



Office of Youth and
Community Restoration

Deferred Entry of Judgment in California

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LaRon Dennis is an attorney and Special Consultant for the Office of Youth and Community Restoration, specializing in juvenile law and policy. A retired prosecutor and former probation officer with 30 years of practical and policy experience in juvenile and criminal justice, Ms. Dennis has worked within the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state and local government. She has worked as a consultant for criminal and juvenile justice systems around the country in risk/need assessment tools, effective supervision methods, and other evidence-based practices. Ms. Dennis has served as an adjunct law professor and for over a decade and was a contributing author for California's leading Juvenile Law treatise, *Seiser and Kumli on California Juvenile Courts: Practice and Procedure*. She was the author of the first published academic article on California's Deferred Entry of Judgment law for juvenile offenders as well as other publications addressing juvenile justice system issues, including girls, mental health, and overall system improvement.



Juvenile Deferred Entry of Judgment (DEJ):

Juvenile DEJ offers an opportunity for youth offenders to have their case dismissed and records sealed upon the successful completion of treatment and supervision in a community setting.

To participate in Juvenile DEJ, eligible youth must admit all allegations within a charging petition as charged and waive the right to a speedy jurisdictional hearing. If a youth subsequently commits another felony offense or two or more misdemeanors, the deferred judgment will be imposed.

Under DEJ, Probation Supervision May Offer:

- Educational Programming
- Drug & Alcohol Treatment Courses
- Workforce Development Services

Juvenile Deferred Entry of Judgment Eligibility:

Pursuant to Welf. & Inst. Code § 790, prosecuting attorneys shall review the case files of minors accused of committing specified felony offenses for their eligibility to participate in **Deferred Entry of Judgment (DEJ)**.

Upon reviewing the case file of eligible minors, the prosecuting attorney shall declare to the court and the youth their eligibility for DEJ. A juvenile court may then grant DEJ after making a finding that the minor is suitable.

DEJ Eligibility is based on the following criteria:

1. The minor has not previously been declared a ward of the court for a felony offense (WIC § 791(a)(1))
2. The charged offense is not a specified sex or 707(b) offense (WIC § 791(a)(2) & (7))
3. The minor has never failed to complete probation before (WIC § 791(a)(4))
4. The minor is at least 14 years of age at the time of the hearing (WIC § 791(a)(5))
5. The minor is eligible for probation (WIC § 791(a)(6))





Adult Deferred Entry of Judgment Pilot:

Like Juvenile DEJ, the **DEJ pilot program** offers an opportunity for transition-aged youth between the ages of 18-25 who are being prosecuted in criminal court, to plead guilty, successfully complete their program, and have their charges and case dismissed.

Unlike the community-based approach of Juvenile DEJ, adult DEJ pilot programs permit adult participants to **serve their term of probation in a county's juvenile hall**. To prepare for the young adult's re-entry into the community, probation departments shall develop a comprehensive housing, employment, and education services plan.

Pursuant to Penal Code § 1000.7(g), participating young adults shall not serve more than a year in custody within a juvenile hall. If probation determines that a young adult violates a rule in the juvenile hall, commits a new crime, or is not benefiting from the program's services, the department may make a motion for entry of judgment and a return to county jail.





TAY Deferred Entry of Judgment Eligibility:

Pursuant to Penal Code § 1000.7, a multidisciplinary team shall determine whether eligible transition-aged youth may participate in the **DEJ Pilot Program**.

The multidisciplinary team shall be composed of representatives from the Superior Court, District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation, Sheriff, Board of Supervisors, Health and Human Services Department, and youth advocacy group.

TAY DEJ Eligibility is based on the following criteria:

1. The young adult is *either* between the ages of 18-21 *or* 21-25, with the approval of the multidisciplinary team (PC § 1000.7(b)(1))
2. The young adult has not been **previously** convicted of a sex, “serious”, or WIC § 707(b) felony offense (PC § 1000.7(b)(4))
3. The **charged offense** is not a sex, “serious”, or WIC § 707(b) felony offense (PC § 1000.7(d)(1-3))
4. The young adult shows the ability to benefit from the juvenile court’s therapeutic, educational, vocational, and mental health services (PC § 1000.7(b)(3))
5. The young adult is evaluated as suitable by a risk assessment tool (PC § 1000.7(b)(2))



OYCR

History & Efficacy of TAY DEJ Programs in California:

AB 1258 (Kalra, Chap. 394, Stats of 2025) extends a pilot program authorizing the counties of Butte, Nevada, and Santa Clara to operate a deferred entry of judgement pilot program for eligible defendants between the ages of 18 – 25, as specified.

