



JUVENILE JUSTICE REALIGNMENT BLOCK GRANT ANNUAL PLAN

MAIN CONTACT FOR PLAN

Date: April 15, 2024

County Name: Contra Costa County

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BACKGROUND AND INSTRUCTIONS:

Welfare & Institutions Code Section(s) 1990-1995 establish the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant program for the purpose of providing county-based care, custody, and supervision of youth who are realigned from the state Division of Juvenile Justice or who would otherwise be eligible for commitment to the Division of Juvenile Justice prior to its closure. Section 1995 was amended by Assembly Bill 505 (Ting, Chapter 528, Statutes of 2023.) This template has been updated to reflect those amendments which will be in effect on January 1, 2024. All citations are to the law as amended. The statutory language can be found [here](#).

To be eligible for funding allocations associated with this grant program, counties shall create a subcommittee of the multiagency juvenile justice coordinating council to develop a plan describing the facilities, programs, placements, services, supervision, and reentry strategies that are needed to provide appropriate rehabilitative services for realigned youth. (Welf. & Inst. Code § 1995(a).)

County plans are to be submitted to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration in accordance with Welf. & Inst. Code §1995. OYCR may request revisions as necessary or request completion of the required planning process prior to final acceptance of the plan. (Welf. & Inst. Code § 1995 (f).) Plans will be posted to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration website. (Welf. & Inst. Code § 1995(g).)

There are nine sections to the plan:

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PART 1: SUBCOMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND PROCESS (WELF. & INST. CODE §§ 1995 (B) AND (C))

List the subcommittee members, agency affiliation where applicable, and contact information:

Agency	Name and Title	Email	Phone Number
Chief Probation Officer (Chair)	Chief Probation Officer Esa Ehmen-Krause	Esa.Ehmen@prob.cccounty.us	925-313-4188
Co-Chair <i>(If Applicable)</i>	Rev. Julius Van Hook, Community Member	Chaplainjxvanhook@gmail.com	510-815-7183
District Attorney's Office Representative	Annie Esposito	Annie.Esposito@contracostada.org	925-957-8721
Public Defender's Office Representative	Jonathan Laba	Jonathan.Laba@pd.cccounty.us	925-608-4400
Department of Social Services Representative	Roslyn Gentry	Gentrr@ehsd.cccounty.us	925-608-4826
Department of Mental Health	Steven Blum	Steven.blum@cchealth.org	925-957-2739
Office of Education Representative	Lynn Mackey	LMackey@cccocoe.k12.ca.us	925-942-3388
Court Representative	Judge Barbara Hinton	Bhint@contracosta.courts.ca.gov	925-608-1138
Three Community Members <i>(defined as "individuals who have experience providing community-based youth services, youth justice advocates with expertise and knowledge of the juvenile justice system, or have been directly involved in the juvenile justice system" (Welf. & Inst. Code § 1995(b).))</i>	Tumani Drew	tumani@youngwomenfree.org	510-646-7646
	Ri Scott	ri.m.scott@gmail.com	415-500-5125
	Rev. Julius Van Hook, Community Member & Co-Chair listed above	Chaplainjxvanhook@gmail.com	510-815-7183

Describe the process used to determine whether to select a co-chair for your subcommittee (Welf. & Inst. Code § 1995(b)):

Consistent with the Contra Costa County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council bylaws, this subcommittee functions with a Chair/Co-Chair model. The Co-Chair is a representative of a community-based organization and is selected by the members of the subcommittee.

Provide the dates of the last two meetings that the subcommittee convened to discuss your county's JJRBG plan?

Meeting Date 1:

Meeting Date 2:

Additional meeting dates of the subcommittee, if applicable: March 30, 2023

Date that the subcommittee approved the plan by a majority vote: March 28, 2024

Describe how the plan was developed, including the review and participation of the subcommittee community members as defined in Welf. & Inst. Code § 1995(b):

Contra Costa County Probation Department contracted with Impact Justice (IJ) to assist the Juvenile Justice Realignment Planning Subcommittee (JJRP) in the initial development of the Division of Juvenile Justice Realignment plan. IJ, in partnership with the JJRP, conducted a comprehensive review of existing literature on best-practices, convened listening sessions with impacted youth and stakeholders, and facilitated the regularly occurring planning meetings, and breakout workgroups that were focused on specific subject matters. Additionally, IJ developed a research-based Social Emotional Learning (SEL) tool that is utilized as a decision-making tool in the Secure Youth Treatment Facility, and IJ is conducting a process evaluation to assess the efficacy of both the planning and implementation of the program model. The plan has been reviewed and revised annually and approved by a majority vote of the JJRP subcommittee.

PART 2: TARGET POPULATION (WELF. & INST. CODE § 1995(D)(1))

Briefly describe the County's realignment target population supported by the block grant.

The "target population" is defined as "youth who were eligible for commitment to the Division of Juvenile Justice prior to its closure and shall further be defined as persons who are adjudicated to be a ward of the juvenile court based on an offense described in subdivision (b) of Section 707 or an offense described in Section 290.008 of the Penal Code." (Welf. & Inst. Code § 1990(b))

Contra Costa County will continue using these block grant funds to support the total population of youth who, prior to the promulgation of Senate Bill 823, were eligible for commitment to the California Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). This includes not only youth that returned from DJJ, but also youth currently housed and supported by programming in three programs maintained and operated by the Probation Department: (1) the Briones Youth Academy (BYA) Commitment Pathway, (2) BYA Secure Pathway (SYTF), and (3) the Girls in Motion (GIM) program. Both BYA and GIM are phased residential programs that offer robust, evidence-based services designed to address mental, behavioral, and cognitive needs as well as to provide education, job, and life skills.

