

# Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant Annual Plan<sup>1</sup>

**Date:** March 20, 2024

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**County Name:** Kern 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.

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.

County plans are to be submitted and revised in accordance with WIC 1995, and may be posted, as submitted, to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration website.

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<sup>1</sup> Updated November 2023 to add elements required by AB 505 (Chapter 528, Statutes of 2023)

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**Part 1: Subcommittee Composition (WIC 1995 (b))**

List the subcommittee members, agency affiliation where applicable, and contact information. If the subcommittee has opted to select a co-chair, identify the co-chair.

Agency	Check box if Co-Chair	Name and Title	Email	Phone Number
Chief Probation Officer (Chair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	William Dickinson, Chairman	DickinsonW@kernprobation.org	661-868-4466
District Attorney's Office Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gina Pearl, Deputy District Attorney	GPearl@kernda.org	661-868-2340
Public Defender's Office Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Peter Kang, Public Defender	KangP@kerncounty.com	661-868-4770
Department of Social Services Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maria Bermudez, Assistant Director	BermudM@kerndhs.com	661-631-655
Department of Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jennie Sill, System Administrator	JSill@kernbhrs.org	661-868-7807
Office of Education Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Debra Plank, Program Director	deplank@kern.org	661-636-4346
Court Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Honorable Judge Marcus Cuper	Marcus.cuper@kern.courts.ca.gov	661-610-6950
Community Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tom Corson, Executive Director Kern County Network for Children (KCNC)	tocorson@kern.org	661-636-4980
Community Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wesley Davis, President/CEO Wendale Davis Foundation	wdavis@wendaledavisfoundation.org	661-493-0275
Community Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lois Hannible, Program Manager Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK)	lhannib@capk.org	661-396-8126
<b>Additional Subcommittee Participants</b>				
Community Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ucedrah Osby, Chapter President All Of Us or None	aouonbakersfield@gmail.com	661-616-8625

**Part 2. Subcommittee Process and Meetings**

Define process utilized by subcommittee to determine whether or not a co-chair was desired (WIC 1995(b)):

The subcommittee discussed the AB 505 updates during the 10/18/23 meeting. On March 20, 2024, the subcommittee voted to not add a co-chair to the subcommittee.

Provide dates of subcommittee meetings held during the year (WIC 1995(e)):

The subcommittee met on 03/15/2023 and 10/18/2023 during the 2023 calendar year. The subcommittee will be reconvening on 03/20/2024.

Previously the Subcommittee met on the following dates (in chronological order):

10/13/2022, 03/16/2022, 10/20/2021, 03/10/2021, 02/24/2021

The subcommittee holds meetings at an average of two (2) per calendar year, with one taking place typically in March and the other in October.

Provide date plan was updated (WIC 1995(e)) and approved by the majority of the subcommittee (WIC 1995(c)):

The subcommittee last updated and approved the plan on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The subcommittee had previously updated the plan and approved it on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021. During each meeting the plan received majority subcommittee approval.

**Part 3: Target Population (WIC 1995 (d) (1))**

Briefly describe the County’s realignment target population supported by the block grant:

Kern County serves youth whose most recent adjudicated offense is described in WIC 707(b) and is defined under WIC 1990(b), for cases where the Juvenile Court has made a finding that less restrictive alternative dispositions are unsuitable. There are two (2) Secure Youth Treatment Facilities (SYTF) in Kern. Male youth are housed in the Achievement, Perseverance, and Excellence (APEX) program located inside the Larry J. Rhodes Kern Crossroads Facility (“Crossroads”). Female youth are housed in the Secure Youth Treatment Program (SYTP) within the Pathways Academy in the James G. Bowles Youth Detention Center (YDC).

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

Kern County Probation Department anticipates serving youth ages 14 to 23, and up to age 25 dependent on the length of the Juvenile Court ordered disposition. Kern County Probation initially received 18 youth from the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The youth coming to Kern County from DJJ ranged in ages as follows: [REDACTED] 21 years old and over, [REDACTED] between the age of 19 to 20, and [REDACTED] under the age of 18. Of the 18 youth; [REDACTED] had a reentry status of community supervision, [REDACTED] were committed to APEX academy, and [REDACTED] had a reentry status of terminated. There is capacity for approximately 40 youth locally. There were no female youth offenders received from DJJ. Commitments of female youth offenders continue to be low. There are currently [REDACTED] female commitments to the SYTF. Kern County has contracted locally with Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services for specialized services for sex offenders, however unique cases may require a level of treatment that would only be available through a regional contract with another County specializing in group-based services with like offenders.

Demographics for youth offenders who have served or are serving commitments in Kern county from inception through January 2024 are as follows:

- 41 total commitments: [REDACTED] males; [REDACTED] female (Graph 1)
- 47%(17) for assault related offenses; 33%(12) for homicide related offenses; [REDACTED] for robbery related offenses; and [REDACTED] for sex offenses (Graph 2)
- 36% (15) are under the age of 18; 49% (20) are between the ages of 18-21 years old; [REDACTED] are over the age of 21 (Graph 3)
- 63% (26) are Hispanic; [REDACTED] are African American; [REDACTED] are Caucasian (Graph 4)
- Of these Commitments [REDACTED] were for an original offense; [REDACTED] were due to a probation violation (Graph 5)

Graph 1

### SYTF Commitments by Gender (through Jan 2024)

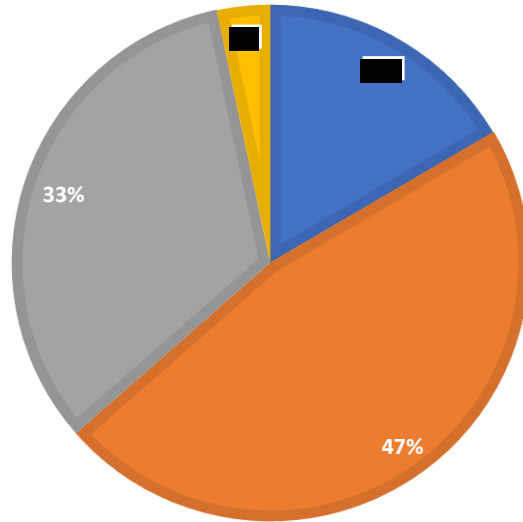
■ Male ■ Female



Graph 2

### COMMITMENT TYPE YOUTH IS SERVING IN KERN COUNTY (AS OF JAN 2024)

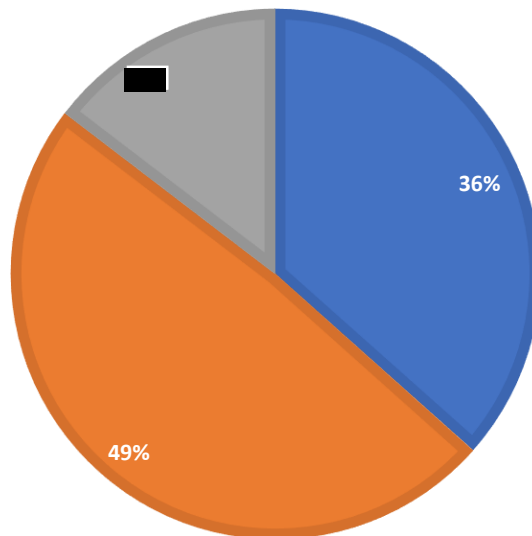
■ Robbery ■ Assault ■ Homicide ■ Sex Crime



Graph 3

### AGE AT THE TIME OF COMMITMENT (AS OF JAN 2024)

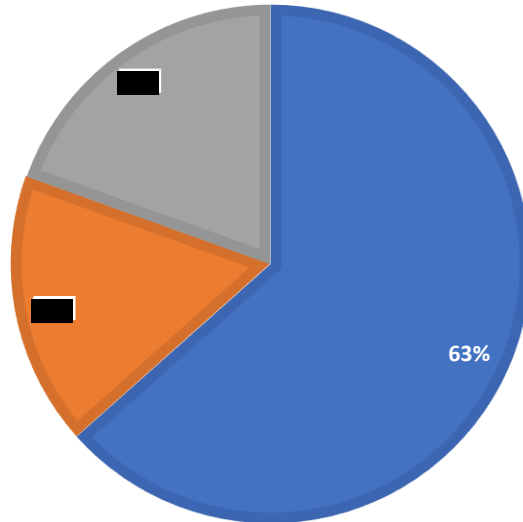
■ Under 18 ■ Between 18 - 21 ■ Over 21



Graph 4

### RACE OF YOUTH FROM KERN COUNTY SERVING COMMITMENTS (AS OF JAN 2024)

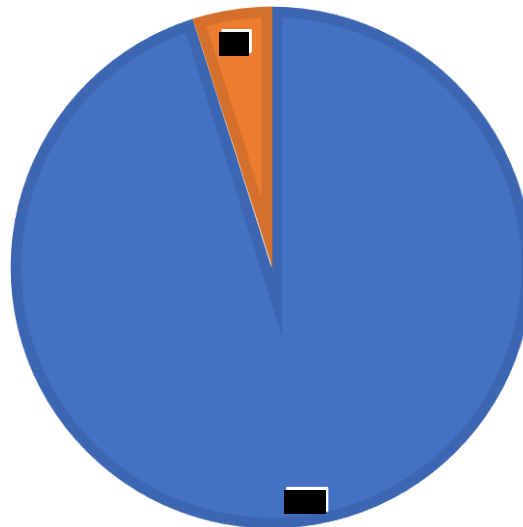
■ Hispanic ■ African American ■ Caucasian



Graph 5

### TYPE OF COMMITMENT YOUTH IS SERVING IN KERN COUNTY (AS OF JAN 2024)

■ New Commitment ■ Probation Violation



Describe any additional relevant information pertaining to identified target population, including programs, placements and/or facilities to which they have been referred:

Several lower-level interventions are available to youth prior to a long-term commitment of this nature becoming necessary. However, at times the serious nature of the adjudicated offense(s) and consideration for public safety will outweigh the opportunity for youth to be tried in lower-level options. A brief description of the Probation Department's continuum of care is described below:

**Out of Custody Referrals for Youth not on Probation Status**

Kern County Probation receives hundreds of police reports a month. Each report is reviewed by a Probation Officer or Supervisor to determine what, if any, action will be taken. Referrals to other services or warning letters are sent to parents of youth with no prior record for any report received alleging charges that carry no confinement time and some low-level misdemeanors.

