

Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant

Annual Plan¹

Fiscal Year 2024-2025



Date: April 16, 2024

County Name: Sierra

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

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.

Contents:

Part 1: Subcommittee Composition	Page: 3
Part 2: Subcommittee Process Information	Page: 4
Part 3: Target Population	Page: 4
Part 4: Programs and Services	Page: 6
Part 5: Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant Funds	Page: 7
Part 6: Facility Plan	Page: 10
Part 7: Retaining the Target Population in the Juvenile Justice System	Page: 12
Part 8: Regional Efforts	Page: 12
Part 9: Data	Page: 13
Part 10: Progress Report	Page: 13

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 or Co-Chair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charles Henson, Chief Probation Officer	chenson@sierracounty.ca.gov	530.289.3277
District Attorney's Office Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandra Groven, District Attorney	sgroven@sierracounty.ca.gov	530.289.3269
Public Defender's Office Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	J. Lon Cooper, Public Defender	jloncooper@gmail.com	530.265.4565
Department of Social Services Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lori McGee, Director Social Services	lmcgee@sierracounty.ca.gov	530.993.6720
Department of Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheryll Prinz-McMillian, Director Behavioral Health, Health and Human Services	sprinzmcmillian@sierracounty.ca.gov	530.993.6748
Office of Education Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	James Berardi, Superintendent	jberardi@spjUSD.org	530.993.1660
Court Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ann Mendez, Court Executive Officer	amendez@sierracourt.org	530.289.3698
Community Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Derrick Koch	dkoch@sierracounty.ca.gov	530.993.6720
Community Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stacy Wilson	shood@spjUSD.org	530.993.4454
Community Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	L.B., a juvenile	rbboatn@gmail.com	530.993.4613

Part 2. Subcommittee Process and Meetings

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

Members were advised of the statutory changes in advance of the meeting and the matter was discussed at the first meeting addressing the updated plan. There was a motion made to keep the Chief Probation Officer as the sole Chair which was seconded and voted upon by the body. Majority vote decided to keep the Chief Probation Officer as the sole chair.

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

March 15, 2024
April 16, 2024

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

April 16, 2024

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

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

Sierra County will serve the targeted youth and young adults with adjudications for offenses outlined in 707(b) W&I or 290.008 PC where the Juvenile Court has made a finding that less restrictive alternative dispositions are unsuitable.

Sierra County does not have an in-county juvenile hall or other less restrictive facility such as a camp or ranch. The county contracts with other counties in the region for these services. The county does not currently have any in county programs or resources to serve youth requiring specialized therapeutic needs, such as sexual offenders, arson offenders, offenders with significant mental health issues, and pregnant or recent mother offenders. For these youth, we intend to seek a partnership with other agencies in or out of our region that address these specialized treatment needs through a contract process once needs are identified.

It is not expected that all the future eligible youth will need “DJJ like” replacement programming in a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) custodial setting for an extended period. Extended period will be defined as secure facility incapacitation for over one (1) year. Secure Track commitment and length of commitment will be dependent on the individual circumstances and the gravity of the qualifying offense(s) in conjunction with the assessed criminogenic risk and needs of the youth. If existing contracted facilities become operational as a SYTF, and they are

configured and programmed to serve these youth to the suitable standards of Sierra County, those facilities may be utilized. If not, a contract will be sought with a willing facility nearest to the offender's support network or a facility that is able to appropriately addresses the offender's specific needs.

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

Sierra County does not currently have any youth that would come within the provisions of realignment nor did the county have any youth housed within the DJJ at the time of realignment or youth that would have come within the provisions since the initial plan.

Consequently, Sierra County does not have a record of demographics. Generally, of Sierra County's nearly 3,000 permanent residents, the median age is 54.9 years, 16.1% are under the age of 18 and approximately 52% male and 48% female. Sierra County's residents identify as 80.8% White, 0.2% Black or African American, 0.6% Native, 11.7% Hispanic or Latino, and 0.2% Asian. The median household income is well-below California's median income by over \$23,000. The most recent poverty rate was at 8.2% and unemployment rates have improved to under the balance of state; however, the teen unemployment rate remains higher. Sierra County residents have a nearly 98% high school completion rate, a very low suspension rate and an improving truancy rate although the east side of the county remains high, primarily with the K-8 group. The communities are rural with most employment being an average of an hour commute to out of county employers. Sierra County does not have any verified gang activity.

