter how clients think and make judgments about what is right and wrong. Twelve steps are completed during weekly meetings. DBT is an evidence-based psychotherapy that treats mood disorders and suicidal ideation and aims to change behavioral patterns such as self-harm and substance use.

### **What is the status of the Release Prep Program and youth participation?**

This class was previously provided by the programming Sr. DPO but is no longer active. Instead, the topics from that course are now being taught by our STEPS-Y providers.

### **Have any substance abuse programs specifically tailored for SYTF youth been implemented?**

Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) expanded services to include SYTF youth. Further expansion of substance abuse services will be addressed in the mental health RFP being published soon as noted above.

**JJDPJPC Recommendation:** Since there is only 1 full-time equivalent (2 part-time counselors) responsible for providing substance abuse services for all youth/young adults at the JF, it is recommended that additional staff be hired. A review of existing outpatient substance abuse treatment and residential treatment programs should be conducted to determine if there are adequate resources for Ventura County youth and young adults.

**Please provide a list of any program cancelations with the reason why.**

Per VCPA, due to VCBH staffing shortages, Moral Reconciliation Therapy was put on hold until the new therapists could be trained. We have resumed this program. Release Prep was previously taught by the programming Sr. DPO at the JF. Due to the increase of programming oversight duties, she was no longer able to continue providing this program. To rectify this, she ensured that the topics from this program are still being provided to youth at the facility by another provider (STEPS-Y).

**Please provide the detailed process for youth re-entry plans, including how many youths were referred for wrap-around services or full-service partnerships**

Per VCPA, reentry release plan meetings involve a multi-disciplinary team including VCBH, VCOE, Wellpath, the Commitment DPO, the field DPO, the youth, and any other provider who would ensure the continuum of care continues. VCOE sets up educational services and VCBH arranges mental health and drug and alcohol programming upon release. Wellpath ensures that the youth and family have the medication(s) they need upon release when applicable. The youth will work with Interface through the Second Chances Program for 90 days prior to release and up to 9 months after release to provide transitional support to the youth and their families. The field DPO also works with the youth, their families and Interface to support the re-entry plan.

**JJDPC Recommendation on Re-Entry Services.** The JJDPC recommends more housing programs, job training programs and placement, transportation assistance, and access to a greater variety of options for substance abuse treatment including both outpatient and residential treatment. Also, consider using some of the space already at the JF to create a less-restrictive placement where youth can come and go to work or college courses as an option for older young people who may not have a home to go back to. Funding from the state for less-restrictive placements could help with this.

**IV. MEDICAL, DENTAL, AND VISION SERVICES**

There were no changes to the JF Medical, Dental, and Vision services instituted in 2022. The JJDPC did talk with the head nurse of the JF, Shirley, and she was able to walk the JJDPC through the nursing station and medical area and describe the processes already in place.

**V. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**From VCPA:** In 2022, VCBH had several staff transfer out of the JF and they found it difficult to recruit new therapists. They are experiencing a 30% vacancy rate for their department. VCPA has hired a consultant to review current services. The consulting group will be developing an RFP to advertise and contract with a provider to provide comprehensive services at the JF.

**JJDPC Comment:** At the time of the inspection, the VCBH team was understaffed, primarily due to the transfer of several clinicians to another Ventura County program. Because of the staffing shortages, the Clinic Administrator assisted with providing client

care and was responsible for a client caseload (in addition to his administrative responsibilities). The provision of family therapy was limited due to these staffing challenges. Family support was provided by the Mental Health Associate (MHA) provided case management services to families- linking them with needed services and offering support in the areas of communication skills and problem-solving. Follow-up contact with Marcus Lopez, LCSW, Clinic Administrator was made to get an update on the staffing issues. Mr. Lopez reported that staffing has improved since the date of the inspection. There will be a total of 5 full-time Behavioral Health Clinicians (BHC). Two of the five clinicians will be starting soon. In the interim, the clinical team is receiving assistance from 2 “support” BHCs for a total of 21 hours. The team also includes an Educationally Related Social Emotional Services (ERSES) BHC (16 hours) per week, a full-time MHA and a second MHA that works 3 days per week. The MHA provides case management services and serves as the liaison with families and psychiatry. The MHA can also run some of the groups that are offered. VCBH will be implementing the Full-Service Partnership Program (FSP) for youth. As part of the program, the FSP Administrator will be at the JF one day per week to assist with the transition of youth from the JF to the FSP program upon re-entry to the community.