**Evidence-Based Screening for Felony and Misdemeanor Referrals**

Probation uses the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) to screen youth referred for most misdemeanor offenses that carry confinement time and for referrals on felony offenses. The PACT is an evidence-based, risk/needs assessment and case planning system implemented to assist officers in accomplishing four basic objectives:

- Determine the level of risk for re-offending (low, moderate, or high) to prioritize resources to youth at a moderate to high-risk
- Identify the risk and protective factors linked to criminal behavior and tailor rehabilitative efforts to address the youth's individualized assessment profiles
- Develop a case management plan focused on reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors
- Allow case managers to determine if targeted factors change because of the Court's intervention

The PACT assists in guiding initial decision-making regarding referrals. Dispositions of cases that have been screened by an officer include referrals to the District Attorney for filing or sending a warning letter and relevant referrals to community-based resources. Felony referrals are reviewed by the District Attorney's office. Once on probation status, the PACT case plan is updated regularly by the assigned Probation Officer.

**Lower-level Interventions for Youth on Probation Status**

Once youth have been adjudged wards of the Juvenile Court, lower-level interventions may be appropriate for redirection prior to consideration for a commitment to a local custodial program. These options include: Deferred Entry of Judgment (DEJ) (it should be noted DEJ youth are not adjudged wards at time of DEJ disposition), community service, Juvenile Court Work Program (JCWP), community based behavioral health services, and school-based services. These interventions are typically ordered by the Juvenile Court in conjunction with terms of probation-based supervision of youth while they live at home in the community. Out of home placement is an option of last resort for youth whose parent/guardian is unable to properly provide care or where the home is unsafe or unsuitable.



### **Youth Programs and Supports Unit**

Officers can also refer youth for services available at the Probation Department's Youth Programs and Supports Unit (YPS). The mission of YPS is to empower youth by providing support and intensive skill training through evidence-based practices to reduce criminal behavior for a safer community. YPS is designed to offer youth a respectful and safe environment for individualized treatment of criminogenic needs by using evidence-based and cognitive behavioral treatment models with fidelity. The treatment provided promotes accountability, development of attainable goals, and a framework for making positive changes in personal values for increased success and reduced recidivism.

### **In-Custody Dispositional Options for Intervention**

Youth determined to need in-custody treatment can be committed by the Juvenile Court to local custodial commitment programs (Pathways Academy, Camp Erwin Owen, and Kern Crossroads Facility) for one year, serving a portion of that time in custody and the remainder of the time on furlough release. These youth are composed primarily of those who, because of their level of delinquent behavior and risk to reoffend, require in-custody service provision and supervision. Upon release, most youth return to the community under Probation Department supervision. The Probation Department operates five distinct custodial programs on three campuses:

- **Youth Detention Center (YDC):** YDC is a secure detention facility for youth that fall under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court with a maximum capacity of 108 youth. Youth detained at YDC are alleged to have committed a law violation and are detained for the protection of themselves and/or the community or are serving a short-term Juvenile Court-ordered commitment. The YDC program is structured to provide individual and group activities, behavioral health treatment, and a well-balanced school program. All youth booked into YDC are screened for risk factors associated with Human Trafficking (HT)/Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC), suicidal/self-harming ideation through the MAYSI-II, sexual abuse through the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) questionnaire, and a general health assessment is made.
- **Camp Erwin Owen (CEO):** Camp Erwin Owen is a 65-bed juvenile forestry camp for young men ages 14-18. It is in Kernville, California, and opened in 1938 as an honor and work camp. Camp holds true to that tradition today, as staff and allied agencies provide services which promote discipline, a strong work ethic and individual responsibility. All programming is geared to provide youth with the necessary tools to remain crime free upon their return to the community. Youth attend school participate in evidence-based treatment and contribute to the maintenance of the facility on work crews. The work crews include caring for chickens and pigs, working in the garden which produces food for the Dining Hall, as well as being assigned to kitchen, laundry, maintenance, grounds, and community service projects.
- **Pathways Academy:** Located on the YDC campus, Pathways Academy is a structured commitment program for females. Pathways Academy works collaboratively to ensure each youth successfully completes her commitment and makes a smooth transition into the community. At Pathways Academy, staff continuously strive to rehabilitate youth by providing resources to successfully reintegrate youth into the community. Youth are provided with

evidence-based services and linked with outside service organizations. They participate in educational programming, receive behavioral health services, and are involved in community service projects.

- **Larry J. Rhoades Kern Crossroads Facility:** The Kern Crossroads Facility is a secure residential institution with an operational capacity of 120 beds. It was created to provide a local institution option for male youth offenders, ages 14-18, in lieu of a Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) commitment. The rehabilitative function of the Kern Crossroads Facility relies on a program design that includes evidence-based cognitive behavioral therapy, incentives, education, work experience, vocational training, physical education, group living and a behavioral health counseling component. Youth attend school and participate in vocational/work programs and/or counseling when not in the classroom. The custody portion of the program is a two-tiered, 168-day or 252-day program.
- **Furlough Treatment and Rehabilitation:** Located on the YDC campus, Furlough Treatment and Rehabilitation is a 30-bed short-term in-custody program designed for youth who are on furlough release from, or who are pending transfer to a Juvenile Court ordered treatment facility (Camp Erwin Owen (CEO) or Crossroads).
- **Re-entry, ADA, and Programming Units (RAP):** All three facility settings have Re-entry, ADA, and Programming Units (RAP). The goals of RAP are to increase programming, improve staff/youth interactions, de-escalate tense situations, reduce use of force incidents, and change facility culture. RAP staff assist youth in their adjustment to a facility by ensuring their individual needs are addressed. RAP staff conduct Pre-Release Meetings to review youth accomplishments, identify available community resources, and present release expectations to render youth ready for successful re-entry into the community. When a youth engages in misconduct a RAP team member dispatches to assist the youth toward continued participation in regular programming. RAP includes Crisis Awareness Response (CARE) team members who are available to both respond to youth in crisis and to meet regularly with youth to model and encourage pro-social behaviors. Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accommodations are processed through RAP; they ensure that youth understand program expectations and that staff are aware of the youth's ADA accommodations. A Special Cases List containing all current ADA accommodations is distributed daily. Special Cases Meetings are conducted weekly with facility staff and partners to review accommodations. The RAP staff strive to incorporate industry leading trends in programming to appropriately identify and deliver effective and structured activities to youth. The end goal is for this work to be the sparking catalyst for positive redirection in the youth served.

**Part 4: Programs and Services (WIC 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:

**Facility**

Kern County will continue to utilize the Kern Crossroads Facility to house male youth and the Pathways Academy, located on the YDC campus, to house female youth. The Kern Crossroads Facility is a secure residential institution with an operational capacity of 120 beds. The facility plant is divided into three pods which can house 40 youth in each, separated as two units of 20. One pod will be designated for this realigned population. Each housing unit of 20 has 12 individual rooms and four dorms which can house two individuals in each. Each 20-bed housing unit has a dayroom for structured activities and school if necessary. It also includes an additional room which can be utilized for visiting, mental health counseling or separation of served groups, as necessary. The physical plant includes a full kitchen with an attached dining hall which can seat up to 60 individuals at a time for meals.

**Youth Supervision**

To provide rehabilitative services to these youth, safety and security must be a core tenant. Youth will thrive when they feel safe and secure. Youth Services Officers (YSO) provide this population supervision and guidance in day-to-day activities. They are trained in both de-escalation techniques as well as Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) and defensive tactics. A philosophy of “accountability and opportunity” combined with “coach vs referee” is employed in daily supervision efforts. Youth are held accountable for misbehavior but also provided with an opportunity to redirect their negative behavior. A Program Specialist and Deputy Probation Officer are also housed on site for case management and re-entry purposes.

