



Office of Youth and Community Restoration

Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act & Youthful Offender Block Grant (JJCPA-YOBG)

FY 2024-2025 Consolidated Annual Plan

Date:	April 14, 2025
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INSTRUCTIONS:

[Government Code Section 30061\(b\)\(4\)](#) and [Welfare & Institutions Code Section 1961\(b\)](#) call for consolidation of the annual plans required for JJCPA and YOBG.

Please submit your most up-to-date consolidated plan.

The rest of this document is a standardized template for a consolidated county plan. Please use this template or ensure your submission meets the accessibility standards by reviewing either the Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF checklists published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website here [Accessibility Conformance Checklists | HHS.gov](#). Your submission will be posted to the OYCR website once it is confirmed to meet the accessibility standards.

Once the report is complete, attach the file to an email and send it to: OYCRgrants@chhs.ca.gov.

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Part I. Service Needs, Priorities & Strategy – (Government Code Section 30061(b)(4)(A))

A. Assessment of Existing Services

Include here an assessment of existing law enforcement, probation, education, mental health, health, social services, drug and alcohol, and youth services resources that specifically target at-risk juveniles, juvenile offenders, and their families.

The Juvenile Division of the Probation Department provides supervision services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Santa Cruz County offers a comprehensive range of services across the continuum, with a primary focus on prevention, diversion, and intervention. This integrated approach ensures that young people and their families receive culturally responsive support, enhancing engagement and creating meaningful opportunities for success.

Santa Cruz County Probation continues to move beyond traditional supervision, prioritizing prevention and diversion efforts with an "upstream" approach to keep young people from entering the juvenile justice system. This focus on diversion, aimed at supporting youth and their families, receives support from several grant-funded initiatives, primarily from the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). These grants enable the department to sustain vital resources that prove effective and impactful in serving our community.

Many initiatives are led by community-based organizations in collaboration with probation, social services, behavioral health, and law enforcement. Key partners driving this work include the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz (CAB), Encompass Family Services, Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Services, Inc. (PVPSA), Conflict Resolution Center (CRC), Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE), Barrios Unidos (BU), United Way of Santa Cruz County, CASA of Santa Cruz, Community Bridges (CB), Pajaro Valley Health Trust, Positive Discipline Community Resources, and Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD). Together, they play a crucial role in implementing and managing efforts that support diversion and intervention strategies for young people and their families. Most importantly, their services are designed to foster meaningful connections and engagement with young people and their families.

Our Juvenile Division partners with the Health Services Agency to offer Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) services in custody, ensuring that youth receive the necessary support for substance use recovery while incarcerated. This partnership extends to providing ongoing follow-up care once youth are released and reintegrated

into the community, ensuring continuity of care and long-term success. Additionally, through our collaboration with Encompass, youth are provided with comprehensive Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services, addressing any ongoing needs and offering tailored treatment to support their recovery journey. Together, these partnerships work to support youth in their rehabilitation and empower them with the resources they need to thrive both inside and outside of custody.

In 2024, the County Office of Education (COE) received a grant to expand diversion efforts through the ACEND program (Advancing Community Engagement and Diversion). This initiative partners with multiple law enforcement agencies to prevent youth from entering the justice system by providing early interventions and connecting at-risk youth with supportive resources. The ACEND program focuses on diversion strategies, helping youth avoid formal justice involvement and encouraging positive outcomes.

One notable BSCC grant funded project was the creation of the Luna y Sol program which exemplifies the focus on connecting critical services to young people and families. Since 2022, the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County has operated the Luna y Sol Familia Center, a comprehensive, one-stop service hub dedicated to supporting at-risk Latino youth and their families. This center fosters strong partnerships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and Probation, ensuring the delivery of trauma-informed, culturally responsive services. Strategically located in the heart of the community, the center provides a wide array of resources, including educational support, behavioral health connections, youth employment opportunities, and legal aid services.

The Luna y Sol Familia Center further enhances its support through culturally relevant programming, including *Cara y Corazón*, *Joven Noble*, and *Girasol*—initiatives developed by the National Compadres Network to promote cultural healing and address the diverse challenges faced by families. Over the past year, the Juvenile Division has deepened its collaboration with CAB to develop the Youth and Family Advisory Councils. These councils serve as a platform for individuals with lived experience in the juvenile justice system to share their insights and help shape policies and practices. Most importantly, the councils provide a safe space for youth and families to build leadership skills, engage in advocacy, and participate in community events.