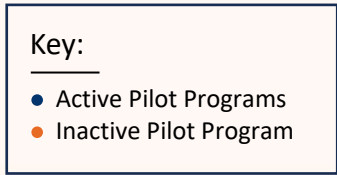
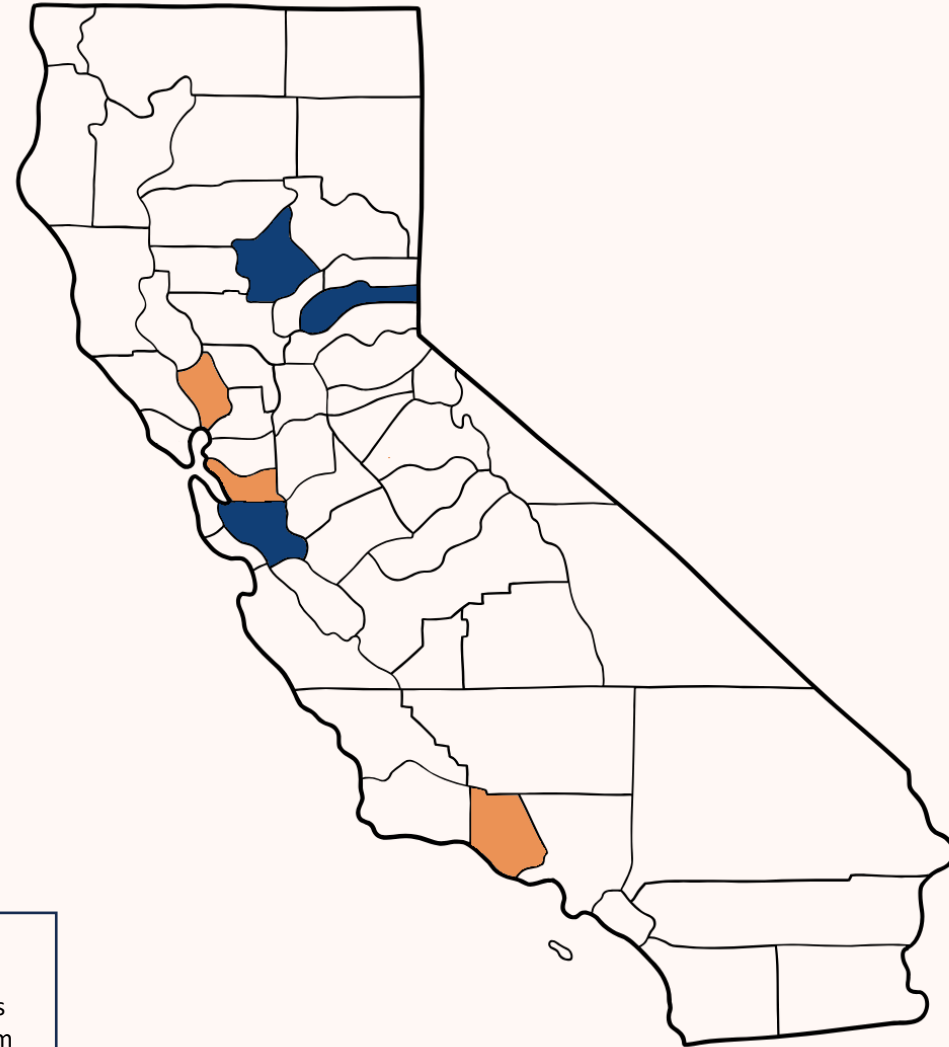
In 2016, SB 1004 (Hill, Chp. 865, Statutes of 2016) authorized the creation of the first TAY DEJ pilot programs in the counties of Alameda, Butte, Napa, Nevada, and Santa Clara. Subsequent legislation has altered this list.

According to the Board of State and Community Corrections, young adults participating in the TAY DEJ programs:

1. Receive evidence-based treatment and services
2. Engage with age-appropriate educational and vocational programming
3. Have reduced rates of recidivism, as compared to non-participating young adults
 - A. For the youth that completed the program, but did recidivate, BSCC found that they had a significantly smaller proportion of subsequent jail or prison sentences

TAY DEJ Pilot Counties:

- Since the passage of SB 1004 (Hill, Chap. 865, Stats of 2016), a total of **6 counties have implemented TAY DEJ pilot programs**





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Questions?



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Thank you