**Re-entry, ADA, and Programming Units**

RAP is available to youth housed within each facility. These units have staff dedicated to providing additional programming to youth in custody, assisting with crisis intervention, and providing an array of services outside of the normal supervision duties of direct youth supervision line staff. RAP staff will be on-site during programming hours to provide emotional support to youth, initiate daily structured programming to encourage youths’ active participation in their treatment program and support adolescent development, as well as to provide quality control for programming and activities within the institution. Additionally, RAP staff will be involved in the arrival of youth into the facility as well as Pre-Release Meetings to ensure a successful progression of the case plan while in custody and thorough connection to resources for transition upon release into the community.

**Medical Services**

Medical services will be provided through an agreement with Kern Medical, who provides on-site staff 12 hours each day to meet medical, dental, and vision related needs of the youth. Emergency and after-hours services are provided through Kern Medical Hospital. For families with private insurance, arrangements can be made to transport youth to those providers’ offices.

### **Behavioral Health Services**

Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (KernBHRS) is the primary provider of behavioral health services on-site. KernBHRS provides an array of evidence-based and best-practice group programs as well as individual therapeutic interventions. For complete details regarding behavioral health services, please refer to that section within Part 4 of this plan.

### **Educational Program**

Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) will continue to operate the on-site educational program. The school consists of a school office, probation office, four classrooms, a Learning Center, library, woodshop area and multi-use outdoor covered workshop area. Youth within the program have access to Redwood High School for continued education until they graduate or complete an equivalency course. Redwood High School serves students in a six-class rotation. The courses offered include English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Careers, and W.I.N. (What I Need). Students will also have an opportunity to enroll in Culinary Arts and Construction Classes. The Construction Class provides students with basic construction skills. Students will be eligible to earn the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Core Certification, which is recognized internationally in the construction industry. Additionally, students may receive certification in CPR, First Aid, OSHA-10, Serv Safe, Forklift Safety, virtual welding and the Switch Electric Car Lab Program.

Students will have access to a Career Readiness class that provides opportunities for students to develop career ready skills and explore possible career paths that serve their interests and strengths. Industry has indicated that possessing strong “soft skills” directly correlates with workplace success. Additionally, students may participate in field trips to local college campuses, will be offered one-stop college registration and testing conducted at the Redwood High campus, and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) workshops will be made available to parents and guardians. A-G courses for students who desire advanced courses will also be available in the lab.

Students who have completed High School will have the opportunity to enroll in local colleges or vocational schools. Depending on the youth’s security level, they will be able to attend classes online with on-site instructors or possibly attend courses outside the facility if hands-on participation is required and the youth is deemed suitable for this level of responsibility. Youth who have demonstrated a high level of competence in an individual area and are eligible for a less restrictive environment and a lower level of supervision may be eligible for placement within the community for educational, vocational, apprenticeships, internships, or skills development training. Probation has initiated contact with California State University Bakersfield’s (CSUB) Project Rebound and will continue to develop a relationship with them to facilitate services and opportunities for youth. APEX youth have participated in a Financial Literacy course and an Introduction to College course through the Prison Education Project (PEP), which is an affiliate of Project Rebound. Probation has partnered with Bakersfield College (BC) for youth participation in college courses through the Rising Scholars Program and is currently in its seventh semester of classes.

### **Vocational Training**

In addition to the programs referenced in the Educational Program section, youth will have access to work-based programs to enhance life skills and transitional opportunities upon release into the community. Examples of which include:

SERV Safe: Youth earn a certificate by completing tasks designed to mimic the restaurant industry. An online test must be passed to receive the certificate which is good for 2 years. The certificate translates to real world restaurant experience and the ability to step into a job in the restaurant industry immediately upon release.

General Maintenance/Landscaping: Youth will work with both the maintenance and landscape coordinating staff to learn life skills in these areas. Youth learn skills such as equipment operation, tool use, landscaping, lawn care, tree pruning, plumbing repair, painting, floor care, electrical, power washing, etc.

WESTEC: Youth earn certificates in Forklift, Confined Space, and requirements designed to translate to work in the oilfield, warehouse, or construction industry. This course is typically 2 weeks in length and the certificates translate to real world opportunities.

Department of Rehabilitation, Students with Disabilities assistance (DOR): Probation has discussed opportunities for youth services through the DOR. Part of the re-entry plan for youth with disabilities may include referrals to DOR to establish a connection and help transition youth into industries and occupations that can train them for future employment.

Bakersfield College: With assistance from KCSOS, we have partnered with BC to provide Automobile Detailing and HVAC onsite training. Advanced Automobile Detailing is set for Summer 2024.

Garden Pathways: Youth have the opportunity to acquire on-the-job training through paid internships coordinated by Garden Pathways through the Kern Community Foundation and Bank of America. To date ■ youth have completed approximately 600 hours of paid internship experience, which are initiated while youth are still on-site and continue when youth step down or complete their baseline term.

### **Volunteer Services**

Probation has a dedicated department-level Volunteer Services Coordinator position specifically for developing relationships with Community Based Organizations to access services for the department in general and for youth within facilities. In addition, within the facility's RAP unit, there is a site-specific Volunteer Coordinator. The site-specific Volunteer Coordinator directly monitors volunteer activities at the facility, explores volunteer programs, bolsters existing programming to meet unmet programming needs, explores new/additional ways for youth to serve the community, serves as the direct liaison between the facility and volunteers, and works closely with the department-level Volunteer Services Coordinator in every capacity needed. Additionally, the Coordinator will answer all questions from volunteers to help them provide the best quality of service for youth. Recent collaborations for life skill groups and mentoring have included The Wendale Davis Foundation, Stay Focused Ministries, Garden Pathways, Jack Frost Football, George Vasquez, Fanny Hernandez, Tommy's Legacy, the Outsiders, and the Arts Council of Kern.

Cooperation with faith-based organizations has traditionally been strong. Entities such as Bethany Center, Teen Challenge, Youth for Christ, Symbols of Hope, New Hope Ministries, and Catholic Services will provide opportunities for youth seeking religious fulfillment from their program. In many cases, these services continue once youth are released from the facility into the community. Youth are free to exercise their individual religious liberties as they choose, with safety and security in mind.

**Other Unidentified Contracted Specialized Programs and Services**

As we move forward with this population it is recognized that service and programming gaps will likely be discovered. These may be vocational, recreational, treatment or some other area. Probation will address these service gaps through contracted services, volunteer-based partnerships, and collaborative agency workgroups to help leverage resources and direct services based on the needs of the realigned population. Probation staff have implemented a positive behavior based inter-facility sports program allowing youth to compete amongst each other with staff as coaches and team elected captains shouldering many leadership responsibilities at practices and games. Within our RAP unit we have a “Sports Boss” designation, who in addition to providing youth supervision, coordinates structured PE activities, tournament preparation and coordinates cross unit and facility competitions. CEO has hosted Crossroads for basketball and flag football competitions and Crossroads/APEX has hosted CEO and YDC for multiple flag football, volleyball, and soccer tournaments. Probation has partnered with the All-Out Flag Football league and Jack Frost whose members have volunteered their time for youth skill building exercises leading up to these tournaments.

**Part 5: Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant Funds (WIC 1995(d)(3)(A))**

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:

Probation has contracted with Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (KernBHRS) as the primary provider of behavioral health services on-site. KernBHRS provides an array of evidence-based and best-practice group programs as well as individual therapeutic interventions. Further exploration and implementation of programs best suited for this population will be an ongoing priority. KCSOS oversees the provision of Education Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) and there will be ongoing communication and collaboration with KernBHRS regarding youth plans and service overlap. Psychiatric medication management will continue with KernBHRS psychiatrists. KernBHRS will continue to assist in the transition from custody plans related to behavioral health services post-release, bridging connections to appropriate levels of care for which youth are eligible, ranging from specialty care such as Transitional Age Youth (TAY Team), Youth Wraparound, and Youth Multi-Agency Integrated Services Team (MIST Team); to lower levels of care with contracted outpatient clinics: College Community Services, Clinica Sierra Vista, and Child Guidance Clinic.

**KernBHRS Services**

The goal of the behavioral health services offered will be to assist youth in their recovery from intergenerational trauma and substance use in efforts to reduce recidivism, increase pro-social attitudes and behavior, and develop a healthy sense of community. KernBHRS integrates evidence-based approaches with best practices within the field to serve the needs of youth and their families. The program will incorporate assessment, treatment planning, case management, individual and group services, and intensive family services. Mental Health services are tailored to individualized needs, with a strong focus on healing, recovery, and healthier patterns of thoughts and behavior. Youth will be assigned a mental health skills trainer, who actively implements individualized treatment plans, monitors youth progress for effectiveness, and modifies treatment as clinical needs evolve. When behavioral health accommodation needs are identified, KernBHRS coaches the family and Probation staff on how to effectively assist in helping rehabilitate youth who present with symptoms that require more specific, intensified care.

Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services currently offers the following services to youth housed within the facility who are committed to the Crossroads and APEX Program.