**Youth Behavioral Health Statistics**

	<b>Youth Under 18</b>	<b>Youth 18+</b>
Number of youths on psychotropic medication:	17	17
Number of youths with a mental health diagnosis:	38	26
Number of youths with a substance use diagnosis:	26	24

**VI.**

Major modifications or improvements to the ground made in 2022 included the Santa Rosa Commitment Housing area being transformed into a Vocational Center. A classroom within the Santa Rosa building was converted into a Career Center that is being actively utilized for educational and career presentations. There are five computers located inside the Career Center. An MOU with VCOE is in process to have a counselor work with youth to assess and explore their strengths, different trade certifications and career paths.



There are now two pods being utilized for Paxton Patterson construction modules. A third pod is being used for the Music in Society program that is working primarily with SYTF youth. The Specialized Training for Employment Services (STEPS-Y) program provides two staff from the Human Services Agency. They have offices in the Vocational Center, and they are currently working with commitment youth. The Ventura County Arts Council will be working with SYTF youth to paint a mural inside the Vocational Center. Additional no climb fencing was added around the facility as well as mesh coverings along the back fence to protect the confidentiality of the youth in our care. These infrastructure needs along with the Career Center furniture, computers and cameras were purchased with Youth Programs and SYTF Facilities Grant funds. An automotive tech program is currently

being provided by VCOE and a vehicle has been donated to the facility. The vehicle will be located next to the Vocational Center.

## **VII. INTERIOR OF BUILDINGS**

Changes or improvements to the buildings in 2022 included the inside of the Boys and Girls Club, the vocational center, and the career center all seeing interior improvements regarding equipment, paint, and/or furniture.

VCPA and VCOE have partnered to have the Providence School Mascot (the Grizzly Bears) added to the inside and outside of the multi-Purpose Gym. This project will most likely be completed in 2023.

## **VIII. MEALS AND NUTRITION**

**Describe any changes instituted during 2022:**

No current changes to the meals and nutrition. Changes that were made in 2021 to increase the protein, dairy and snacks for the TAY population are still in place.

**JJDPJPC Comment:** A tray from breakfast the day of the inspection was provided to the commission to see, smell, and taste the food provided.

## **IX. ORIENTATION FOR YOUTH**

**Describe any 2022 changes in the youth orientation process (f/u to Title XV) for the JF and for the SYTF:**

Per VCPA, no new changes were made to the youth orientation process. All youth receive a Youth Handbook at booking and are placed on intake status until they have

two negative COVID tests. Symptomatic youth are placed on medical isolation. All youth are offered the COVID-19 vaccination.

**JJDPC Comment:** At the time of the inspection, OYCR had started the process of sending out an Ombudsperson poster to all facilities to post in each unit. JJDPC encourages adding this information to the Youth Handbook, plus adding the Youth Bill of Rights once the final version is sent out.

## **X. DISCIPLINE OF YOUTH**

**Describe any 2022 changes in the discipline process for youth:**

Per VCPA, there were no changes to the discipline process for youth during 2022. A small workgroup is being convened to review the points system which helps to determine how youth earn and maintain their levels.

## **XI. DISCIPLINE OF STAFF**

**Describe any misconduct issues with staff and what course of action was taken:**

Per VCPA, there was one misconduct issue where a staff member made disparaging comments to a youth. The action that was taken was a Written Reprimand. There were also informal discussions held with three staff based on complaints or grievances filed by facility youth.

## **XII. GRIEVANCE POLICIES/PROCEDURES**

**Please provide copies of all policies and procedures related to Grievances for youth and community members.**

There is a formal complaint process for community members. Current Title 15 Regulations require a grievance process for youth only.

**How many youth grievances were submitted during 2022? 26**

**How many community grievances were submitted during 2022? 0**

**JJDPC Comment:** The JJDPC reviewed grievances during the inspection, but unfortunately the two commissioners assigned to the task are no longer with the commission and did not submit a report out. Commissioners Salazar and Lopardo visited the JF on July 7, 2023, and reviewed all submitted grievances. We did not review appeals but have noted to review for next year. Grievances were overall well documented and resolved in a positive manner. We did note a couple of issues and appreciated being able to talk directly to staff during the review. Two main issues stood out; one was overly assertive responses to the youth's grievances that we felt would be sorted out with the new process being implemented of the trauma-informed training mentioned in the follow-up to the 2021 grievances review. The second concern was that a male youth adjudicated for charges of a sexual nature was housed on a unit with

females. As discussed during our time at the JF speaking with DPOs Vredenburg, Jimenez, and Hain, we want to reiterate that sexual trauma in females is known to exist at a high rate for incarcerated females, and males with charges of a sexual nature can be triggering. While male and female integration isn't a concern, this specific circumstance should be avoided when known to exist. As also discussed, we recommend going back to grievances to document the "closing of the loop", i.e., when a suggestion for an action is included in the response, its completion is documented.

**JJDPC Recommendation:** The JJDPC noticed words like "Canteen" and "Kite" being normalized in the JF grievances. We recommend renaming them to something else like "Market" and "Request" going forward to get away from language that could be perceived as grooming for adult jail and prison.