In addition to our community partners, we maintain a strong collaboration with local law enforcement agencies. Our primary law enforcement partners include the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, the City of Watsonville Police Department, and the City of Santa Cruz Police Department. The work being done across the county would not be possible without the support of the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office—an ongoing partner in diversion services—and the Superior Court. Together with our

service providers, the dedicated staff providing these services create a System of Care (SOC) that is making a meaningful, positive impact on the lives of young people and families in Santa Cruz County. An example of this collective impact is the 2024 recidivism rate of 6% as compared to the recidivism rate of 7% in 2023. Additionally, over 250 youth, ages 6-14, participated in a two-week soccer camp as part of prevention efforts. Most importantly, 2024 saw an over 80% increase in the number of youth diverted from formal justice involvement compared to 2023.

Describe what approach will be used to facilitate collaboration amongst the organizations listed above and support the integration of services.

The Santa Cruz County Probation Department collaborates closely with the partners listed above, along with many others dedicated to supporting the well-being of young people and their families. In addition to these partnerships, various initiatives are underway to expand and enhance services across the county. In an effort to develop robust services focused on diverting youth from formal system involvement, the department has historically worked with community-based organizations to leverage grant opportunities and remains committed to strengthening these partnerships to sustain and grow support for youth and families.

The primary vehicle for this consolidation has been leveraging the System of Care (SOC) model to facilitate collaboration and to support the integration of services. This model, which has been in place for years, supports the continued work initiated by Assembly Bill 403, Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) which sought to improve outcomes for young people served in California's child welfare system by drawing together a series of new and existing principles. The CCR aims to ensure young people have their physical, mental, and emotional needs addressed and can thrive in permanent and supportive homes. In alignment with the goals outlined in the CCR, Assembly Bill (AB) 2083 mandated in 2018 that counties establish a timely, and trauma-informed system-of-care approach for young people in foster care who have experienced trauma.

In response to this legislative directive, Santa Cruz County established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure that all public programs serving young people provide integrated, comprehensive, culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and evidence-based services, regardless of how youth enter the system. The MOU identifies five primary partners: the Santa Cruz County Probation Department, the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (HSA), the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department (HSD), the San Andreas Regional Center (SARC), and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE). Additionally, the Santa Cruz Superior Court, A Better Way and First 5 Santa Cruz County serve as advisory members.

The AB 2083 System of Care workgroup, also known as the Interagency Leadership Team (ILT), continues to meet monthly to advance the initiatives outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and has already achieved several system improvements. These include developing a universal Release of Information (ROI) for use across county agencies, establishing a process for County Behavioral Health (CBH) to share data from the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment with Family and Children's Services (FCS) and Probation, and introducing probation staff to the principles of the Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM).

Other notable examples of collaborative efforts within the system include equity-focused diversion initiatives aimed at reducing reliance on incarceration, Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs), and the Stable Transitions After Reentry (STAR) grant project. Lastly, the ILT team is the governing body which provides oversight and support to the county's Well-Being Cabinet in the implementation of the local Comprehensive Prevent Plan focused on the prevention of young people entering the dependency or juvenile justice system.

In 2024, the ILT team continued its focus on California's implementation of Family-Based Aftercare and the delivery of High-Fidelity Wraparound Services, as outlined in All-County Letter 21-116. The ILT team is currently planning for a Request For Proposals to appropriate High Fidelity Wraparound services in Santa Cruz County. In addition, it will further focus on offering training on the Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM), which will further support alignment on how partners work with young people and families as outlines through state mandates. The team's monthly meetings provide a platform for ongoing collaboration, planning, and communication regarding the implementation and delivery of services for young people and families. These efforts are grounded in a team-based approach to identifying and executing strategies that best support youth.

B. Identifying and Prioritizing Focus Areas

Identify and prioritize the neighborhoods, schools, and other areas of the county that face the most significant public safety risk from juvenile crime.

Santa Cruz County has a population of 282,361, with 25,265 being youth between the ages of 10-17 years old. The majority of residents are concentrated in three distinct regions: North County, Mid County, and South County. Probation caseloads, which include both CAPS (Connecting and Promoting Success) and non-CAPS cases, are distributed as follows: South County 52%, Mid County 2%, North County 34%, and out-of-county 12%. As reflected in this data, most youth on probation reside in South

County, particularly in the City of Watsonville, which has a population of 52,457. South County is an underserved area where many residents experience poverty and face significant barriers to accessing resources equitably.