**Mental Health Assessment and Diagnosis:** Upon arrival to the facility, KernBHRS Team provides a comprehensive clinical behavioral health assessment, focusing on 7 domains: Presenting Concerns and Identified Impairments; Trauma; Behavioral Health History; Medical and Medication History; Social/Life Circumstances, Strengths, and Risk Factors; and Clinical Summary/Diagnosis. Tools used during assessment include the following: Mental Status Exam (MSE), Child and Adolescence Needs and Strengths (CANS), Pediatric Symptoms Checklist (PSC-35), Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS), Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7), and Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). The purpose of assessment and tools is to identify current behavioral health needs, create an Individualized Treatment Plan and initiate services aligned

with this plan. Treatment plan recommendations are shared with Probation at their Multi-Disciplinary Initial Assessment Meetings, where treatment information is included in youth's case plan for overall programming.

**Psychiatric Evaluation:** When clinically indicated, youth is offered a Psychiatric Evaluation service to evaluate appropriateness of medication support to treat symptoms. The Psychiatric Evaluation is completed by a KernBHRS Psychiatrist. Youth prescribed medications will continue to meet with the psychiatrist for medication management services, as often as clinically determined to be necessary.

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy-Based Interventions (CBT):** This an evidenced-based treatment model that helps individuals learn and change destructive thought patterns that have a negative influence on behavior and emotions. Core principles include targeting unhelpful ways of thinking and behavior, learning to recognize distortions, using problem-solving skills to cope with difficult situations and developing a greater sense of confidence in capability to achieve goals. This has been demonstrated effective for a range of problems including depression, anxiety, alcohol, and drug use. Youth are offered skills and therapy services based in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

**Dialectic Behavioral Therapy Approach Skills Training:** This is an evidenced-based treatment model developed by Marsha Linehan, based in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, designed to improve acceptance, emotional reactivity, mood regulation, social skills, relationships, distress tolerance and addiction. Adolescents are taught up to 32 skills from 5 the five core DBT modules that guide treatment: Core Mindfulness, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Emotional Regulation, Distress Tolerance, Addictions. These skills are taught, reviewed, and coached throughout the week as needed to support reintegration back into the community. This service is offered in the form of group and individual services.

**Forward Thinking Journal Series:** This service is primarily offered to APEX program. It incorporates cognitive-behavioral evidenced-based strategies to assist juvenile justice involved youth with making positive changes to their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to support responsible and pro-social living. Skill building session plans are based in 9 sections: What Got Me Here, Individual Change Plans, Responsible Behavior, Handling Difficult Feelings, Relationships and Communication, Victim Awareness, Substance Use Behaviors, Family, and Reentry Planning. This service is offered in the form of group and individual services, each section ranging from 8 – 12 weekly sessions.

**Seeking Safety:** This is an integrated model that addresses both trauma and substance use through cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal domains, with a strong focus on safe coping. Seeking safety refers to helping clients free themselves from negative behaviors, freeing themselves from trauma at a deep emotional level and can help break the cycle that brings them back to addiction. This treatment helps to teach self-nurturing skills, asking for help from safe people, recovery thinking, rehearsing compassion and honesty, and utilizing community resources that will help individuals seek and maintain safety and recovery out in the community. This service is offered in the form of group and individual services.

**Suicide Risk Assessment and Monitoring:** The Zero Suicide model is a multi-level approach to implement evidenced based practices to address suicide. This includes suicide risk assessment, interventions to increase safety, teaching coping strategies and increasing contact and monitoring of high-risk individuals during



transitions in care and high-risk periods. The individual's assigned clinician will complete a suicide risk assessment at beginning of treatment, and every 30 days after, using the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS), which measures current and past suicidal ideation, attempts, preparatory behavior, deliberate and non-deliberate self-harm, and non-suicidal self-injury. APEX Team will intensify services and safety plan as needed based on these ongoing assessments.

**Family Services:** Involvement of family is central to effective treatment and provides opportunity to address both risk factors and protective factors of the family. Family sessions are offered to increase family support, engagement, and skill usage within the family system. Family systems are integral to a youth's successful return into the community. It is encouraged families participate and are involved in their child's treatment. Services are based in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy interventions and include Family-inclusive skill building service and Family therapy.

**Bridges to Connection/Success:** Warm connections with community resources and outpatient providers is essential to continuity of care following release from APEX program. KernBHRS APEX Team supports successful reintegration by bridging youth connections with outpatient behavioral health services aligned with their current clinical needs. KernBHRS coordinates with outpatient teams to conduct warm clinical hand-offs and introductions with youth pre-release to better prepare youth for their transition out into the community. Youth and families are provided resources for shelter, transportation, medical, food, education, independent living, support groups, support/crisis lines, mentoring and more. APEX team works collaboratively with youth, families, probation, contracted mental health providers, and partnering agencies to reconnect youth to their communities, and support their successful reintegration.

KernBHRS offers these services periodically, based on clinical need:

**24/7 Dad (12-weeks, 12-sessions):** Focuses on parenting skills, children's life skills, and family life. The 24/7 Dad program is based on five principles, which are: how we parent successfully or unsuccessfully in a largely learned set of behaviors, father and mother parents have two different distinct approaches to parenting, there are universal aspects of fathering and parenting that exist in all cultures, and any father, given the chance can learn to be a great dad and parent. The goal is to increase positive parenting skills, involvement, responsibility, and commitment to their children and the mother of their children.

### **Contracted Specialized Services for Youth**

**Stages of Accomplishment (Juveniles who Sexually Offended (JwSO)):** This model addresses the evaluation and rehabilitation of inappropriate sexual behavior in adolescence. This treatment consists of four inter-related workbooks that take youth through a series of guided exercises that help them learn about themselves and why they are in treatment, understand their feelings, attitudes and ideas that have contributed to these behaviors, understand the impact of their behavior on others, and build empathy and healthy relationships. This service is offered in the form of Individual services.

**Programs and Services for Females:** Female youth had historically been committed to DJJ programs at a very low rate. Therefore, female youth programming may be better suited where additional like-gender youth can program together. This has been accomplished through housing with other females within the Pathways

Academy. There will be an individualized case plan developed specific to the youth that is suitable to both meet the youth's needs and is appropriate for longer-term care. It is prudent to ensure all youth have optimal opportunities to be placed in a program that best suits their needs.

KernBHRS Juvenile Probation Psychiatric Services (JPPS) Team offers the following services to female youth who are housed at the Youth Detention Center through a Secure Youth Treatment Program (SYTP) commitment.

**Aggression Replacement Training:** ART is a group therapy approach and is based in Cognitive Behavioral Theory. This evidenced-based model is designed for youth to help to support and learn prosocial skills, moral reasoning, and reduction of aggressive behavior. The group typically meets three times per week for 10 weeks and is offered periodically.

**Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT):** MRT is a group therapy approach. It is a systematic, cognitive-behavioral, step by step treatment strategy designed to enhance self-image, promote growth of a positive, productive identity, and facilitate the development of higher stages of moral reasoning. MRT will be offered once a week and will be ongoing until the client achieves a minimum of "Step 7" in her moral reasoning development but can continue up to "Step 16" in her development of moral reasoning.

Female SYTP youth also receive assessment, medication management, risk assessment, family services, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy-based Interventions, and Seeking Safety services as outlined above.

#### **Trauma Informed Care Based Approach**

Kern County Probation is dedicated to a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) based approach. The first part of TIC in the Juvenile Justice System is to recognize that most of the affected youth have experienced trauma in their lives. The next step is to put policies in place which attempt to minimize the potential for re-traumatization. Providing services and outlets to address trauma through both treatment and positive staff interactions is also key. Ongoing training will be a priority to ensure the permanency of these practices. To support ongoing training efforts, one Senior Youth Services Officer will be dedicated to the Training unit. This staff will assist in researching and coordinating formal and informal training for the Department and collaborative partners, with a primary focus on emerging TIC and behavioral health minded approaches to staff/youth interactions to supplement and enhance current training efforts already in place.

Describe how the County plans to apply grant funds to address support programs or services that promote healthy adolescent development for the target population: (WIC 1995(d)(3)(B)):

Youth will have access to a variety of programs and services designed to promote healthy adolescent behavior. Some of the specific evidence-based, pro-social, and best-practice programs related to this area are more fully described in the behavioral health section of Part 4 of this plan. In addition to those, other services directed at healthy adolescent development will include volunteer-based, educational, recreational, redirection and vocational based programs and supports.

### **Volunteer Services**

Probation has a dedicated department-level Volunteer Services Coordinator position specifically for developing relationships with Community Based Organizations to access services for the department in general and for youth within facilities. Examples of volunteer programs designed to promote healthy adolescent development are as follows:

- **Garden Pathways Youth On a Mission Program:** Probation partners with Garden Pathways to bring their Youth On a Mission program to the realigned population. Youth will participate in the 10 week program, which focuses on skill building in the areas of leadership development and goal setting. The curriculum is designed to be facilitated in custody, with a significant emphasis on re-entry follow up and application of the skills learned while on community supervision.
- **Arts Council of Kern:** APEX Creative Economies Program has provided youth with creative outlets and hands on videography and music compilation at the direction of a professional video producer and local music artists.

### **Educational and Vocational Services**

In addition to the provision of traditional core secondary and post-secondary education, this realigned population will be able to receive additional training and skill building in specific fields. Healthy adolescent development includes the development of skills that support independence, responsibility, and work ethic. Some examples of these types of programs include:

**SERV Safe:** Youth earn a certificate by completing tasks designed to mimic the restaurant industry. An online test must be passed to receive the certificate which is good for two years. The certificate translates to real world restaurant experience and the ability to step into a job in the restaurant industry immediately upon release.