Understanding that the targeted population will be dynamic, the needs of all youth, inclusive of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) has been and will be considered in the drafting of all plans and the care, custody, and supervision of all youth in an equitable and compassionate fashion.

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

Again, there is no data available for previous DJJ eligible/ committed youth due to the length of time since the last relevant youth and Sierra County has not had any eligible or participating youth since the initial legislation.

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:

Sierra County currently has contracts with two (2) out of county juvenile detention centers located in Butte and Placer Counties. It is anticipated that these facilities will be utilized to house the targeted population pre-disposition and as a possible alternative to Secure Track detention centers for lower risk youth who do not have specific treatment or other special needs that would require placement in another location.

Programs, placements, services, and service providers, if out of the scope of local resources, will be contracted out through current contracts or through new contracts depending on the most appropriate setting for the youth and proximity to supportive family. Supervision outside of a facility will be done by existing Sierra County Probation staff.

Sierra County has a relatively low wardship rate as there is a focus on serving our youth at the lowest level of intervention as appropriate. When appropriate, local resources are utilized. Those services have consisted of probation mentoring, self-reflection exercises such as interactive journaling, community service, facilitating meaningful family/peer conflict resolution circles, restorative justice, tobacco, drug and alcohol services, mental health, peer support, family wrap services, wellness, electronic monitoring, and school attendance assistance. Contracted out of county services for sexual offender counseling have also been utilized. Funding will directly support our youth in providing these specialized services and potentially enhancing services within the county when the need arises.

Sierra County Probation enjoys a strong partnership with Sierra County Behavioral Health (SCBH), the only provider of Mental Health and Substance Use Services available in the county. SCBH utilizes a MCP partnership to provide counseling in county or through Telehealth for any low to moderate behavioral health service through a network of providers. If a youth involved in the Juvenile Justice system at the local level has low to moderate Mental Health and/or Substance Use Services need, those needs can be met with MHSA funding. Mental Health and/or Substance Use Services uses a variety of programs that are accessed through the following specialized programming:

- Access to Youth Services Treatment program- Available through the Mental Health Services Act, these programs and services include Therapeutic Behavioral Services Behavior Intervention Specialist services, Mental Health counseling, Family Therapy, medication management, case management and rehabilitative services.
- Student/ Parent Navigation program- Program provides outreach, linkage, and access to supports and services to families of youth who are experiencing challenges with school attendance and behavior problems in the school setting.

Sierra Wellness Advocacy for Youth (SWAY) program- SCBH partners with Sierra Plumas Joint Unified School District to provide education and in-services to the staff and student body related to social-emotional development and well-being. Current plans are underway to extend youth-based wellness activities within the care continuum at the SCBH drop-in Wellness Center.

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:

Sierra County plans to assess eligible youth using evidence based Noble assessments for risk and needs. A specialized sex offender assessment will be conducted using the JSORAT assessment. Due to the historically small size of the county’s targeted population, unpredictable nature of juvenile crime and dynamic needs of the target population in Sierra County, it would be costly and inefficient to create robust programming for each specialized treatment need area. To be cost effective, JJRBG funding will be used to benefit these youth by enabling the county to enhance local services when appropriate and to obtain out of county services that are proven in quality for specialized offenders when needed. It is anticipated that services for offenders who are experiencing significant mental health needs, severe alcohol and drug issues, sexual offender treatment needs, and/or other significant related behavioral or trauma-based needs will be contracted out to out of county specialized services to effectively serve the youth. Eligible youth who are not placed in Secure Track will also be eligible to receive programming and services through these funds as well to work to ensure that they do not violate and be at further risk of Secure Track placement.