The current population of South County is composed of 84% Latino, 12% White, 2% African American, and 2% Other/Unknown. Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) is the largest school district in the county, and many of the youth we serve come from this district. Additionally, the COE plays a critical role in supporting at-risk youth by providing various alternative school options throughout the county, including in South County. Data shows that Latino youth in Santa Cruz County are three times more likely than White youth to be committed to Juvenile Hall. In 2024, Latino youth accounted for 64% of all bookings into Juvenile Hall, with 52% of those bookings involving youth from Watsonville. Arrest data further indicates that Latino youth are disproportionately impacted, with 32% of all youth arrests in 2024 involving Watsonville residents.

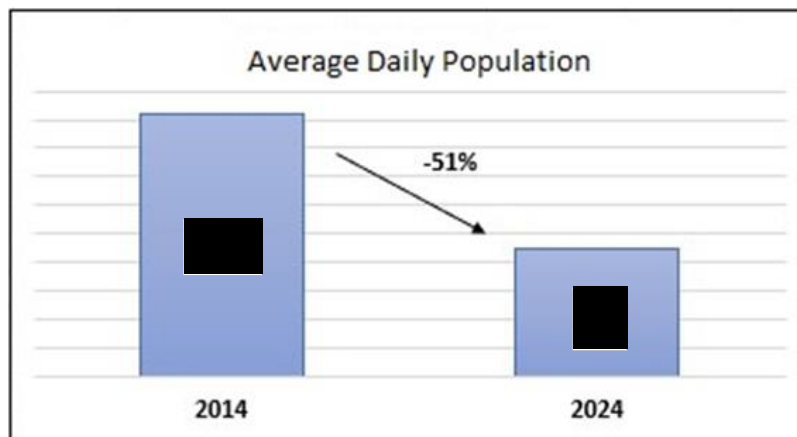
To further support young people and their families in South County, the department continues to have the majority of the Juvenile Probation staff located in the department's Watsonville office. Most importantly, we value operational excellence and meeting our communities' needs as all our juvenile probation officers there are bilingual speaking English/Spanish and bicultural. Additionally, the Luna Evening Center (LEC) is also located in South County, alongside the majority of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that offer direct services to young people on probation and their families. Collaborating with various partners in the county, the probation department is dedicated to addressing racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system, promoting accountability without relying on threats of confinement and instead fostering the well-being of youth and families impacted by the juvenile justice system. As previously mentioned in this report, the establishment of the Luna y Sol Familia Center has proven to be a valuable asset for residents of the South County.

The Juvenile Division's commitment to cultural responsiveness and ongoing reform efforts to reduce disparities and system involvement for youth of color aligns with the department's Race Equity Initiative (REI), launched in 2021. The REI facilitates internal assessments of supervision practices, identifying areas for improvement to help reduce disparate responses and outcomes for people of color. Additionally, the REI led to the department's adoption of a "Coaching Model" for supervision, implemented in 2023. By enhancing engagement with those under supervision and leveraging this model, the department aims to remove barriers, provide equitable opportunities for success, and reduce technical violations. The ultimate goal of the Coaching Model is to build strong, trust-based connections with youth and families—so that instead of viewing probation as something to evade, youth actively collaborate with probation to access the support they need.

C. Juvenile Justice Action Strategy

Describe your county's juvenile justice action strategy. Include an explanation of your county's continuum of responses to juvenile crime and delinquency as well as a description of the approach used to ensure a collaborative and integrated approach for implementing a system of swift, certain, and graduated responses for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders.

Since 1999, the Juvenile Division has been at the forefront of reducing juvenile detention, serving as a model site for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's (AECF) Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). This initiative focuses on eliminating unnecessary detention, enhancing data-driven decision-making, streamlining court processes, establishing risk-based detention criteria, expanding community-based alternatives, improving confinement conditions, addressing youth disparities, and meeting the needs of specialized populations. Below is data which outlines our concerted efforts in decreasing our average daily population of incarcerated youth in our facility over the past 10 years.