### **XIII. TELEPHONE, CORRESPONDENCE, VISITATION PROCEDURE**

**Describe any changes in the procedures since December 2021 Inspection, including procedures for SYTF youth.**

Per VCPA, during 2022, youth were allowed to use both phones on the unit instead of one as COVID numbers declined and the need to social distance was reduced. In July 2022, in person visiting was suspended due to a COVID-19 surge. Youth visited with their families via a video chat app on cell phones. In person visiting resumed during September 2022. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, youth no longer have to pay for phone calls.

### **XIV. PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF YOUTH**

**List any changes in required dress for youth since the December 2021 inspection.**

Per VCPA, there have been no changes in required dress for facility youth. The youth who are participating in the Providence Scholar Programs are allowed to wear shirts with their local community college logo on them. The youth who are in the screen-printing program are in the process of developing shirts for the Leaders program and SYTF youth.

**Please describe clothing and laundry procedures. How often are new clothes including shirt and pants provided?**

Per VCPA, youth are given clean underwear, bras, socks and a shirt on a daily basis. They get new/ clean pants, shorts and sweatshirts twice a week (Wednesday and Sundays). Youth are assigned their own underwear. All dirty clothing gets laundered daily.

### **XV. INSPECTIONS & ACCREDITATIONS**

**Fire (Health & Safety Code § 13146.1)**

Date: 11/15/22      Result: Pass

**Medical/Mental Health: (Understand this will be NA per 2021 inspection report)**

Date: N/A Result: N/A

**Environmental Health:**

Date: 11/7/22 Result: Pass

**Nutritional Health (Health & Safety Code § 101045)**

Date: 4-15-22 Result: Pass

**Facility Safety & Security**

Date: Pending Result: NA

**XVI. EDUCATION**

**PROVIDENCE SCHOOL**

**School Staff Number: 15 total**

Providence Court School utilizes both certificated and non-certificated personnel. All six full-time Providence Court School teachers, the school counselor, the school psychologist (part-time), and the administrators are highly qualified and appropriately credentialed. In addition, Providence School also has 3 Classified Para-educators and 1 Office Manager.

**Number attending school: 46**

**Number in Independent Study: 0**

**SYTF number attending school: 5**

**Number of minors not attending school and reason?** All non-graduates attend school.

**Specific steps taken to encourage their involvement?**

N/A

**Number of youth in each classroom:** The JF population fluctuates so class size has been as low as two and as high as 15. The maximum class size is 20.

**Activities and coursework:**

California Common Core State Standards (CCCSS) are embedded in Providence Court School's courses. Teachers develop and implement lessons that teach 21st Century Skills, provide the opportunity for students to learn skills needed for the workforce,

utilize inquiry, and facilitate academic and personal discovery. Teachers implement English language development (ELD) strategies identified in the 2015 English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework. All programs utilize a variety of supplemental material to prepare students for the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC), English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC), and local assessments.

All supplemental materials (e.g., Character-Based Literacy, online tools used in ELA, science, social science, and mathematics) align with CCCSS and support the development of technology and 21st Century skills. All teachers develop lesson plans, pacing guides, and assessments in alignment with the CCCSS. Teachers use curriculum-embedded formative and summative assessments to modify instruction and monitor students' understanding of the core subjects (mathematics, English, social science, and science) at regular intervals. These data are used to determine student progress and adjust instruction based on student performance.

### **ON-LINE COLLEGE ACCESS**

Probation offers online college course to high school graduates. The Providence School counselor works with the Oxnard College Counseling department to enroll students in college. An Oxnard College counselor has met with each student taking college classes to identify a career choice and the courses that they must take to obtain their career goal.

**Number of youth enrolled: 17** currently (14 are enrolled for the Spring of 2023)

**Number of SYTF youth enrolled:** 11 of the 17

#### **Specific steps taken to encourage their involvement?**

The enrolled youth are allowed to wear a community college logo shirt, they receive tutoring, daily encouragement and they get to celebrate the end of the semester with a special food item request.

#### **Activities and coursework:**

The youth are completing general education classes (English, Social Sciences, Humanities, etc.). One youth took a Biology class and had to do experiments.

