

**SB 823 - Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant
Kern County Annual Plan – Supplemental (April 2022)**

Contents:

Part 1: Facility Improvements

Part 2: Classification

**Part 3: Placements and Demographic Data - Youth With 707(b) Offenses and/or 290.008
Offenses**

Part 1: Facility Improvements

Several facility improvements and programs are either completed or underway to our Secure Track Program, Achievement, Perseverance, and Excellence (APEX) Academy. As the age and maturity of our youth increases, we found a need to provide them with tools to assist them in their mental, physical, and educational development. We also strive to give youth access to vocational skills while in APEX. A goal of the APEX Academy is to produce a prepared and proactive member of our community.

We completed the construction of a concrete slab to be used for recreation and Physical Education. The concrete slab is in a gated/secure section adjacent to the APEX Academy housing wing. Youth will have access to a variety of exercise equipment and games which can be utilized in a safe and secure environment. We purchased two additional pieces of outdoor exercise equipment as well. These two pieces are weather resistant and will be placed in a grass portion of our recreation area. Additional exercise equipment has been purchased for use within the APEX Academy. This will provide opportunities to exercise indoors when weather prevents outdoor exercise and will also act as an incentive for youth when they wish to exercise indoor in a climate-controlled environment.

A covered patio will soon be built on the facility site, adjacent to the dining hall. We are waiting on materials to be shipped and installation will be completed soon thereafter. The covered patio is quite large, 12' x 28'. The patio will have electrical outlets, and lights installed as well. This covered area was placed strategically next to the dining hall to provide youth the opportunity to eat outside when weather permits. The area will also be utilized to host youth picnics with their families. Our staff have also conducted barbecue cooking classes with youth. The covered area will provide staff the opportunity to continue this with the youth outside, in the shade, while being next to the kitchen to get cooking supplies.

All housing units will also have patio tables and umbrellas placed outside, in front of their unit. This will be in place to give youth the opportunity to take a break when they are feeling overwhelmed or a need to de-escalate their behavior. The patio table will also have multiple other purposes such as for visiting, enjoying a snack, and for leisure activity. All other outdoor tables on the facility site will also be outfitted with colored umbrellas. During picnics with family members or visiting, these table can be used, and the sun will be kept off youth and their families. The umbrella and patio tables will also add some homelike features to the facility and will provide a different aesthetic. Youth will be involved with staff in the building of the unit patio tables. This will give them a sense of accomplishment while also offering them some basic home construction skills. It also gives our staff an opportunity to interact with youth in a positive environment and open the channels of communication.

Another addition to the outdoor portion of the facility is the creation of a large outdoor garden. Through a collaboration with the Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) we were able

to start construction of a large garden. This garden is being designed and constructed in an area behind the units that was never utilized. Youth have been directly involved in the physical labor of creating this outdoor space and planting seedlings. Youth will also be involved in the construction of raised planter boxes through the construction class facilitated by KCSOS. Through this collaborative, KCSOS will provide a storage building, large greenhouse, and purchased numerous supplies. Probation has purchased a large, commercial grade rototiller as well as supplies to maintain the garden. Youth will work within the garden and learn how to plant and cultivate crops. These crops will be utilized in our kitchen and create a “garden to table” program in which youth will reap the benefits of the crops they raised. Youth will also be able to participate in the construction class to build the planter boxes and construct the greenhouse adding to their construction skills. Youth will also learn to prep and cook crops produced from the garden to assist them in an independent lifestyle.

Educational and vocational opportunities have increased as well for our youth. For the youth who have yet to graduate, KCSOS provides their high school education as well as vocational training. Youth can potentially obtain their OSHA safety certificate and forklift certificate. KCSOS provides state of the art virtual welding and forklift simulators to train youth in preparation of obtaining these certificates. Youth will be able to participate in weekly and weekend culinary and construction classes provided through KCSOS. KCSOS has built a culinary trailer to utilize as well, which will soon be on-site. This is like a food truck; however, is a state-of-the-art trailer equipped with a full kitchen. This trailer will be utilized in the culinary class provided by KCSOS to teach youth how to cook and maintain kitchen standards. Youth can receive their ServeSafe certificate through KCSOS’ culinary class as well as the facility kitchen. Future plans for the culinary trailer are to have youth cook for parents and serve them during visiting days and other events. Long term goals of teaching youth the business side of a full-service kitchen is a priority. This culinary kitchen has many uses off-site during fundraiser events and will provide our youth an opportunity to give back to their community.

We have plans to continue KCSOS Radio Frequency classes which teaches youth skills to work on cellular telephone towers. KCSOS will continue to provide solar related classes to assist youth in gaining knowledge of obtaining a career in the solar industry. Another class in the initial stages of development is a state-of-the-art screen-printing class. KCSOS has purchased a digital printer capable of printing logos and designs on clothing. This equipment will be utilized to teach youth how to operate it with plans of providing clothing for the facility. The class will also teach youth the business side of the operation and skills involved with creating and operating a business. We have also reached out to a large, local farming operation in the Central Valley and begun talks related to providing vocational training to our youth. While the talks are in the beginning stages, the outlook is promising. The vocational training would provide training not only in the agriculture sector, but also the manufacturing sector as well.