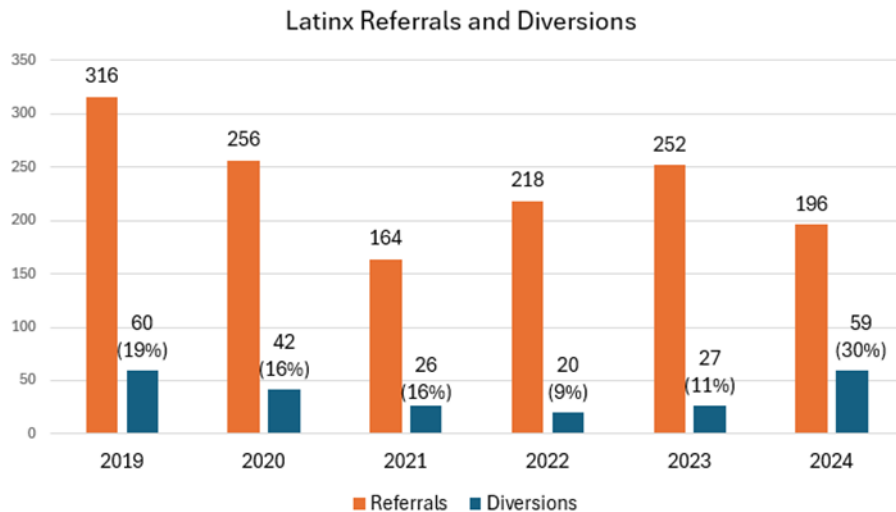


Our division has welcomed delegations from across the country and around the world to share our innovative and effective practices. In recognition of our leadership, we were honored with the National JDAI Distinguished System Leadership Award in 2019. In 2024, the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) further recognized our Chief Probation Officer with the inaugural Visionary Award, honoring the transformative work in the juvenile justice system which inspires a system that prioritizes healing of young people. Moving forward, the Probation Department remains committed to scaling continued reform efforts in juvenile justice.

In the Fall of 2024, staff, partners, and individuals with lived experience, including youth and families, played a pivotal role in planning and designing the Juvenile Division’s youth justice convening, *Transformations in Juvenile Justice: Reflecting on the Past and Shaping the Future*. The event featured esteemed leaders from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Office of Youth and Community Restoration, former probation leadership, and local system and community partners, many of whom contributed to the positive outcomes that were achieved. It provided a platform to reflect on three decades of juvenile justice reform in Santa Cruz County, highlighting key strategies that have driven positive outcomes. Additionally, the convening set a vision for the future, reinforcing the importance of continued partnerships to be innovative and develop strategies that advance the wellbeing of the young people we serve.

The department remains committed to diverting youth from the Juvenile Justice system through strong collaboration with law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations. Together, we are building a community of practice focused on identifying and implementing early diversion initiatives that minimize the need for detention. In 2024, the department had an increase of 119% Latinx diversions. The focus is important as Latinx youth continue to be disproportionately represented in our justice system.

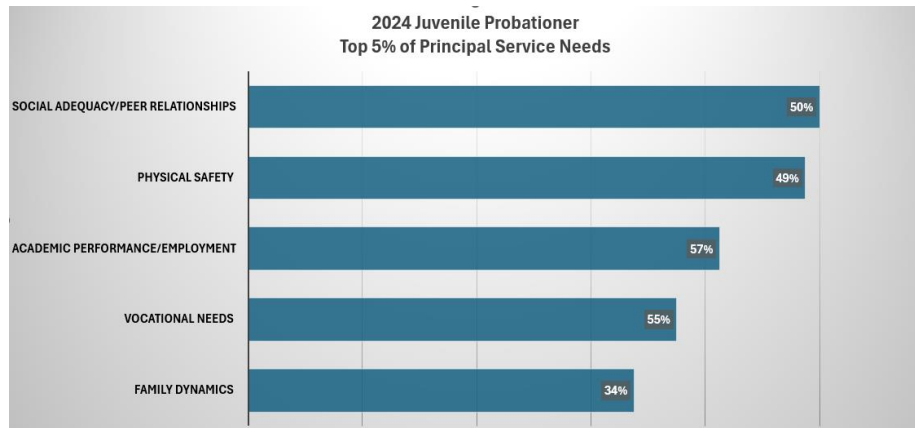
The following chart illustrates our trend line and affirms our line of sight for the future of our work:



Prioritizing diversion strategies whenever possible, Santa Cruz County employs various assessment tools to guide case management decisions. These include the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) and the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS). The DRAI is designed to ensure objective admissions to detention, preventing unnecessary or inappropriate placements. It assesses two key public safety risks: the likelihood of reoffending before a court hearing and the risk of failing to appear in court.

Additionally, the DRAI is linked to detention alternatives such as home supervision and electronic monitoring, including GPS tracking.