Demographics of identified target population, including anticipated numbers of youth served, disaggregated by factors including age, gender, race or ethnicity, and offense/offense history.

The County anticipates serving a youth population very similar to the population currently under its custodial care. The following is point in time data, collected March 8, 2024: [REDACTED] youth is committed to GIM, fifteen (15) youth in BYA- Secure Pathway, and sixteen (16) youth in BYA- Commitment Pathway, for a total of thirty-two (32) young people. Across these three programs, the population can be described by the following demographics:

Age. At intake to Juvenile Hall, [REDACTED] of young people were under age 16 years; [REDACTED] young people [REDACTED] were age 16 years; eighteen (18) young people (56%) were age 17 years; [REDACTED] young person [REDACTED] was age 18 years; [REDACTED] young people [REDACTED] were between the ages of 19 and 25 years.

Sex. Of the thirty-two (32) young people, [REDACTED] as male; [REDACTED] as female.

Racialization. Thirteen (13) young people (41%) identified as Black; thirteen (13) young people (41%) identified as Hispanic; [REDACTED] identified as White; [REDACTED] identified as Other.

Offense. Twenty-eight (28) young people (88%) were adjudicated for person related offenses; [REDACTED] for property offenses; and [REDACTED] for other offenses. Of the person related offenses, thirteen (13) cases involved Murder or Attempted Murder; [REDACTED] involved Robbery or Carjacking; and [REDACTED] involved Assault or Battery.

*There were [REDACTED] young people pending 707(b) offenses who were excluded from the above data set, as their adjudication date is unknown.

Describe the target population, disaggregated by programs, placements and/or facilities to which they have been referred.

Given the anticipated youth population described above, Probation recognizes the potential for youth to remain under juvenile supervision for longer periods of time as they approach adulthood. As such, Probation considered this population during the planning, creation and funding of a collaborative service network for Transitional Aged Youth (TAY). The goal is to ensure transitional planning occurs, and that a variety of individualized supports and services are available to help young adults navigate the unique challenges of reaching the age of majority while involved in the justice system.

PART 3: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (WELF. & INST. CODE §1995(D)(2))

Provide a description of the facilities, programs, placements, services and service providers, supervision, and other responses that will be provided to the target population. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response (Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(D)(2) and (d)(8)):

The County has created a treatment program roadmap to serve the needs of the target population. This program includes three components following disposition:

- 1) Orientation
- 2) Pathway
- 3) Reentry

During orientation, the following assessments will be completed:

- Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS)
- Youth Outcomes Questionnaire (YOQ)
- Criminal Thinking Scale (CTS)
- Choices
- Career Aptitude Test
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

These assessments inform the youth's individualized rehabilitation plan, developed collaboratively within a multidisciplinary team (MDT) and to track progress.

An individualized "Pathway" will be developed based on a youth's unique, specific needs. The Pathway is developed collaboratively within the MDT, which will include the youth, Deputy Probation Officer, Juvenile Institutional Officer, Behavioral Health, Medical, Education, and supportive individuals. These supportive individuals may include any people the youth identify as supportive, such as mentors, coaches, faith leaders, social workers and/or family members. The Department will also work with the young people to ensure that they have a mentor to work with.

In addition to plan development, the MDT will meet regularly to check-in on the youth's progress. Following best practice, the MDT includes only stakeholders relevant to the actual and current needs of the youth while in-custody. Research also illustrates the connection between meaningful engagement and participation of youth within the decision-making and treatment plan, and successful plan completion.

Programming will include evidence-based cognitive behavioral treatment classes, life-skills development, postsecondary coursework, vocational and career technical education, and exposure to programs, services, and activities that encourage positive youth development. Re-entry programming will include off-site educational opportunities, employment, recreational activities, home passes, and collaboration with community-based organizations when eligible and court-approved. All youth court-ordered to the BYA Commitment Pathway will reside on the Aspen Unit. All youth court-ordered to the BYA Secure Pathway will reside on the Cypress Unit until they have reached specified personal goals and benchmarks and be eligible to apply for transition to the Tamalpais Unit. The Tamalpais Unit is a less restrictive environment, and program goals will prepare the youth for reentry.

PART 4: JUVENILE JUSTICE REALIGNMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS (WELF. & INST. CODE §1995(D)(3))

Describe how the County plans to apply grant funds to address the mental health, sex offender treatment, or related behavioral or trauma-based needs of the target population. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response: (Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(A) and (d)(8))

Whereas empirical research estimates that the prevalence rate for mental health disorders among juvenile justice-involved young people is exceptionally high—and given the high degree of overlap between the clinical needs of youth adjudicated for sexual offenses and for non-sexual offenses—the County will explore ways to consolidate and leverage its resources to best serve these populations.

Serious and persistent mental illness (“SPMI”) is a critical concern for the juvenile justice system. Although there is wide variation, most mental health disorders emerge between adolescence and early adulthood,¹ precisely the age range of the realigned youth. Relative to their non-system-involved peers, young people in the juvenile justice system are exceptionally likely to meet the criteria for at least one mental health diagnosis.² As described above, the County will assess on an ongoing basis the needs of the young people under its care, including mental health needs. For those with identified mental health needs, County-employed behavioral health clinicians possess sufficient training to not only provide guidance with respect to the development of individualized rehabilitation plans, but also administer appropriate care consistent with that plan.

To address concerns regarding practical delivery of care, Contra Costa County has expanded its capacity to locally serve the rehabilitative needs of youth with behavioral health needs. The County has funded the hiring of new clinicians, and the creation of a Multi-Sensory De-escalation Room (MSDR) on a repurposed Juvenile Hall living unit. Moreover, the MSDR was curated by staff, youth in custody, and a local artist with lived experience.

In addition, the County will continue to update policies, practices, and trainings as appropriate toward the development of strategies regarding crisis stabilization and management upon return from hospitalization.