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)):

Sierra County lacks a presence of community-based organizations (CBOs) or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that specialize in providing services for justice involved youth. This plan intends to reserve some funding for the development/ assistance of groups that may come forward in the community. Absent any CBOs or NGOs, probation will continue to utilize the strength we have as a small, intertwined community, to assist youth in obtaining out of home, nonauthoritarian prosocial relationships to provide an outlet and guidance. Funding may be used for prosocial activities and programs to help foster healthy development.

Sierra County does have a valued nonprofit partner in county, the High Sierras Family Resource Center. Although it does not specialize in justice involved youth, it can offer general family services which include family peer counseling, parenting services, food assistance, housing, winter heating, and transportation assistance, employment services, assistance with connecting to State benefit programs, GED and secondary education assistance, adult literacy programs, Khan Academy, citizenship, and English language assistance.

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

Sierra County plans to support family engagement for the target population through a variety of services and programming. Child and Family Teaming, in collaboration with the Department of Social Services, will be used to engage in Family Finding for youth in need of permanent connections and the utilization of a variety of options for parenting education and support. Mental health, drug and alcohol, and wellness services will also be used to support family engagement by providing capacity for regular family counseling for all Secure Track youth.

Wraparound Services is another key program for promoting family engagement. Target population youth re-entering the community from a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) will have the opportunity to participate in Wraparound Services if they are under the age of 18. The Subcommittee recognized that the target population is more likely to be over the age of 18 at re-entry compared to other youth on probation; therefore, many will not be eligible for Wraparound Services. Some of these youth will be able to access similar services such as Full Service Partnership (FSP), SWAY, and Youth Access to Treatment. Where no existing services can meet the need, grant funds are intended to be applied towards replacement services.

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)):

Sierra County plans to address the following needs for the targeted population by focusing on:

- Specialized Services – Reserving some grant funds for specialized purpose needs as they arise, will allow for some specialized services, such as “Wraparound” management services, to aid with reentry for those target population youth who are not eligible for existing services based on age, insurance or other factors. This funding could also be accessed for youth specific needs such as post-secondary course enrollment for Secure Track youth.
- Supportive Housing - The Subcommittee recognized that some Secure Track youth will not have family homes to return to upon release. Those under 18 will have options for foster care placement settings. Those over 18 may not qualify for Extended Foster Care (EFC) services and therefore be in need of additional support. County stakeholders have agreed to provide “special consideration” for the Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP+) Program for Secure Track youth. Even so, some will not meet suitability criteria or otherwise be able to access this limited resource. Probation will work with these youth to explore all other housing options; however, some may still be in need of additional resources to exit custody to stable housing.
- Specialized Foster Home for High Needs Probation Youth – Sierra County has a FFA provider, Mountain Circle that can be utilized as well as a mechanism to utilize a RFA provider. Sierra County does have a need for a higher level “therapeutic” Resource Family Home. The subcommittee has expressed an interest in exploring this program through assistance of the JJRBG within Sierra County or likely in partnership with other small rural neighboring counties.
- Specialized Placements - Every effort will be made to serve the target population locally in order to keep them connected to their families and community; however, Sierra County has very limited local resources for placements in general therefore, this plan intends to reserve some realignment funds for Specialized Placement each year to access Secure Youth Treatment Facilities in other counties as they are needed.

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)):

As most of the specialized programs and services to serve the targeted Secure Track youth will be contracted out to out of county providers, Sierra County plans to only utilize services for our youth that are well suited and experienced in evidence-based, promising, trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices. Sierra County Probation and the JJCC will endeavor to assess all programs and services prior to placement and to evaluate utilized programs at least annually.

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)):

Sierra County does not have a CBO or NGO presence that focusses their services on justice involved youth. Sierra County is open to partnering with reputable CBOs or NGOs that may want to establish in Sierra County.

As previously mentioned in Part 5., Sierra County does have a valued nonprofit, the High Sierras Family Resource Center with a Loyalton field office, the Empowerment Center. Sierra County does plan on building upon the partnership it has with the Family Resource Center and reserving an allocation of funding for this program and its broad range of services when the need arises.