The JAIS, on the other hand, is a supervision model that fosters rapport between youth and probation staff while uncovering critical insights into a young person’s motivations and behavior. At its core, JAIS facilitates one-on-one conversations that focus on understanding the individual beyond their actions, helping to inform more effective and supportive intervention strategies.



If a young person is determined to be ineligible for diversion, they may still qualify for Informal Probation. If they do not meet the criteria for that option, the case is referred to the District Attorney’s Office for petition review. Should a petition be filed, the court has several options to consider, including Court-Ordered Informal Probation, Deferred Entry of Judgment, a six-month term without Wardship, or Wardship. If a youth is unable to successfully complete their court-ordered probation term and their behavior continues to pose a risk to community safety, the next steps in the graduated continuum of care may include placement in a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP), commitment to a Ranch Camp, a Court Commitment, or, in the most serious cases, placement in a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) under SB 823 for eligible 707(b) offenses.

The Santa Cruz County Probation Department actively participates in the development and implementation of the Santa Cruz County System of Care (SOC), guided by the following core principles:

- **Family Preservation:** Prioritizing efforts to keep children in their homes whenever possible.
- **Interagency Collaboration:** Ensuring coordinated services through a unified, purpose-driven system of care for children with serious emotional disturbances and their families.
- **Least Restrictive Setting:** Placing youth in their natural environments whenever feasible to support their well-being.
- **Family Involvement:** Engaging families throughout the assessment, evaluation, and treatment process to enhance outcomes.

- **Cultural Competence:** Delivering services that are relevant, inclusive, and effective across diverse cultural backgrounds.

Santa Cruz County Probation's juvenile programs and services are thoughtfully designed around the core principles of the System of Care (SOC). Grounded in a balanced and restorative approach to justice, these initiatives acknowledge three key stakeholders: the victim, the community, and the youth. Their primary objectives focus on fostering accountability, promoting competency development, and ensuring public safety.

The Juvenile Division is committed to safeguarding public safety by reducing recidivism through the development of life skills and competencies among the youth and families we serve. This is achieved through a range of services that emphasize genuine engagement and collaboration with families and youth. Probation remains dedicated to building strong partnerships with community-based organizations and key stakeholders, allowing us to provide comprehensive, culturally responsive supervision and services. These efforts are essential in supporting community safety and are relied upon by the court, juvenile justice partners, and the broader community. A key priority of the division is addressing and reducing the disproportionate representation of Latino youth within the justice system.

The Juvenile Division implements the Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) in recognition of the critical role early youth and family engagement plays in achieving positive outcomes. The ICPM serves as both a model and a framework that establishes shared values, core components, and standards of practice for professionals working with California’s children, youth, and families. A key element of the ICPM is Child and Family Teaming (CFT), which functions as the primary mechanism for a collaborative, team-based approach to case planning and service delivery.

Through CFT meetings, youth and their families actively participate in decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are met. This approach strengthens family connections, enhances support systems, and promotes long-term stability. By integrating the ICPM, the Juvenile Division aims to reduce recidivism and victimization, build essential life skills, and foster meaningful family engagement. This model underscores the department’s commitment to holistic, strength-based interventions that prioritize the well-being of youth while enhancing public safety and community resilience.

ICPM Guiding Practice Principles

ICPM Values	ICPM Phases	ICPM Guiding Practice Principles
Family-driven and Youth Guided: Youth and family voices are solicited and respected in determining the	Engagement, Assessment, and Team Preparation	Family voice and choice- Each family member’s voice is important.

<p>type of treatment, intervention and supports.</p> <p>Community-Based: Services are provided in the community.</p> <p>Culturally & linguistically competent: Services are provided in the family's primary language. While valuing traditions, values, and heritage as sources of strength.</p> <p>Prevention and Early Intervention: Care is proactive, strengthening family and community resilience while reducing risks to child development and family stability.</p>	<p>Initial Service Planning</p> <p>Monitoring and Adapting</p> <p>Transition</p>	<p>Team-based- Team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family.</p> <p>Natural supports- Friends, neighbors, coworkers, church members, and others identified by family.</p> <p>Collaboration and integration-Team shares responsibility in all aspects of plan development.</p> <p>Community-based- Services and support are accessible and available in the family's community.</p> <p>Culturally respectful- Plan supports achievement of goals for change that integrates the youth and family's culture.</p> <p>Individualized- Plan is built on strengths, needs, and interest of the family members.</p> <p>Strength-based- Team will use family's skills, knowledge and build upon the initial Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment.</p> <p>Persistence- The team never gives up on youth or families. When met with resistance, the team will revisit the plan to identify any revisions.</p> <p>Outcome-based- Team tracks goals and progress in plan and adjust as needed.</p> <p>Evidence-based- Team utilized interventions, services and programs which are based on effective outcomes.</p> <p>Trauma-informed- Team understands and addresses the impact of trauma on children and families.</p>
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D. Comprehensive Plan Revisions