In addition to SPMI, problematic sexual behavior (“PSB”) is a significant area of concern. With respect to Contra Costa County, this population is relatively small. However, given the gravity of these offenses, the County will pursue evidence-based programs or arrangements that serve its dual interest in rehabilitation and public safety. Contra Costa County currently partners with Sonoma County to meet the needs of our youth who are committed to a secure facility to receive treatment for sexual offenses. The County will continue to assess expanding local capacity. Moreover, the County commits to continuous improvement and supplementation of its programs using an evidence- and strength-based, trauma-informed lens.

Importantly, the body of evidence consistently demonstrates that youth adjudicated for sexual offenses are psychologically and behaviorally distinct from adults convicted for similar charges. Namely, justice-involved youth with PSB are, on average, remarkably similar to the general population of justice-involved youth (i.e., without PSB) in terms of rehabilitative needs³ and may be appropriately and effectively treated using non-PSB-specific methods.⁴ Nonetheless, there remains a limited proportion of this population who would benefit from PSB-specific treatment methods. For this group, the County will explore expanding its local capacity and partnerships with other jurisdictions.

In exploring an expansion of local capacity, the County will consider: (1) an additional allocation of budgetary and human resources toward either (a) the creation of an ongoing, funded position to serve in the role of clinical specialist with experience treating PSB, or (b) development and fulfillment of an agreement with an appropriate non-County entity to provide contract-based services for the same purpose; (2) an additional

allocation of budgetary resources toward training and certification for facility-based clinical staff to provide supplementary care and to ensure the appropriateness of services provided to youth adjudicated for sexual offenses but who do not warrant specialized care; and (3) partnering with at least one community-based provider to coordinate and synchronize therapeutic methods for the purpose of ensuring consistency and continuity of service across the continuum of care (i.e., from the secure treatment facilities to less restrictive placements and through reentry).

These considerations recognize the value of developing local clinical expertise that, consistent with the articulated intent of SB 823, maintains strong connections between youth and their families and communities. Specifically, family involvement carries empirically validated benefits in terms of therapeutic engagement⁵ and post-release outcomes⁶ for youth with PSB generally and young women with PSB specifically.⁷ Additionally, building capacity from within the existing County infrastructure averts logistical complications related to securing non-MediCal-eligible contract funding and ensuring physical access to juvenile facilities by non-County clinicians, especially for non-routine visits as, for example, during emergent situations.

Moreover, establishing a local continuum of services comprising both County agencies and community-based providers has substantial clinical benefits. Evidence-based clinical standards of care suggest that youth with PSB should be treated in community as soon as is clinically feasible and that continuity of services is critical to successful reentry.⁸ Indeed, research finds that community-based care is more effective than facility-based care in terms of reducing recidivism among youth with PSB.⁹ While this may not be possible in some cases, the County embraces these findings in principle and will appropriately weigh these facts as it determines its programmatic strategies. To this end, Contra Costa will continue to consider and invest in partnerships with local providers who specialize in addressing this service need.

In exploring partnerships with other jurisdictions, the County will consider establishing agreements with other counties that: (1) are willing to host youth from Contra Costa; (2) will house and treat youth in a facility located within a distance that is reasonably accessible to the families of youth; and, (3) administer evidence-based programming that is both consistent and compatible with programming offered by those community providers that will manage care for youth post-release. For example, the County has partnered with Sonoma County to house and oversee the sex behavior treatment of youth from Contra Costa.

For both the SPMI and PSB population, Contra Costa commits to continuously exploring methods by which to improve or supplement its programming using an evidence- and strength-based, trauma-informed lens. In the immediate term, the County will consider: (1) adding strength-based curricula to its mental health programming, and (2) committing resources toward continuous training and professional development opportunities for its facility-based staff. Specifically, for strength-based curricula, the County will explore options regarding arts- and performance-based therapeutic modes of constructing narrative identity, including opportunities to share or publish final works. Additionally, with respect to training and professional development, the County will consider providing additional staff training on topics such as crisis response strategies (discussed above), basic knowledge regarding mental health conditions common among justice-involved young people, appropriate strategies and boundaries for building positive relationships between staff and the young people under their care, and other topics deemed professionally relevant and useful for achieving the County's rehabilitative goals.

Furthermore, consistent with the evidence in culturally responsive and trauma-informed care, the County will be attentive to not only models of treatment, but also the means by which that treatment is delivered. For example, most existing interventions do not take into account the impact of historical trauma, structural racism, and current interpersonal racial discrimination in the lives of system impacted youth. To address this gap, Contra Costa will consider implementing Culturally Adapted Treatments (CATs), which have been defined as the "systematic modification of an evidence-based treatment or intervention protocol to consider language,

culture and context in such a way that it is compatible with the client’s cultural patterns, meanings and values.”¹⁰ Additionally, the County will explore mechanisms—including training and clinical assignment policies—by which to ensure that mental health clinicians and institutional staff have a reasonable understanding of the cultures and communities from which youth emanate and have the capacity to engage in ways that are familiar to youth.¹¹

Describe how the County plans to apply grant funds to address support programs or services that promote healthy adolescent development for the target population. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response: (Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(B) and (d)(8))

The County understands the importance and benefits of utilizing positive youth development (PYD) framework for programs involving young people. The PYD framework is commonly conceptualized as building a pathway for youth to work towards the Five Cs: connection, confidence, character, competence, and contribution. A sixth C, caring, is sometimes added. These components focus on the youth’s perception of themselves: for example, confidence in this framework means “a sense of self-worth and mastery; having a belief in one’s capacity to succeed.”¹² They also incorporate desired outcomes, from taking on leadership roles to contributing to the community. The framework outlines a holistic approach that focuses on creating a network of supportive individuals and opportunities that allow youth to build on their strengths and define and work towards goals that speak to their interests and values. This network brings together family, educators, and other trusted adults as community partners to work with youth in building their own individual pathways to success.¹³

Recognizing youth as the experts on their own needs and strengths is a critical component of this framework. Therefore, the County has engaged youth in developing programs and will continue to solicit and value feedback from current and former participants. This is demonstrated by several independent living components of the Tamalpais Unit. Based on youth feedback, youth launder their own clothes and can cook meals; décor and furniture were reimaged according to youth preference, a beekeeping program is underway, a music studio is in the development stage, and the kitchen is being remodeled to facilitate a culinary program.