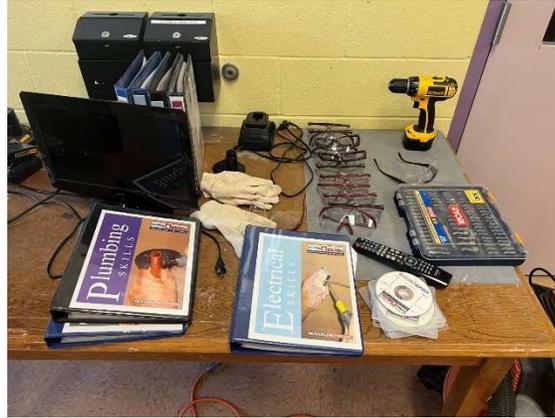
**Supplies? (Books, paper, computers?)**  Yes  No

**Ability to do homework?**  Yes  No

### **VOCATIONAL**

Per VCPA, they currently offer Paxton Patterson construction modules, an automotive engine repair program, screen-printing, STEPS-Y to develop resume, interviewing skills, and how to complete applications. Additional Paxton Patterson modules have been

ordered and are anticipated to be delivered in 2023. In addition, they are in the process of adding Career Technical Education courses, specifically, Career Exploration, Workplace Essentials, and Agriculture/Natural Resources. Lastly, they anticipate bringing in a financial literacy program in 2023. At the time of inspection, 30 youth were enrolled plus 13 out of 30 of the SYTF youth.



### Specific steps taken to encourage their involvement?

Youth volunteer to participate in vocational programming. They are encouraged to participate to assist them in being more successful in finding/sustaining employment upon their release. For SYTF youth, participating in these types of programs are recommended in their Individualized Rehabilitation Plan and their progress is reported to the Court every 6 months.

### Activities/coursework:

Paxton Patterson youth complete painting, plumbing and drywall modules. In 2022, they submitted a recycle bin with a Minion theme to the Ventura County Fair. They won first place for their submission. Paxton Patterson youth also built a music stage for the facility band.



**JJDPC Recommendation:** JJDCPC recommends working with an Independent Living Program for additional life skills for youth 16 and over. We also recommend exploring programs like the Prison Education Project which can bring life skills to youths, taught by formerly incarcerated persons. JJDCPC also recommends working with the local Department of Rehabilitation who might be able to assist with more programming and higher education, especially for SYTF youth who may be in the care of VCPA long enough to complete a 4-year degree or more. We also encourage working with Oxnard College for in-person courses for youths who may be eligible to furlough for them.

## **XVII. Youth Interviews**

Commissioners Valerie Salazar and Gina Petrus completed interviews with four youths. The youth interviewed were aware of staffing shortages. They reported lack of staff affecting family involvement and regular access to therapy. One youth who requested to see a therapist stated they waited over a week. Other mentionable concerns from the youth interviews included book series being incomplete, not in good condition, or not current, and wishing they had more access to updated entertainment in the video game arena as well as streaming services and such.

All youths interviewed did mention that most of the staff go out of their way to talk to them, encourage them, and help them think about how they can make better choices to change their futures.

## **XVIII. Other Areas of Concern**

JJDPC sent a follow-up email with two additional questions. The answers from VCPA are directly below each question.

### **Does VCPA use OC spray and is there a process for it?**

Yes, the JF uses OC. See attached Post Order. On a monthly basis, the videos, incident reports and supervisor review of all Use of Force incidents are reviewed by our Administrative Review Committee (ARC) which includes the Housing Division Manager, Supervising DPOs, CSOIII's, the Chief Deputy, a member of our Force Options team and a Professional Standards Unit team member. The review is to determine if the incident was handled within policy, if training or remediation is needed, or if the matter needs to be referred to our Professional Standards Unit.

### **Are staff at the JF given Naloxene Hydrochloride (Narcan) to carry on them for potential overdoses?**

Currently, our Wellpath medical team who are on-site 24 hours a day carry naloxone in their emergency bag and they also have it located in their medical office. We do have a few staff who recently attended the training last week (week of February 12, 2023), who are now authorized to carry it on their person. The JF is in the process of enrolling all members of our Special Functions Team (who conduct the bookings, respond to incidents or emergencies in the units, oversee central control, assist with unit coverage, staff breaks and programming) in this training first. The training is 24 hours in length and





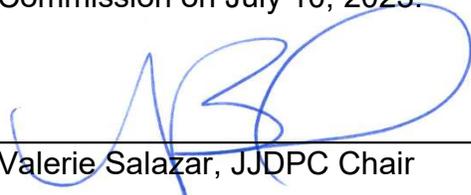
### CONCLUSION

The JJDPC concludes that the Juvenile Facility residents are well-supervised in a safe and secure environment. The JJDPC believes that, based on this inspection, the Ventura County Juvenile Facilities Complex meets Title 15 standards for a safe juvenile facility.

This report will be sent to the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court, The California Board of State and Community Corrections, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, The Ventura County Chief Director/Chief Probation Officer, and The Ventura County Chief Deputy Juvenile Services. The report will also be made available online at the JJDPC website.

The JJDPC plans to return in December 2023 for the next annual inspection.

Approved by The Ventura County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission on July 10, 2023.

  
Valerie Salazar, JJDPC Chair

Date: July 10, 2023