**General Maintenance/Landscaping:** Youth will work with both the maintenance and landscape coordinating staff to learn life skills in these areas. Youth will learn skills such as equipment operation, tool use, landscaping, lawn care, tree pruning, plumbing repair, painting, floor care, electrical, power washing, etc.

Westec: Youth will earn certificates in Forklift usage, Confined Space, and requirements designed to translate to work in the oilfield, warehouse, or construction industry. This course is typically two weeks in length and the certificates translate to real world opportunities.

Department of Rehabilitation, Students with Disabilities assistance (DOR): Probation has discussed opportunities for youth services through the DOR. Part of the re-entry plan for youth with disabilities may include referrals to DOR to establish a connection and help transition youth into industries and occupations that can train them for future employment.

Bakersfield College: With assistance from KCSOS, we have partnered with BC providing Automobile Detailing and HVAC on-site training. An advanced Automobile Detailing class is scheduled for Summer 2024.

Garden Pathways: Youth have the opportunity to acquire on-the-job training through paid internships coordinated by Garden Pathways through the Kern Community Foundation and Bank of America. To date six youth have completed approximately 600 hours of paid internship experience, which are initiated while youth are still on-site and continue when youth step down or complete their baseline term.

### **Re-entry, ADA, and Programming Units**

The Re-entry, ADA, and Programming (RAP) unit has specific staff positions whose purpose is to help support healthy adolescent development, both through redirection and provision of supports to guide better decision making. Some of those positions and services within the RAP unit are as follows:

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator:** The ADA Coordinator runs Special Cases Meetings, monitors the Special Cases List to ensure accuracy, conducts quality control of the documentation in unit binders, follows up with staff to ensure accommodations are understood and being followed, serves as an ADA liaison with our partnering agencies and other Probation divisions, and evaluates ADA training needs for the facility. The ADA Coordinator will ensure youths' accommodations are communicated during intake, initial assessment, school, and Pre-Release Meetings. The ADA Coordinator will work closely with the School Coordinator to ensure information regarding educational accommodations are received and documented.
- **Special Cases Meeting (SCM):** The SCM attendees include representatives from school, behavioral health, medical, and Probation staff. The primary goal of the SCM is to discuss challenges youth may have while programming, specifically detailing their ADA accommodations. The ADA Coordinator records minutes and disseminates information to unit staff to assist youth supervision.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Within the facility's RAP unit, there is a site-specific Volunteer Coordinator. The site-specific Volunteer Coordinator directly monitors volunteer activities at the facility to explore volunteer programs, bolster existing programming and meet unmet programming needs. The Volunteer Coordinator serves as the direct liaison between the facility and volunteers.
- **Programming Coordinator:** The Programming Coordinator directly monitors programming in the facility to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of existing programming, works closely with partnering agencies to assure our mission and goals are understood, research new programming, technology, and industry trends in facility programming.

- **Crisis Awareness Response (CARE) Team Members:** The CARE Team consists of all members of the RAP Team. CARE Team members will respond to youth in crisis to de-escalate situations before they deteriorate further. The CARE Team will motivate youth to interact in the program and counsel youth who need re-direction. All CARE Team members will work shifts that allow the most accessibility to the programming needs of youth. CARE Team members will be present in the units to lead structured activities, engage youth individually when appropriate, build rapport, and gain knowledge about youth to assist with de-escalating future incidents that may occur. Not being part of direct youth supervision staffing ratios will allow CARE Team members to respond directly to incidents without delay.
- **Alternative Program (AP):** Alternative Program (AP) will be a sanction used to address all levels of youth misconduct. Youth who receive AP will not participate in regular recreational programming and will remain in the defined AP area, typically a separate dayroom. RAP staff will facilitate AP and document youth participation. The ADA Coordinator will document youth with ADA accommodations who were placed in AP. All youth in AP will complete any interventions, educational assignments, or Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) assignments during their AP time. Completed interventions and assignments will be reviewed by staff and discussed with the youth. Longer AP periods, which may be given for high level misconduct, may require several Core Correctional Practices (CCP) interventions, educational or CBT assignments over the course of the AP period.

#### **APEX Academy Baseline Reduction Matrix**

Pursuant to WIC 875(e)(1) the court may order that a youth's baseline term be modified downward by a reduction of confinement time not to exceed six months for each review period. The APEX Academy Baseline Reduction Matrix is designed to encourage and reinforce positive behaviors, identify program progress, and provide a system to appropriately calculate reductions to baseline terms. The Matrix consists of five phases, each phase contains a list of objectives and goals that focus on education, programming, and treatment, and each phase includes a maximum number of days earned that may be deducted from a baseline term. The level of responsibility increases as the phases progress and the maximum number of days earned also increases as the phases progress. Youth who do not complete or meet the objectives and goals of a phase will not progress to the next phase or if appropriate, may be required to repeat a previous phase. A report is prepared for the Court prior to every review hearing that summarizes the youth's progress and when earned, provides a recommendation for baseline term reduction.

#### **Youth Council**

The purpose of Youth Council is to maintain an open line of communication between staff and youth, evaluate and improve facility programming, and give Youth Council members an opportunity to learn valuable leadership and diplomacy skills. Youth Council affords representation for youth in all housing units and provides a venue for ideas, issues, and concerns to be discussed and resolved. Youth are expected to communicate facility expectations back to other youth in their designated housing units to ensure harmonious operations. Youth who have an active role in this process often have a positive impact on how the youth population responds to facility rule and policy changes. Youth Council convenes monthly with two youth representatives from each of the APEX units included.

### **Other Unidentified Contracted Specialized Services**

As we move forward with this population it is recognized that service gaps will likely be discovered. Some of these may be related to the need for additional supports and services to help further promote healthy adolescent development. Probation will address these service gaps through contracted services, volunteer-based partnerships, and collaborative agency workgroups to help leverage resources and direct services based on the needs of the realigned population.

Describe how the County plans to apply grant funds to address family engagement in programs for the target population (WIC 1995(d)(3)(C)):

Youth will have access to groups designed to enhance the transition back to the community and maintain a strong family unit. Bolstering a robust, sturdy family unit will be a core concept in the program. Family members are preferred to be involved in every step of youths' programs and transitions back into the community. The more involved the family is in the treatment experience, the better the understanding, respect, and trust to solidify the successful return to the community will be.

### **Visiting**

Regular visiting will be accessible to parents or legal guardians to continue and further develop family ties. Visiting will be accessible at the facilities, either in person or remotely through virtual conferencing. Consideration will be given to expand visiting options to include additional family members, such as siblings, grandparents, spiritual advisers, and mentors. As the youth progress through the program, they may earn the privilege to expand their visiting list to close friends who serve as constructive influences. For youth who are parents, opportunities will be available for regular baby visits. Youth will have onsite visits with their children and typically their parent/guardian. Future baby visits may include both the youth and the other parent to allow for family unity. Suitability for this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Probation has established a committee to address the widely held belief that visiting, and telephone communication parameters need to be widened to include extended family members, siblings, and significant others. Taking into consideration the number of APEX youth over the age of 18 adds to this need.

### **Special Events and Engagements**

Youth who are progressing strongly through their program and meet the criteria may be eligible for passes to attend life events such as graduations, births, and funeral services. On-site outdoor picnics will be available to youth doing well in the program who attain certain goals. Additionally, off site picnics may be allowed provided the youth meets classification and behavior criteria. In May of 2023, we hosted our first on-site APEX high school graduation. Each youth was allowed five family and friends to attend, complete with an APEX Honor Guard presentation and graduation pictures provided to families.

### **Family Engagement Programs**

Youth and families will have access to several programs intended to increase family engagement and further strengthen and support existing family bonds. Some examples of such programs are as follows:

- **24/7 Dad (12-weeks, 12-sessions):** Focuses on parenting skills, children's life skills, and family life. The 24/7 Dad program is based on five principles, which are: how we parent successfully or unsuccessfully

in a largely learned set of behaviors, father and mother parents have two different distinct approaches to parenting, there are universal aspects of fathering and parenting that exist in all cultures, and any father, given the chance can learn to be a great dad and parent. The goal is to increase positive parenting skills, involvement, responsibility, and commitment to their children and the mother of their children.

- **Family Services** Involvement of family is central to effective treatment and provides opportunity to address both risk factors and protective factors of the family. Family sessions are offered to increase family support, engagement, and skill usage within the family system. Family systems are integral to a youth's successful return into the community. It is encouraged families participate and are involved in their youth's treatment. Services are based in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy interventions and include Family-inclusive skill building service and Family therapy.

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 (WIC 1995(d)(3)(D)):

### **Re-entry Supports**

The average length of stay at DJJ was approximately 28 months. It is anticipated that will remain similar moving forward with the development of sentencing structures for local commitments. The APEX Baseline Incentive Matrix will assist in identifying any appropriate reductions to the baseline term. Many of the youth will not have been out of custody and in the community as an adult prior to release. Based on their ages, there will also no longer be a legal obligation for parental care and custody. It is anticipated there will be a variety of tangible needs to help the release transition be more successful. Some examples of potential tangible needs may include food, clothing, transportation, vocation, and education supports. In addition, upon release there will be occasional need for housing supports, be it in sober living homes or other temporary housing options and funds will need to be set aside to provide support in this area. To accomplish this, funds will be designated to support efforts in this area, which may include the need to develop contracts with Community-Based Organizations and other support-focused entities.