The County will continue to collect feedback that allows youth to be consulted both on their individual interests, goals, and desired opportunities and to have a voice in the overall conception and implementation of PYD programming. Engaging youth provides an opportunity to ensure that services are responsive to youth needs and creates a leadership opportunity for youth to advocate for themselves and their communities as part of their PYD progress. Feedback mechanisms vary widely but at their most successful will center authentic youth-adult partnerships, in which youth are consulted, their considerations are incorporated into programming, and youth and adults work together to make decisions.¹⁴ Youth commonly offer input through Youth Advisory Boards or Councils, which may put forth suggestions for improvements to programs and facilities.¹⁵

Contra Costa County recognizes the importance of substantial family involvement in developing pathways to success for youth throughout their involvement with the juvenile justice system. The County will pursue a goal of ensuring that families are informed about their family member’s current activities, have a voice in all decisions regarding the young person, and are part of the supportive network of adults that contributes to PYD.¹⁶

As the juvenile and criminal justice systems disproportionately impact youth and young adults of color, it is critical to ensure racial equity is embedded into the County’s PYD framework and programming. Following evidence-based and promising practices,¹⁷ the County will work to ensure that all youth have access to and are engaged by programming and will collect and examine data on outcomes for youth across racial and ethnic groups. The County will explore trainings for program leadership and staff to increase their capacity to

recognize and respond to both racial inequities experienced by youth directly while participating within the program, and structural and interpersonal racism experienced within and outside of the program.

Describe how the County plans to apply grant funds to address family engagement in programs for the target population. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response: Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(C) and (d)(8))

Contra Costa County is committed to prioritizing family and community engagement. Research demonstrates that strong bonds with family and community support is essential for positive youth development and successful reintegration.¹⁸ The County will begin its family engagement strategies at the earliest stage of the youth's commitment. Upon commitment, the youth will be assigned to a counselor, who will meet with the youth's caretaker. The County encourages families to actively participate in their loved one's treatment plan, both at its inception and thereafter, continuing with regular meetings with Briones Academy staff.

The County adopts a broad definition of family that extends beyond biological parents and legal guardians, allowing individual youth and their caretaker(s) to define the individual who will best serve the youth's positive development. As a practical matter, the County will consider using the Juvenile Relational Inquiry Tool ("JRIT"). Consistent with evidence-based practices, the JRIT provides a structure under which young people may work with staff to identify familial resources, strengths, and gaps, both at intake and continuously throughout their justice involvement.¹⁹ Utilizing a broad definition and identifying the strengths and gaps within youth's family network will provide robust and meaningful supportive networks for the young person.²⁰

In order to promote family engagement, the County will review policies and aim to ensure that barriers are removed for families to participate in their youth's treatment plan and that relationships are maintained while in custody. In particular, the County has expanded visitation to include flexible family visitation hours, with caretakers, children of youth, siblings and partners. Transportation support is considered for those in need.

The County will additionally consider that some families benefit from supplementary support or coaching to help them throughout the process. Such considerations will include connection to networks where families can connect with similarly situated families involved in the justice system, as well as exploration of parenting classes for both youth in custody who have children, and adult caregivers. It is important for engagement with families to be culturally responsive,²¹ and the County will continue to explore utilizing community-based organizations for these services.

Relatedly, the County will seek to ensure that any spaces identified for family engagement events, to the degree possible, mirror a home-based setting to provide a sense of normalcy that is grounded in dignity for youth and their families. The County has hosted its first family movie night, and will continue to monitor and assess other models to further facilitate a family-oriented environment.

Describe how the County plans to apply grant funds to address reentry, including planning and linkages to support employment, housing, and continuing education for the target population. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response: (Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(D) and (d)(8))

Understanding how to support returning youth requires understanding the harm confinement inflicts during a crucial period of a young person's development.²² The disconnection from one's family, friends, and community impairs the potential for successful reentry.²³ For young people, these challenges are complicated by the already trying transition from adolescence to adulthood.²⁴ Reentry interventions that center adolescent development are effective in reducing recidivism and ensuring long-term success, particularly when they involve the family in treatment and target higher-risk youth.²⁵ To ensure better reentry outcomes as they

transition from confinement to their communities, the county's reentry support system will explore methods that tap into the strengths, assets, and aspirations of justice-involved youth and their support systems, and combine targeted programs and services to address the immediate needs of youth returning to their communities. Some of these needs include housing; employment; education; substance abuse, mental health, social-emotional, legal, and familial support; and transportation.

To improve the odds of success for youth reentering their communities, the County, related agencies, and the community should consider planning measures of success for youth during their reentry process when the youth first enters the juvenile justice system. Coordination and collaboration between agencies and across services and supports are necessary at multiple phases of a youth's confinement.²⁶ Reentry services and supports that are tailored, high quality, and provided in the least restrictive environment will allow youth the greatest chance to succeed.²⁷ Youth in confinement show significantly low levels of psychosocial maturity (e.g., responsibility, perspective, and short-term decline in temperance). As a result, confined youth have lower levels of educational and employment attainment in young adulthood compared to all other youth.²⁸ As these are critical components to successful reentry, the County will explore programming that allows youth to build psychosocial maturity skills through activities that mirror typical adolescent responsibilities, behaviors, and tasks.