We have partnered with California State University Bakersfield to participate in Project Rebound. This program is designed to support the success of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth.

Project Rebound assists youth by offering the opportunity and resources needed to successfully transition and acclimate to a college campus. The program offers special admissions for those who might not qualify for university acceptance. Project Rebound motivates youth to prepare, apply, enroll, and ultimately graduate with a university degree. We have also partnered with our local Junior College, Bakersfield College. Bakersfield College participates in the Rising Scholars Network which offers classes, free of charge, to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth. Bakersfield College offers academic classes as well as vocational classes. This will ensure that youth are continuing to pursue their post-secondary education or obtaining a vocational certificate. Project Rebound as well as the Rising Scholars Network will follow youth upon their release so there is a seamless transition, and they can continue their education without interruption.

Within the APEX Academy we have added many homelike improvements. We have allowed youth to paint the entire interior of the dayroom and multipurpose rooms. Youth will also be given the option to paint the interior of their sleeping rooms and to hang pictures of family within their rooms. We have installed several gaming systems, gaming chairs, rugs, bean bags, and changed the décor on the walls. Other large rocker chairs and sectional chairs have been added to all housing units. We have selected several posters depicting different cultural themes to represent youth here at the facility. Decorative curtains in the multipurpose rooms will be installed as well to add to the homelike feel. We have replaced plastic tables used for visiting and programming with new, more compact tables which can be stored to add space to the multipurpose rooms. We will also be adding new, larger televisions to each unit. In addition, we will install new soundbars to project the sound of the televisions and provide music within the unit. As youth progress through the program, we will open visiting opportunities to all immediate family members, siblings, and positive mentors.

We have added additional security features to the APEX unit as well due to the increased age and sophistication level of our youth. On the upper mezzanine of both units, we have installed painted wrought iron railing which extends from the floor to approximately six inches below the ceiling. The railing extended the current railing on the mezzanine which was approximately four feet high. This added safety feature will protect the youth as well as staff. We are currently in the initial planning stages of an additional security fence around the exterior of the facility. We also are in the stages of shoring up some of our interior fencing with “no climb” chain link and adding additional security features to our gates leading out of the facility. A large-scale video surveillance system is in the final stages of installation and is anticipated to be completed by May 20, 2022. Over 250 cameras will be installed on the facility site. While obviously providing for additional safety and security, these upgrades will also allow for greater participation in outdoor activities conducted within the perimeter of the facility.

Part 2: Classification

We have a classification process which gives direction regarding the classification of youth as they enter the facility. Each new youth also goes through a series of processes to ensure their safety and security. Upon arrival, youth go through an initial intake assessment. In the event the youth make allegation of abuse, molestation, or has been a perpetrator, the appropriate referral to Child Protection Services or Law Enforcement is completed immediately. Each new youth completes the MAYSI-2 questionnaire to caution or warn of any angry/irritable, depressed/anxious, or suicidal ideations. Youth also meet with our behavioral health provider upon intake. All youth are provided with the PREA Assessment, notice and flyer upon intake as well.

Within our policy we have a section dedicated to "Classification." All youth go through the above-mentioned initial processes which focus on the health and safety of the youth, the safety of staff, and the security of the facility. As youth spend time at the facility and more information is obtained based on their performance and input from family, youth, available records, victims, police, behavioral health, and probation staff, their classification needs may change. Classification is not a tool for punishment or discipline. The Duty Supervisor will assign youth appropriate classification designations considering the following factors: age, maturity, sophistication, emotional stability, program needs, legal status, public safety considerations, medical/behavior health considerations, gang affiliation, gender, and gender identity. Our classification policy also outlines "no dorm status" and "no roommate status" for youth when there are safety concerns associated with shared sleeping rooms. Other specified classifications include observation period, suicide watch, special watch, special medical watch, medical restrictions, medical isolation, medical bed rest, asthma (to alert staff of their safety and medical needs due to the potential use of Oleoresin Capsicum), ADA, special program status, Individualized Safety and Security Program, and Alternative Program.

While we do have guidelines directed at classification of youth, we have also reached out to the Kern County Sheriff's office to obtain their classification guidelines and any additional related information, based on their experience in dealing with 18- to 25-year-olds in custodial settings. We will meet with their classification staff to see what may be useful in altering our guidelines to be used with APEX youth.

Part 3: Placements and Demographic Data - Youth With 707(b) Offenses and/or 290.008 Offenses

Prior to July 2021, we were not tracking demographic and placement data internally on all 707(b) and 290.008 type offenses. Additionally, JCPSS reporting does not have these fields requiring data input for state reporting purposes, and therefore, specific data could not be pulled from that system.

From July 2021 through December 2021, there have been 12 youth with sustained 707(b) offenses. Of those, ■ are African American males, ■ are Hispanic males, and ■. ■ of those youth were ordered into a local camp/ranch commitment, ■ order into our Secure Track program (APEX Academy), ■ released on probation terms, ■ ordered into out of home placement, and ■ given Deferred Entry of Judgement (DEJ). In ■ instances the offenses would have met the 290.008 offense criteria.