As we move forward with this population it is recognized that re-entry services gaps will likely be discovered. These may be vocational, recreational, treatment or some other area. Probation will address these service gaps through contracted services, volunteer-based partnerships, and collaborative agency workgroups to help leverage resources and direct services based on the needs of the realigned population.

### **Re-Entry Coordinator APEX Program Specialist**

The Re-Entry Coordinator will directly coordinate all details of youth being released from commitments to address both custody and community needs upon release, coordinate services with all of our partnering agencies, oversee Pre-Release Meetings, act as the facility liaison for assigned Probation Officers, facilitate connections with outside entities (Social Security Office, Post Office for draft registration, DMV for ID or CDL, birth certificates, Medi-Cal, etc.), and maintain a presence in the facility to build rapport with youth and determine any special interests or skills to be further encouraged through community referrals.

### **Vocational Training**

Youth will have access to work-based programs to enhance life skills and transitional opportunities upon release into the community. Examples of which include:

SERV Safe: Youth earn a certificate by completing tasks designed to mimic the restaurant industry. An online test must be passed to receive the certificate which is good for two years. The certificate translates to real world restaurant experience and the ability to step into a job in the restaurant industry immediately upon release.

General Maintenance/Landscaping: Youth will work with both the maintenance and landscape coordinating staff to learn life skills in these areas. Youth learn skills such as equipment operation, tool use, landscaping, lawn care, tree pruning, plumbing repair, painting, floor care, electrical, power washing, etc.

Westec: Youth will earn certificates in Forklift usage, Confined Space, and requirements designed to translate to work in the oilfield, warehouse, or construction industry. This course is typically two weeks in length and the certificates translate to real world opportunities.

Department of Rehabilitation, Students with Disabilities assistance (DOR): Probation has discussed opportunities for youth services through the DOR. Part of the re-entry plan for youth with disabilities may include referrals to DOR to establish a connection and help transition youth into industries and occupations that can train them for future employment.

Bakersfield College: With assistance from KCSOS, we have partnered with BC to provide Automobile Detailing and HVAC onsite training. Advanced Automobile Detailing is set for Summer 2024.

### **Ongoing Educational Opportunities and Support**

Students who have completed High School can enroll in local colleges or vocational schools. While some classes have been held online, we have partners in BC Rising Scholars and the PEP program who are willing to provide in person instruction. In some cases, in-person off site participation may be allowed when needed, dependent on the youth's suitability for a greater level of responsibility and required level of security. Youth who demonstrate a high level of competence in an individual area, are eligible for a less restrictive environment, and a lower level of supervision may be eligible for placement within the community for educational, vocational, apprenticeships, internships, or skills development training. Probation continues to foster a relationship with Project Rebound through California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) to facilitate service and opportunities for youth. There is an existing partnership with Bakersfield College for youth participation in college courses through the Rising Scholars Network. Online and in-person Financial Literacy and Introduction to College classes continue in partnership with the Prison Education Project, who is an affiliate of Project Rebound.

### **Behavioral Health Transitions**

KernBHRS will work with Probation to transition youth from in-custody treatment to behavioral health services post-release, as most of these youth will be eligible for services under the Adult System of Care or through the Transition Age Youth (TAY) program once out of custody.

The Adult System of Care provides services to youth (age 18 and over) who are experiencing challenges in life functioning as a result of symptoms related to mental illness and/or substance use. Treatment is client-driven



and based on the strengths and goals of the youth served. Key treatment components include a mental health assessment/reassessment, psychological evaluation, medication management services, group therapy, individual therapy, family therapy, case management services, psychoeducation, substance use treatment, rehabilitation and coping skills education, and linkage to community resources. The therapist and recovery specialist form a dyad team to provide tailored services to the client which are outlined on the Clinical Practice Guidelines and reviewed with the youth at the onset of treatment.

The TAY team is a full partnership team which provides support to foster youth between the ages of 16 and 25 who are struggling with mental and emotional health issues. Some specialty services offered include counseling/therapy, drug/alcohol addiction treatment, help with securing financial and health benefits, assistance with accessing medical, dental and vision services, assistance with securing safe and affordable housing, accessing transportation options, food, and clothing resources, help with securing employment or vocational training, and assistance with education classes. Services are provided in the community with locations, such as but not limited to, the client's home, school, work site, or other community agency.

The TAY Team utilizes *The Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model* which is an evidenced supported practice that helps engage youth in their own futures planning process, provides them with services/supports, involves them and others in a process that facilitates greater self-sufficiency, and successful achievement of goals related to each transition domain. The TIP Model helps youth with emotional behavioral difficulties to overcome barriers and achieve their goals.

### **Pre-Release Meetings**

Pre-Release Meetings will address the accomplishments and continuing needs of youth being released. A report detailing youths' programs while in the facility and goals for after release will be discussed with partnering agencies from education, behavioral health, family members, and Probation staff to help develop a successful re-entry plan. Probation will maintain a current resource list of community-based service providers to be able to refer youth being released to in order for the youth and family to know what is available to them within the community. The resource list will include agencies who provide support, services, and opportunities in the following areas:

- Employment/Job Readiness
- Housing, Shelter, and Utility Services
- Medical Services
- Transportation Services
- Legal Assistance
- Child Care Services
- Support/Counseling Groups

### **Youth Day Reporting Center**

Probation has contracted for twenty five slots for service set to launch Spring 2024. Youth will be referred and begin receiving re-entry services six months prior to planned step down or program completion. The

YDRC will act as a one stop shop for youth needs and services. YDRC staff are trained in numerous EBP re-entry skill modalities including :

- Anger Management – Phoenix New Freedom Managing Aggression and Violence
- Cognitive Behavioral Interventions – Substance Use Youth (CBI-SUY)
- Coping, Life Skills, Trauma, and Family Relationships – Power Source Program
- Family Engagement – Nurturing Parenting Program Family Education and Development Series
- Gang Intervention
- Interactive Journaling – TCC
- Youth MRT
- Motivational Enhancement (TCU Mapping)

### **Post Release Supervision**

Based on the high-risk level and numerous needs of the realigned population, dedicated caseloads with manageable youth to officer ratios will be key to successful re-entry back into the community. Deputy Probation Officers will begin working and building rapport with the youth while they are in custody. They will provide case management services and individualized case plans to maximize the chance for successful integration. For those youth over 21 the SRNA (Static Risk and Needs Assessment) will be utilized. This tool is used by the Probation Department for their adult offenders and is validated for this older age group. They will also provide a level of accountability to help redirect behavior which is contrary to their success.

Describe how the County plans to apply grant funds to address evidence-based, promising, trauma- informed and culturally responsive practices for the target population (WIC 1995(d)(3)(E)):

### **Evidence Based Practices**

Kern County and the Probation Department are committed to Evidence-Based Practices (EBP). EBP includes a wide variety of practices and treatments that have been validated through meta-analysis to reduce recidivism by addressing criminogenic needs and building on supportive factors.

The core of EBP is an evidence-based assessment. Kern County utilizes the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT). This assessment both identifies a youth's risk level to reoffend as well as their criminogenic needs. This allows for individualized case plans that focus on those dynamic risk factors that lead to criminal behavior. The PACT is validated for youth up to 21 years of age. For those youth over age 21 the Static Risk and Needs Assessment (SRNA) will be utilized. This tool is used by the Probation Department for their adult offenders and is validated for this older age group.

In addition to an assessment, EBP include evidence-based treatments. These are Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) programs and other best practices that have been proven to address criminogenic needs and reduce recidivism. Examples include Aggression Replacement Training, Strengthening Families, Thinking for a Change (T4C), and Cognitive Behavioral Interventions-Substance Abuse (CBISA). Both sworn and non-sworn staff, as well as contracted service providers, will facilitate these treatment modalities to youth. Additional examples of such programs being implemented for this realigned population are found in Part 4 of this plan.

### **Culturally Responsive Services**

Youth Services Officers within the facilities receive ongoing annual training on topics that include youth development and culturally responsive approaches to youth interaction. Here is one example of a culturally responsive training offered:

- **Cultural Competency (Course Description):** Law Enforcement Professionals are dealing with many challenges, including how to interact and navigate through the diverse communities they are working with. Recent high-profile interactions have also strained police-community relations and has made the jobs more difficult. This interactive course will explore the historical relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. This training will also examine the dynamics of culture, police culture, human relations, and the impact they can have working with a diverse population. Students will also explore effective ways to increase public trust while working within the criminal justice system.

Youth are free to exercise religious expression and have opportunities to request visitation from personal spiritual advisors. Cooperation with faith-based organizations such as Bethany Center, Teen Challenge, Youth for Christ, Symbols of Hope, New Hope Ministries, and Catholic Services provide an opportunity for youth seeking religious support during their program. In many cases, these services continue once youth are released from the facility into the community.