Many youth with justice involvement have few, if any, financial resources and may not have family members that they can rely on for food and shelter. These young people cannot afford to volunteer, take unpaid internships, or engage in some of the job-search behaviors common among more privileged young people. Involving youth in paid work, service, or other employment related activity as soon as possible is key to success. Examples of successful approaches include wage-subsidized internships, stipends for community service, and transitional jobs—i.e., time-limited subsidized work experiences that help establish a work history and develop skills to access unsubsidized employment.²⁹

The County recognizes that placement into the secure youth treatment facility is the first step in the reentry process.³⁰ As part of the reentry planning process, Contra Costa will examine its extant practices and explore methods by which to align those practices with evidence-based best practices in four key areas: (1) consistent with the Risk-Needs-Responsivity principle, assessing confined youth both continuously³¹ and immediately prior to referring any services, supports, or treatment interventions³²; (2) ensuring continuity of care between treatments provided in facility and those referred upon reentry³³; (3) identifying opportunities for establishing partnerships with community-based providers for non-Probation case management to coordinate care across all service-providing agencies³⁴; and, (4) meaningfully engaging youths' social support systems in the reentry planning process.³⁵

The majority exiting SB 823 commitments will likely be transition-aged youth. The County will look to implement programs that can address the unique challenges and needs of this specific population while they are still in confinement. The multiple problems faced by transition-aged youth present barriers to meeting normative developmental milestones of this age, including vocational and educational success, development of stable relationships, and maturation into productive adults.³⁶ The County will explore transition planning that includes provisions for mental health transitions from juvenile-to-adult systems of care. They may also assess and plan for needs in key areas crucial to success in adulthood (e.g., education, vocation, independent living), for this population.³⁷ In the course of these considerations, the County will contract with subject-matter experts for consultation and technical assistance. Moreover, to ensure that a continuum of services is in place, Contra Costa is developing a request for proposals that will expand the services designed for and available to this population.

Step-down treatment would occur continuously throughout a young person's commitment. Assessments for readiness to transition to a less restrictive stage will occur on a regular basis. The County will explore ways to immerse youth in a modified therapeutic community that prepares them for their reentry. For example, the

step-down program could be designed to promote positive behavior. The County recognizes that “positive behavior” should be individualized, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed. Youths’ negative behavior can be addressed using a procedural justice model,³⁸ in which rules and expectations are clear and infractions are dealt with swiftly and fairly, but in a respectful and informative manner. This would allow the youth time to ask questions during the process and would remind them that this should be a learning experience. Treatment exercises in the step-down program will explore ways to mimic as much as possible the challenges that youth will face in the outside world. The program exercises become a dress rehearsal for reentering youth so that they can role-play new skills before reintegrating into their community.

In 2024, Probation will begin planning and development to open the Morrow House, an environment designed to meet the transitional housing needs of youth exiting the Briones Youth Academy. Ideally, this living space will serve as a short-term, housing option for youth who have demonstrated the skills, maturity, and aptitude to succeed in a supportive, yet largely independent residence with minimal supervision. The Morrow House will be a less restrictive program that requires a court order and six-month reviews, consistent with the requirements of SB 823.

Describe how the County plans to apply grant funds to address evidence-based, promising, trauma-informed and culturally responsive programs or services for the target population. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response: (Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(E) and (d)(8))

Contra Costa County’s Probation Department is committed to providing services that are gender-responsive, trauma-sensitive, and culturally responsive for young people and training staff.

The County currently has one unit for youth who identify as female; this is a co-ed unit. The same unit is home to our gender specific Girls in Motion Program that offers both individual and group counseling. This is provided by Probation staff trained on gender-specific issues, therapists, and providers affiliated with community-based organizations that facilitate counseling and the creation of individualized treatment plans. Additionally, the County has gender-responsive caseloads assigned to Deputy Probation Officers.

Restoration cannot exist alongside harm or fear of harm. The milieu surrounding the realigned DJJ population is being designed to serve as a nurturing social environment and thus cannot include tools that degrade, control, and create physically and psychologically unsafe environments.

The County is committed to designing a high-quality, culturally responsive program. The term *cultural responsiveness* generally refers to an approach that considers and responds to individuals’ cultural frame of reference including demographic, sociopolitical, and other contextual characteristics.³⁹ When applied to youth programming, a culturally responsive approach takes into account the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of youth in the design and implementation of the program.⁴⁰ Effective implementation makes youth, particularly those from ethnic and racial minorities, feel safe and valued and better prepared for their futures.⁴¹ Contra Costa will consider programs that youth find experientially relevant, comprehensible, and practically valuable.

An integral component of a culturally responsive approach is the appropriate training of all facility staff given that they will play an essential role in the implementation of culturally responsive programming. As such, the County will explore opportunities for appropriately equipping staff to feel prepared and willing to engage youth in the design and implementation of program activities. These opportunities may train staff on, for example, actively seeking youth’s input regarding their interests, goals, and community concerns. Providing youth with the opportunity to co-create program activities is fundamental to providing culturally responsive programming.⁴² Likewise, the County will assess materials and develop appropriate procedures as necessary to ensure that materials are written in language that is accessible for all literacy levels and remain attentive for when

interpretation or translation services are needed.⁴³ Since youth's realities and needs are likely to change over time, staff should remain flexible and prepared to adapt programs in order to remain responsive to the youth. Additional trainings that may be considered include:

- Positive Youth Justice
- Restorative justice practices and programs
- Effective Strategies for youth and family engagement
- Group facilitation
- Conflict resolution
- Behavior management principles
- Effective case planning and case management
- Special management plans and behavior management plans
- Specific interventions that will be jointly provided.