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))

If currently contracted facilities cannot be utilized as the most appropriate facility for the targeted youth, it is anticipated that other specialized facilities will be used through existing or new contracts. Sierra County does not have oversight or control of how contracted facilities are designed or operated. However, Sierra County will be diligent in monitoring contracted facilities for the safety and protection of all potential local youth. Youth will be withdrawn from and/or contracts will not be renewed to facilities that do not ensure these standards.

Decision making on whether target population youth would be best served in an existing contracted juvenile hall or in a consortium based SYTF will be based upon the least restrictive option that provides care, treatment and guidance that is consistent with the best interests of the youth and the public as required by Section 202(b) of the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC).

Considerations for the safety and protection of all youth in the facilities will take on additional importance given the probability of older (up to and including age 24) and more sophisticated target population youth now remaining in local commitment for extended periods. Youth will continue to be classified for specific housing based on requirements contained in Title 15 and the policies and procedures of the hosting county facility. These requirements are intended to provide for the safety of youth, facility staff and the public by placing youth in the least restrictive housing and program settings that can meet their needs. Classification factors include but are not limited to the following:

- Age and maturity of the youth
- Sophistication
- Emotional stability
- Court status and present offense
- Criminal offense history
- Prior behavior while in the facility or other institutions
- Gang affiliation
- Conflicts with other youth
- Court-ordered restrictions as to the association with other youth
- Medical/mental health considerations
- Gender and gender identity
- Developmental and cognitive processing disabilities
- Program needs
- Legal process status

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)):

The Sierra County justice partners are cognizant of the need to keep youth out of the adult court system. This system will be a last resort reserved for consideration in only the most serious and violent of offenses. Funding for specialized services that meet an individual's needs will incentivize keeping the youth within the juvenile court system.

It is important to note that SB 823 changed the maximum age of juvenile court jurisdiction for some target population youth. Previously, only youth who were committed to the DJJ had their maximum age of juvenile court jurisdiction extended to age 23 or 25. Changes enacted with SB 823 extend the age of jurisdiction for the entire target population, regardless of whether they become Secure Track youth, to the ages of 23 or 25, depending on the nature of their adjudicated charges. By adding a new Section 208.5 to the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC), SB 823 also provided additional restrictions on housing wards of the juvenile court in adult facilities, regardless of age. Wards 19 years of age or older cannot be detained in an adult facility without a hearing. The presumption at that hearing is that the ward will be retained in a juvenile facility. Wards serving a commitment in a juvenile facility cannot have that commitment transferred to an adult facility, regardless of age. For the purposes of this plan, that means there is the potential for more youth between the ages of 21-25 requiring services in the local juvenile justice continuum, up to and including juvenile detention services.

All requests for transfer of a juvenile to adult court will be reviewed by the Chief Probation Officer using a multi-agency process and creating a comprehensive continuum of services for the individual.

Part 8: Regional Effort

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

Sierra County plans to use JJRBG funding to house eligible offenders in existing contracted facilities or new contracted facilities if needed. No regional agreements or arrangements have been supported by the funding to date. It is planned that the funds will serve as a "insurance" type policy to keep available and to utilize for appropriate secure placement, special individualized programming and services, and reentry programming and services when the need arises.

Part 9: Data

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

Absent a significant anomaly, the amount of eligible youth the Sierra County justice system will become involved with will be low enough that existing staff will be able to record data through existing case management systems. The demographics of the youth served will address age, gender, ethnicity, neighborhood, family status, and offense details.

Data other than demographics that will be collected will consist of:

- Assessment information- risk/ need
- Custody time – days spent in custody at juvenile detention facilities
- New law violations - subsequent adjudications and/or convictions for misdemeanor or felony offenses after becoming a target population youth
- Treatment programming - programs referred to and completion status
- High school and secondary education status
- Employment and/or employment skills training participation

Housing status

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)):

The completion rate of eligible youth will be measured as well as the completion rates for programs utilized. Youth, families, and other partners will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on programs and the methods used to manage this population. Recidivism will also be monitored.

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)).

Since the initial allocation of funding Sierra County has not had any youth come within the jurisdiction of this targeted population. Therefore, there have not been any new programs or significant uses of funding as described in Parts 2 through 9.