### **Trauma Informed Care Based Approach**

Probation is dedicated to a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) based approach. The first part of TIC in the juvenile justice system is to recognize that most of the affected youth have experienced trauma in their lives. The next step is to put policies in place which attempt to minimize the potential for re-traumatization. Providing services and outlets to address trauma through both treatment and positive staff interactions is also key. Some examples of current trainings provided to staff that support a trauma-informed approach include:

- **Crisis Intervention Training:** This course provides an overview on how to work proactively to increase pro-social behavior, teach skills, and positively change behavior. Information is shared on how to stay ahead of behavior by working the environment to increase success from intake. Specific behavioral interventions and corrective teaching are covered for common mental health diagnoses seen in this setting. ACEs are reviewed with examples of triggers and fight/flight responses.
- **Mental Health 101:** This course provides an overview of mental health issues and diagnoses, interventions, and psychotropic medications. Information is covered on the history of treatment for offenders with mental health issues and the impact now on the Criminal Justice System and Probation. Disability and special education laws are covered as well as how to effectively make accommodations for offenders with mental health issues with regard to developing effective interventions and treatment plans.
- **Crisis Prevention Institute Non-Violent Intervention Strategies:** This course provides an overview of the Crisis Development Model and offers non-violent intervention strategies to address potential escalating behavior. This course identifies both verbal and non-verbal techniques and strategies to utilize when contacting a youth who is showing signs of anxiety.
- **Behavioral Health Unit-Youth Services Officer Core Training:** The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) was created to increase officers' proficiency at identifying possible mental health or behavior issues and

support appropriate officer responses, as well as identifying resources that are available to youth within the Juvenile Justice System. This training unit is comprised of ten individual lessons consisting of: Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse, Trauma, Interventions and Resources, Stigma and Bias, Roles and Responsibilities, Liability, Suicide Prevention, Foundations and Definitions, Safety, Emotional Survival.

**Ongoing Training Support**

Ongoing training will be a priority to ensure the permanency of these practices. To support ongoing training efforts, one Senior Youth Services Officer (YSO) will be dedicated to the Training unit. This staff will assist in researching and coordinating formal and informal training for the Department and collaborative partners, with a primary focus on emerging TIC and behavioral health minded approaches to staff/youth interactions to supplement and enhance current training efforts already in place.

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 (WIC 1995(d)(3)(F)):

It is recognized to accomplish the mission of successfully realigning the DJJ population it must be collaborative effort. While the Probation Department will have primary responsibilities for security, services, and treatment, numerous other partners will be significantly involved. KCSOS and local colleges play a vital part in education services. Kern Medical will provide healthcare services. Other important partners will be KernBHRS, various volunteer groups, and more.

In addition to those core partnerships, as we move forward with this population it is recognized that service gaps will likely be discovered. These may be occupational, recreational, treatment or some other area. Having funds available to address these service gaps is a sensible strategy to ensure that youths' needs will be met. Certain youth, depending on their circumstances or specialized needs, may present specialized treatment needs that could be better served by a community-based entity. Therefore, it is important to begin to prepare for such a contingency and grant funds will be set aside to be available for these types of services. The actual service areas will be directed by the SB 823 Subcommittee.

It is anticipated there will be a variety of tangible needs to help the release transition be more successful. Some examples of potential tangible needs may include food, clothing, transportation, vocation, and education supports. In addition, upon release there will be occasional need for housing supports, be it in sober living homes or other temporary housing options and funds will need to be set aside to provide support in this area. To accomplish this, funds will need to be designated to support efforts in this area, which may include the need to develop contracts with Community-Based Organizations and other support-focused entities.

Kern County Probation has a dedicated position for a Volunteer Services Coordinator specifically for developing relationships with Community-Based Organizations to access services for youth within facilities. The Coordinator will routinely analyze institution/youth needs and search for a Community-Based Organization to fill needs.

Probation will maintain a current resource list of community-based service providers to be able to refer youth being released to in order for the youth and family to know what is available to them within the community. The resource list will include agencies who provide support, services, and opportunities in the following areas:

- Employment/Job Readiness
- Housing, Shelter, and Utility Services
- Medical Services
- Transportation Services
- Legal Assistance
- Child Care Services
- Support/Counseling Groups

## **Part 6: Facility Plan**

Describe in detail each of the facilities that the County plans to use 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. (WIC 1995(d)(4))

### **Facilities**

Kern County will continue to utilize the Kern Crossroads Facility to house male youth and the Pathways Academy, located on the YDC campus, to house female youth. The Kern Crossroads Facility is a secure residential institution with an operational capacity of 120 beds. The facility plant is divided into three pods which can house 40 youth in each, separated as two units of 20. Each housing unit of 20 has 12 individual rooms and four dorms which can house two individuals in each. Each 20-bed housing unit has a dayroom for structured activities and school if necessary. It also includes an additional room which can be utilized for visiting, mental health counseling or separation of target groups, as necessary. The physical plant includes a full kitchen with an attached dining hall which can seat up to 60 individuals at a time for meals.

### **Facility Upgrade Considerations**

Currently security upgrades are being planned and prioritized. Initially, a holding room has been converted to a padded safety room, an additional recreation slab has been added, and taller railings have been added to the upstairs portions of the pods. Upgraded perimeter fencing has been completed and an exterior second layer of security fencing has been completed. Additionally, a new camera system is up and running to cover all areas of the facility to protect youth and investigate allegations when needed. We are actively exploring all options for upgrading and securing the facility, as well as providing space for programming, recreational activities, school, and behavioral health groups. These added measures will help ensure safety and security while allowing for robust service delivery and increased time spent outside of rooms. We are currently renovating our main field to allow for a proper field of play for sporting events. We have completed the renovation of a second full workout gym and have acquired numerous C-trains for grounds equipment storage and vocational skills equipment. Plans are in the work for designating a large outdoor APEX family visiting area, adjacent to the APEX pod, where APEX youth and their families can have access to an outdoor recreation area with basketball hoop, picnic benches, and a child friendly play area.

### **Staffing**

Youth will be housed a safe environment in cooperation with Probation staff and partnering agencies.

- **Probation Staffing:** Youth Services Officers (YSO) will always be on site 24 hours a day for supervision of youth housed in facilities. There will always be an adequate number of personnel sufficient to carry out program activities, provide for safety and security of youth and staff, meet established standards and regulations, and to ensure that no required services shall be denied because of insufficient numbers of staff on duty (absent exigent circumstances). The shift coverage for the units will be arranged to meet or exceed the Title 15 Standards for youth detention facilities. YSO supervision encompasses all daily activities youth participate in including, unit programming, meals,

physical education, school, room and unit clean-up, medical transports, vocational training, off site visits, court appointments, visits, structured activity, baby visits, and all other programs.

- **Behavioral Health Staffing:** Behavioral health staff will be on site every day or on-call 24 hours a day in case an emergency response is needed, or a mental health crisis takes place. Youth can request behavioral health services at any time by either verbal or confidential written request.
- **Medical Staffing:** Medical staff will be on-site for 12 hours every day to provide timely and quality medical care. Youth can verbally inform staff of any medical needs and staff can initiate protocols or refer the youth to medical staff for evaluation. Youth can also complete a confidential medical request and have that sent to medical staff. Services provided to youth include medical, dental, and vision. Emergency and after-hours services are provided through Kern Medical Hospital. For families with private insurance, arrangements can be made to transport youth to those providers' offices.

### **Additional Safety Measures and Protections**

- **Prison Rape Elimination Act:** Youth will have access to the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) hotline. The Probation Department has a policy in place to investigate all sexually based accusations or complaints as serious, truthful, and time sensitive. PREA investigators include supervisory staff at the Deputy Probation Officer III (DPO III) and Senior Youth Services Officer (SYSO) level. At any time during an investigation, outside law enforcement agencies may be called to conduct a criminal investigation. Victim's Advocates will be available should they need to be utilized in any case. All information is considered confidential.
- **Transgender Youth:** Policies are in place to protect transgender and intersex youth. Upon initial entry to any Kern County Institution, youth who identify as transgender participate with staff in completing a Transgender Youth Preference Form which plays a part in helping to determine housing, clothing, and supervision based on their gender identification.
- **Special Education:** In cooperation with the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, youth will have access to continued education and services. Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) are available for those youth who qualify. Schools also work in cooperation with behavioral health providers, medical staff, and Probation to individualize each youth's program to meet their specific needs.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** The RAP Unit has a position designated as the ADA Coordinator. The ADA Coordinator runs Special Cases Meetings, monitors the Special Cases List to ensure accuracy, conducts quality control of the documentation in unit binders, follows up with staff to ensure accommodations are understood and being followed, serves as an ADA liaison with partnering agencies and other Probation divisions, and evaluates ADA training needs for the facility. The ADA Coordinator will ensure youths' accommodations are communicated during intake, initial assessment, school, and Pre-Release Meetings. The ADA Coordinator will work closely with the School Coordinator to ensure information regarding educational accommodations are received and documented.
- **Special Cases Meeting (SCM):** The SCM attendees include representatives from school, behavioral health, medical, and Probation staff. The primary goal of the SCM is to discuss challenges youth may

have while programming, specifically detailing their ADA accommodations. The ADA Coordinator records minutes and disseminates information to unit staff to assist youth supervision.