In addition to relying on evidence-based, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive services, the County intends to develop a feedback loop to reflect and review whether the plan is meeting the needs of the County and realigned youth, and is amending the plan, as necessary. The County is working with outside evaluators to measure the plan's impact and disseminate information on a regular basis.

Describe whether and how the County plans to apply grant funds to include services or programs for the target population that are provided by nongovernmental or community-based providers. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response: (Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(F) and (d)(8))

Community-based providers play a critical role in the justice apparatus. These providers can facilitate connections to support, services, and opportunities that cannot be provided through the traditional justice system, and also support community connections. The support and relationships provided extend far beyond any necessary supervision or involvement within the justice system. Contra Costa County recognizes the importance of community-based providers in ensuring that youth have access to programs that are run by members of their own communities, center their experiences and needs, and can provide continuity following commitment. Therefore, the County intends to incorporate community-based providers into the system of care for the realigned population and will identify the specific services, programs, and components to handle.

The County has previously relied on collaborative models that bring together justice system partners, community-based providers, and young people. These collaboratives have been shown to reduce recidivism, improve young people's well-being, and have created a diverse network of support around young people.⁴⁴ The County will consider using and expanding usage of collaboratives. When developing partnerships with community-based providers, the County will take into account evidence-based models that provide culturally affirming, strength-based, and supportive programming.

The creation of a successful partnership between youth, community-based providers, and justice system partners requires all three partners to begin working together at the earliest possible stage of a young person's justice involvement. This early partnership also ensures appropriate reentry planning and continuity of services. At the other end of the timeline—and to ensure that youth are able to continue to leverage the relationships and opportunities that community-based providers have built during their commitment—the County will consider the location of community-based providers and their presence in the community that each youth will return home to.

Additionally, the County recognizes the need to allocate resources towards capacity-building for community-providers to better serve the realigned population and will explore this more in the next phase. Capacity-building grants have shown great promise in allowing organizations to better serve justice-involved youth. In a

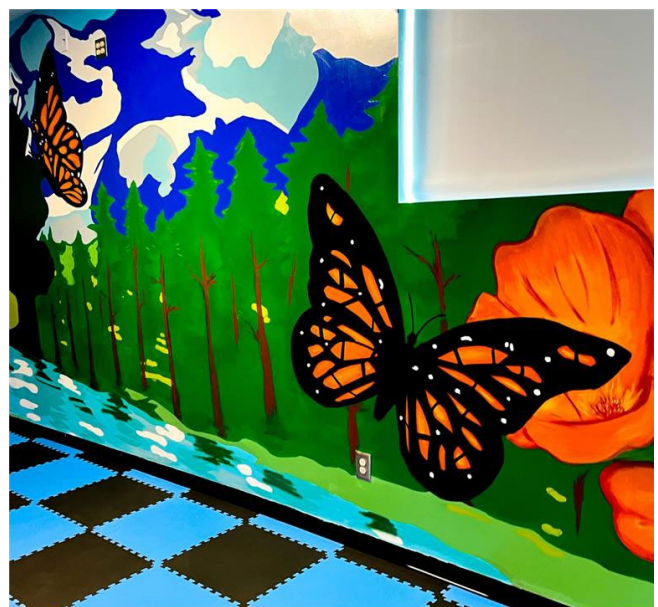
study of capacity-building grants given to six grantees working in the juvenile justice system, the provision of such grants with limited strings attached allowed organizations to leverage the power of their existing leadership and structure to expand and improve on the services they provide and the organizational structures that allow them to provide these services.⁴⁵ In order to ensure that accountability across system and community-based partners is equitable, data and reporting should be complementary and not burdensome to program aims. The County will explore ways to leverage its resources to support community-based providers with data gathering and tracking and will consider measures that focus on holistic wellbeing outcomes. The County will consider using data that can be disaggregated by race and other identities to ensure that all youth are benefitting from the services and relationships from community-based providers. This information will be used, tracked and maintained through our new case management system, Tyler Enterprise.

Provide a detailed facility plan indicating which facilities will be used to house or confine the target population at varying levels of offense severity and treatment need, and improvements to accommodate long-term commitments. Facility information shall also include information on how the facilities will ensure the safety and protection of youth having different ages, genders, special needs, and other relevant characteristics. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response: (Welf. & Inst. Code (d)(8))

Contra Costa County intends to follow evidence-based best practices that indicate institutional facilities are inconsistent with Positive Youth Development principles and the creation of trauma-responsive systems of care. Research has shown that juvenile halls often rely on jail-like facilities and mechanisms, which are antithetical to trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate services for youth.⁴⁶ These facilities cause harm to the youth committed and may increase the risk of reoffending, a connection that is most crucially seen in the cases of young people who are committed far from their families for long periods of time.⁴⁷ In contrast, when young people are closer to their families and communities, they can maintain ties both to supportive adults with whom they have positive relationships and with educational programs.⁴⁸ The target population included in this plan will serve older adolescents and young adults. Gleaning the most effective solutions from realignment programs like New York City's Close to Home, and trauma-informed environments like those initiated in the Ohio and Florida juvenile justice systems, Contra Costa County has created a plan for facilities that places paramount importance on Positive Youth Development and trauma-informed care.

Contra Costa County intends to house currently eligible youth in its Juvenile Hall, a 270-bed, maximum security detention facility located in Martinez. There are ten (10) living units, of which only five (5) are currently occupied by youth, and youth are classified and assigned to units based on gender, age, offense/commitment, and special needs.

Two housing units have been repurposed to accommodate academic and evidence-based programming, and a recreational space to ensure that the young people are not confined to one unit for the entirety of their day. A third unit has been transformed into a calm space, with a Multi-Sensory De-escalation Room.



Young people committed to the Secure Youth Treatment Facility will initially be housed within one unit while they begin their identified treatment plan. After approximately one year, the young people will become eligible

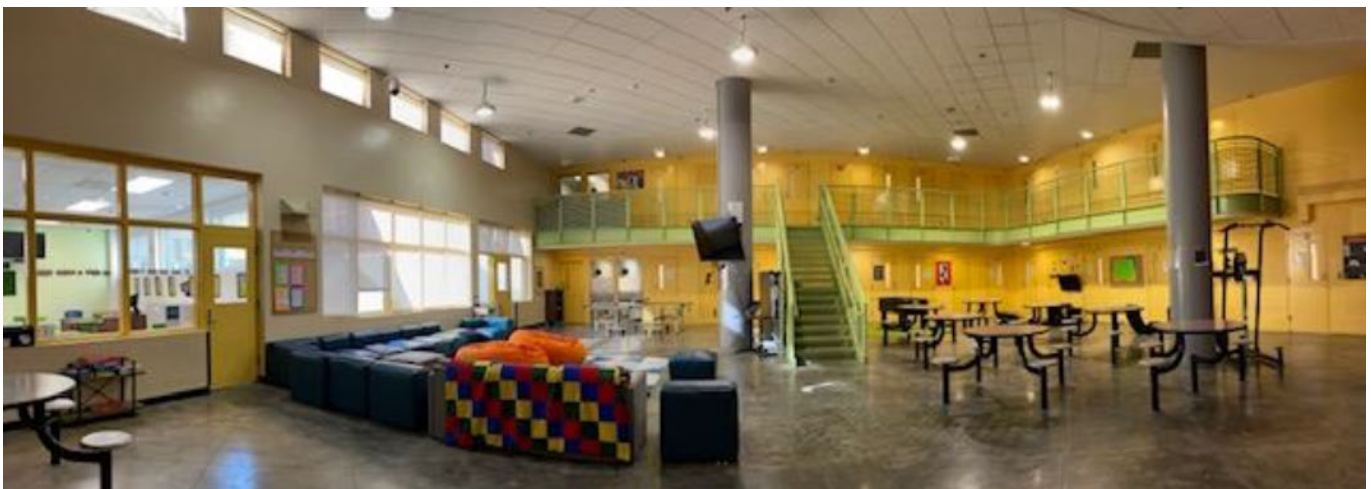
to apply for transfer to the (in-house) step-down housing unit. Once a young person has been accepted for transfer to the (in-house) step-down housing unit, an individualized re-entry preparation plan will be created. This plan is crucial as it is designed to promote a successful transition into the community by addressing three essential areas: life skills, healthy relationships, and vocational skills/education.

Probation will chaperone enhanced off-site outings to provide life skill development and hands-on experience in various skills, such as opening a checking account, pumping gas, grocery budgeting and shopping, and obtaining their California Identification Card or Driver's license. Youth will also be able to seek vocational training and/or advance their education. This may require the young person to attend college or vocational courses, or become gainfully employed, off-campus.

To build healthier relationships with family and supportive adults, the young people and their identified supportive adults may begin family therapy, have extended family visits, participate in facility family movie nights, and have temporary releases (3-hour, 6-hour, and 48-hour).

The County has collaborated with experts to design spaces that are trauma-informed and support positive youth development within the inherent confines of this space. A trauma-responsive physical environment is essential and allows young people to feel both physically and emotionally safe. Trauma-responsive physical environments imbue respect and care for committed young people into the design of the space where they live. In particular, the County has continued to explore all environmental options to ensure that young people have access to rooms for sleeping and relaxing that provide a level of privacy and autonomy, leisure indoor and outdoor recreation outside of their sleeping environment, kitchen space for meal preparation and consumption, and appropriately designed space for family engagement.

Ultimately, the County plans to implement less restrictive community-based placements for young people when appropriate in their treatment plan and recommended and ordered by the Court. Currently, after a young person has applied and been accepted for transfer to the (in-house) step-down housing unit, Probation focuses on providing engaging opportunities for young people as they prepare for reentry. These opportunities may include allowing young people to attend college classes, participate in trades programming at trades halls, and/or participate in other educational and vocational programs. Additionally, these programs may be located within communities, which allows young people to be closer to their families and support networks and facilitate family reunification.





Subject to formal adoption by the County's Board of Supervisors, the final, long-term plan for youth will involve the creation of a new multi-use campus. Consistent with evidence-based best practices, the intention for the campus is to meet the needs of youth throughout their commitment, which operationalizes a system of decreasingly restrictive housing and programming for youth as they move towards completion of their sentences. The framing of this new facility as a campus is purposeful, conveying the intention to create a space focused on increased programming and academic and vocational education designed to instill hope in currently committed youth. Upon the Board's approval, the County would intend to open the facility by or potentially before 2030.

Housing Special Populations: Contra Costa County has sufficient physical space. However, the County acknowledges that its interest in rehabilitation is not best served by committing youth with severe and persistent mental illness within juvenile hall. Juvenile halls are neither designed to serve the complex treatment

needs of this population, nor are they equipped to provide clinically necessary services and support.⁴⁹ Even when services are provided within restrictive settings, evidence indicates that, to the extent youth achieve meaningful progress, that progress either fails to apply in community or decays quickly.⁵⁰ In contrast, research shows that robust community-based provision of mental health care produces better, more durable outcomes in both the immediate and long term.⁵¹As such, the County is committed to utilizing all available alternatives for young people with serious and persistent mental illness, including finding appropriate housing that comports with evidence-based and therapeutic best practices.