- **Suicide Prevention:** Probation is committed to deterring and preventing self-harm and suicide within its facilities. Policies are in place for supervision of youth identified as high-risk for this behavior. Each youth completes a MAYSI-II questionnaire upon entry into any facility. This risk assessment tool is utilized in determining the youth history, current state of mind, and potential for self-harm or suicidal ideation. Youth deemed to be an immediate risk are immediately assessed by behavioral health to determine program needs and supervisory objectives. Youth may be placed on Suicide Watch or Special Watch depending on their needs. Programs can be changed at any time during their stay with behavioral health input and approval.
- **Youth Grievances:** Youth are able to file a grievance at any time. Each youth have access to grievances during their program or they and may keep them inside their room for completion. A confidential grievance box is made available within each housing unit, or youth may give them directly to supervisory staff. Grievances are taken seriously, handled in a timely manner, and at times can develop into policy change when required. All are reviewed by facility administration.



## **Part 7: Retaining the Target Population in the Juvenile Justice System**

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 (WIC 1995(d)(5)):

Kern County Probation continues to work within the parameters of the legal system to ensure youth entering the Juvenile Justice System are given opportunities to succeed at the lowest level of intervention possible. Partners within the Juvenile Justice System include the Kern County Juvenile Court, the Kern County District Attorney, the Kern County Public Defender, and community support advocates. These partners work closely to ensure fair, consistent, equal, and individual treatment for each youth.

Each individual case is assessed and evaluated before Court recommendations are made to ensure the best practices and services are directed to each individual youth. Probation utilizes the PACT risk/needs assessment tool and case plan to assess level of risk to reoffend, identify criminogenic needs, and guide services (further information on the PACT is found in Part 2 of this plan). This allows incorporation of goals related to youths' court orders into their program to ensure youth are on track to meet achievable goals of being law-abiding and self-sufficient community members. Working within the existing laws, only offenses eligible for transfer to the adult system would be considered. When considering Court recommendations on those cases, the underlying principle applied to the Court process will be that whenever possible and appropriate youths' cases should remain in the Juvenile Justice System.

Probation will continue to operate rehabilitative programs and refer youth to community-based services when appropriate to reduce youth recidivism and mitigate the need for the transfer of cases to the Adult Criminal Justice System. Only when findings are made by the Juvenile Court that services within the Juvenile Justice System are not appropriate to rehabilitate a youth will a case be transferred to the Adult Criminal Justice System. It is the goal that this program will be adequate with regard to both security and service provision to be a robust alternative and thereby limit the need for cases to be transferred to the Adult Criminal Justice System in all but the most serious of cases.

## Part 8: Regional Effort

Describe any regional agreements or arrangements supported by the County's block grant allocation (WIC 1995(d)(6)):

Kern County will serve youth locally unless substantial case factors indicate the youth would be better served another way. Youth committed to this program are not only at risk of further exposure to the Criminal Justice System, but they are at much higher risk to become disenfranchised with the community to which they will ultimately return. Family structure, family visits, positive peer and mentor involvement, and community service are keys to successful reintegration to the local community. Local programming, vocational training, higher education, and community ties are valuable to a youth's chances for success when released from the program. Kern County is committed to prioritizing both the family bond and commitment to their community for these youth and local programming provides the best opportunity.

### **Possible Regionally Contracted Specialized Services for Youth**

- **Sex Offender Services:** Probation has contracted with Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services locally for specialized services for sex offenders. It is also possible certain sex offenders will require a level of treatment necessitating a regional contract with another County who could provide group-based services with like offenders. Certain youth, depending on their circumstances or specialized needs, may benefit from a non-local custodial placement. With the low numbers of sex offenders from Kern County, it is possible for it to be in the best interest of the youth to get services from another County capable of serving more youth with similar needs, allowing for the group counseling dynamics needed in sex offender treatment.
- **Programs and Services for Females:** Female youth have historically been committed to current DJJ programs at a very low rate. To date there have been only two female youth SYTF commitments, and they have been housed with and benefited from programming services available to the Pathways Academy youth.

## Part 9: Data

Describe how data will be collected on youth served by the block grant (WIC 1995(d)(7)):

Data collection and analysis is an important aspect of any new program. Probation is committed to having accurate and relevant data upon which informed decisions can be made regarding what is working, what is not and where resources should best be applied. A Supervising Departmental Analyst will oversee this program along with one (1) new program funded Department Analyst position under the Department's Research, Analysis and Data (RAD) unit assigned to this program. The RAD unit is dedicated to finding evidence-based solutions and programs for the population served by Probation.

Probation developed an internal case management system allowing officers to manage the Youth Probation population in October 2020. This system allows the Department to ensure reporting accuracy and provide the ability to identify trends that impact services including programs funded by JJCPA and YOBG. The vision is to further develop this system to capture data specific to this population such as demographics information, length of stay, program progress, throughout their entire continuum of care under the Probation Department.

Probation routinely reports information in the JCPSS system, annually through the CPOC annual report, and effective this year to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), and collects monthly statistical reports from Probation Officers. This information is used to direct resources and helps guide decision making for the Department's Management Team. In addition, the Superior Court has authored a Standing Order that allows for information sharing on matters between specific agencies that have a vested interest and involvement in youth offenders' treatment plans and rehabilitation.

Statistical data will also be gathered on youth housed within the facility to gather demographic information and to monitor and gauge significant incidents which may occur. Categories in which statistics will be compiled include but are not limited to mutual fights, assaults, gang related graffiti/signs/comments/writing, suicide attempts, self-inflicted injuries, Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) incidents, suicides, escapes, and escape attempts. Probation also has a separate program, Benchmark, which tracks all use of force incidents that occur. This data is regularly reviewed by Probation management.

Another important piece of data is getting feedback from the youth themselves. It is vital to understand how the affected youth are perceiving the services and supports being provided. Equally important is to gauge what service gaps exist from their perspective. While this feedback will be received during the normal course of interacting with the youth it is felt a formalized process to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data is needed. Therefore, formalized surveys will be conducted on a periodic basis. This data will be collected by the assigned Department Analyst and shared with Probation management to help inform decisions moving forward.

Staff working directly with the youth will be continuously engaged in providing feedback to supervisors and management through scheduled unit meetings and ongoing conversations. In addition to these normal avenues of communication, staff will be given the opportunity to complete surveys related to the services and supports being provided in order to formalize a process to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data.

Describe outcome measures that will be utilized to determine the results of the programs and interventions supported by block grant funds (WIC 1995(d)(7)):

Reports were developed to capture the rates of entry to programs, successes and failures, recidivism rates, and services for youth with disabilities. Resource assessments will be conducted routinely to identify gaps to inform future allocation of resources that will give youth more opportunities to be successful.

Measuring program progress for youth committed to a SYTF is a significant indicator of how these youth will adjust upon reentry to the community. Attainable and measurable goals tied to the case plans and Court orders are set through the course of their program to gauge case plan goal completion, progress, and to adjust to individual needs during their stay. Case managers establish attainable goals during assessments to focus youth on successful program completion. These goals include examples such as: high school graduation or equivalency, completing college courses, attaining a vocational training certificate, completion of Court-ordered programs and treatment, enrollment in job training programs, receiving an apprenticeship, and internships.

#### **Part 10: Progress Report**

Provide a description of the progress made regarding any elements described in Parts 2-9 and any objectives and outcomes in the plan that was submitted to the Office of Youth and Community Supervision in the previous calendar year. (WIC 1995(d)(8)):

The SB 823 dedicated staff are now in place after recruitment. The Supervising Departmental Analyst started in May 2023 and the Departmental Analyst started in February 2024. With this staff in place, the goal is to better organize the SB 823 data and reporting to fully capture outcomes and progress for the Department.

From Spring 2022 to Spring 2024, a total of 10 college courses were provided to the APEX academy. The 10 college courses were offered at various times and dates and covered subjects such as communications, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), and auto detailing. As of February 2024, 36 industry recognized certificates earned by 17 unique APEX academy youth as follows: 21 forklift, eight (8) OSHA construction, five (5) SERV safe, one (1) CPR, and one (1) first aid. To date, there have also been two Prison Education Project (PEP) courses offered. Since December 2022 a total of eight (8) groups have been offered at the APEX academy including two (2) ART groups, three (3) Seeking Safety groups, and three (3) Forward thinking groups. There have also been two (2) Youth On a Mission (YOM) and one (1) Etiquette and Communications courses provided by local CBOs. In partnership with local community service organizations and non-profits, a new paid internship program was launched in 2023. The internship program provides youth a pathway to get hands-on and technical training to help equip them with experience and knowledge to prepare for the transition to gainful employment upon reentry into the community. To date, youth offenders have completed 600 hours of paid internship work.

As of January 2024, there have been 12 youth who have exited the APEX program. Of the 12 youth who have exited the APEX program, ██████ completed the APEX program, ██████ stepped down to a less restrictive program, and ██████ youth was terminated from the program (Graph 6).

Graph 6

### YOUTH WHO HAVE EXITED APEX PROGRAM (AS OF JAN 2024)

■ Completed ■ Stepped Down ■ Terminated