**PART 6: RETAINING THE TARGET POPULATION IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM
(WELF & INST. CODE § 1995(D)(5))**

Describe how the plan will incentivize or facilitate the retention of the target population within the jurisdiction and rehabilitative foundation of the juvenile justice system, in lieu of transfer to the adult criminal justice system. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response: (Welf. & Inst. Code (d)(8))

Broadly, Contra Costa County is committed to the retention of youth within the juvenile justice system in lieu of transfer to the adult criminal justice system. In addition, the County is committed to ensuring that youth who would not otherwise have been committed to DJJ are not committed to its new secure youth treatment facility. The County acknowledges and embraces the empirical finding that retention of youth in the justice system, and minimizing the carceral component of juvenile court dispositions, broadly leads to better outcomes for both youth⁵² and public safety.⁵³ As such, the committee agrees in principle that all efforts should be made to exhaust every possible option before transferring youth to adult court. The County aspires to continue limiting transfers only to a subset of cases wherein (a) the underlying offense entails extreme violence, (b) the young person is demonstrably unamenable to rehabilitation by the Juvenile Court, and (c) incapacitation is the only available option for the preservation of public safety. However, recognizing the special role of the Superior Court, nothing contained in this section shall be construed to direct or compel judicial officers in the course of their duties as neutral arbiters of the law, nor shall it be construed to reflect the judiciary's position on the propriety or impropriety of these or related actions that may appear before it.

Currently, the District Attorney's Office follows a formal protocol in determining whether to transfer a case involving a juvenile to the adult court. Among other things, the protocol requires consultation with an *ad hoc* committee comprising the District Attorney, no fewer than three managing attorneys representing relevant units, and the deputy district attorney assigned to the case. The committee is charged with an affirmative duty to seek mitigating information from defense counsel and to weigh this information against an analysis of all five criteria enumerated in WIC § 707(a)(3)⁵⁴ as well as public safety concerns. As a result, the County has in recent years successfully limited transfers to adult court to cases where the accused faced violent felony offenses. Moving forward, the District Attorney's Office intends to continue to use this protocol. The expectation is that transfer requests will continue to be limited.

The Probation Department has a Jurisdictional Transfer Report Review Protocol that allows for proper communication and review of all Jurisdictional Reports subject to transfer that are reviewed by the Probation Supervisor, Probation Manager and for final review and sign off, the report is reviewed by the Director of Specialty Field Services.

Beyond matters of adjudication, the County recognizes the value of data and the importance of leveraging careful analyses to guide decision-making. As such, the County intends to reconvene its DJJ Realignment Subcommittee on a regular basis to publicly review analyses conducted on data collected on the population to which this document applies.

PART 7: REGIONAL EFFORT (WELF & INST. CODE § 1995(D)(6))

Describe any regional agreements or arrangements supported by the County’s block grant allocation. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response: (Welf. & Inst. Code (d)(8))

The County has a regional agreement in place with the Sonoma County Probation Department to serve juveniles who are court-ordered to complete treatment for sexual offenses in a secure setting, as well as youth for which a local conflict may exist.

PART 8: DATA (WELF & INST. CODE § 1995(D)(7))

Describe how data will be collected on youth served by the block grant. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response:

As stated above, the County values and recognizes the importance of data and analysis to guide decision-making. However, the County also acknowledges the present limits of its existing analytical capacity. To reconcile these, Contra Costa will explore a three-part strategy to ensure that appropriate data are collected for meaningful analyses: (1) an internal, immediate-term strategy; (2) an internal, long-term strategy; and (3) an immediate- and long-term strategy for contract-based partnerships.

The internal, immediate-term strategy will explore leveraging data already collected for and reported to the Juvenile Court and Probation Statistical System (JCPSS). These data include demographic (e.g., age, sex, racialization), offense (e.g., charges filed and sustained), and outcomes (e.g., disposition and detention) data. To supplement these, the County will consider additional mechanisms to digitally capture administrative records, potentially including records relating to progress review hearings pursuant to WIC § 875(e) and subsequent step-downs to less restrictive placements.

The internal, long-term strategy will consider how to best leverage a newly implanted digital case management system (“CMS”) – Tyler Enterprise – for not only individual case management, but also robust analysis of both the effectiveness and efficiency of the County’s justice programs as well as the populations served. Probation continues to convene an internal committee to problem solve and improve activities related to the CMS.

The immediate- and long-term strategy for contract-based partnerships will employ the principles of performance-based contracting and standardized progress reporting for contracted providers.

Describe outcome measures that will be utilized to measure or determine the results of programs and interventions supported by block grant funds. Describe any progress on this element since May 1, 2023, at the end of your response:

Through the County’s contracted partnership with Impact Justice, the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) tool was developed. SEL is the process through which young adults acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, and achieve personal and collective goals, feel, and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

PART 9: OTHER UPDATES: DESCRIBE ANY PROGRESS ON ELEMENTS SINCE MAY 1, 2023: (WELF. & INST. CODE (D)(8))

Provide a description of progress made regarding any plan elements and any objectives and outcomes in the prior year's plan, to the extent that they have not already been described above.

As described in the applicable sections above, the County has: successfully navigated the closure of DJJ, and fully integrated returnees to the Briones Youth Academy programs structure; created an all-encompassing Transitional Aged Youth service network to address the unique needs of emerging adults in the justice system; maintained a regional partnership to address the needs of youth exhibiting problematic sexual behavior in a safe environment; expanded the availability of emotional and behavioral health supports and services by funding additional staff, partnering with behavioral health staff to offer continued services to youth after exiting the facility, and repurposing a living unit to create a calm space and MS DR with the youth; considered youth interest, voice and choice in the redesign of living environments and engagement spaces, and development of services and activities; expanded family support, visiting and activities; reimagined and expanded independent living environment, and available activities on and off site; developing concept for the Morrow House, a transitional living space for youth exiting the Briones Youth Academy; and, conceptualizing the campus like environment as a long term plan

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