Describe how your Plan has been updated for this year:

In July 2021, California Assembly Bill 153 (AB 153) authorized both federal Title IV-E and State Block Grant (SBG) expenditures for prevention services. The legislative intention is to create a full continuum of prevention services in each County and Tribe, which AB 153 terms "Family First Prevention Services (FFPS)." California's FFPS Program 1) builds on the Federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), which establishes a new option for States and Tribes to claim Title IV-E entitlement funds for evidence-based prevention and trauma-informed services for candidates at imminent risk for entry into foster care, and 2) includes additional state funding to provide greater flexibility and expand the continuum of prevention services beyond the federal FFPSA

requirements. In 2022, the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department (HSD) Family and Children's Services (FCS), and Probation Department Leadership opted into planning for FFPS.

The Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP) is a countywide blueprint for building and enhancing a system of prevention programs, practices, and policies. The CPP is an unprecedented opportunity to move collectively "upstream," focusing resources and efforts on children, youth, and families before they are involved with Child Welfare, Juvenile Probation, or other systems, and to greatly reduce negative outcomes for children, youth, and families through effective primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. The CPP will be submitted in fulfillment of the State Block Grant funding requirement. Some elements of the CPP may be implemented with funding from Santa Cruz County's allocation of FFPS funds, while other elements of the CPP may be implemented by leveraging other funding streams and initiatives that align with Santa Cruz County's CPP goals. Adjustments to the CPP may be made in communication with CDSS.

The Interagency Leadership Team (ILT) will provide decision-making authority for the CPP. ILT membership is based on State Statute. Current members by role are listed below.

- Child Welfare (HSD FCS)
- Early Childhood (First 5)
- Juvenile Probation
- Children's Behavioral Health (Human Services Agency)
- Regional Center (San Andreas Regional Center)
- Education (Santa Cruz County Office of Education)
- Courts (Child Welfare)
- Parent Partner (A Better Way)
- Parent Partner (Children Behavioral Health)

The Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being Cabinet was formed by combining the ILT and Child Abuse Prevention Workgroups. The Child Abuse Prevention Workgroup was a project of the Office of Child Abuse Prevention and has been meeting since 2019. Cabinet meetings were expanded to include additional partners, including additional Community-Based Organizations and People with Lived Expertise. The Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being Cabinet provides advice and guidance and supports cross-sector communication and collaboration during the development and implementation of the CPP.

- a. Based on guidance from CDSS, the Executive Sponsors merged the ILT and Child Abuse Prevention Workgroup to form the membership of the Child, Youth, and Family Well-being Cabinet.

- b. Invited partners were given the option to attend meetings or provide an alternate representative. Additional people have been invited to the Child, Youth, and Family Well-being Cabinet through connection with partners.
- c. The Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being Cabinet is a cross-sector, cross-agency group inclusive of people with lived experience. Its purpose is to inform, advise, and support the CPP planning in alignment with community needs, assets, and vision.
- d. The inaugural meeting of the Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being Cabinet was held in October 2022.

Child, Youth, and Family Well-being Cabinet Meetings are held monthly, on the third Thursday of each month, unless other arrangements are made. Most importantly, all meetings have been held at a community location to facilitate relationship building and in-person discussion. However, remote options will be available to ensure robust participation and engagement. The ILT (AB 2083 / System of Care Workgroup) will meet monthly, on second Fridays, at least every other month and lend their oversight and support to the Child, Youth, and Family Well-being Cabinet when additional support and direction is required

In June 2023, the state approved the CPP plan. Currently, the planning team continues to meet bi-weekly, focusing on the plan's implementation. In 2024, the Child, Youth, and Family Well-being Cabinet coordinated multiple evidenced based Motivational Interviewing trainings for community partners to enhance their skills and improve service delivery for youth and families. Additionally, a Request for Proposal was issued to incorporate the voices of individuals with lived experience, further strengthening the plan's implementation.

If your Plan has not been updated this year, explain why no changes to your plan are necessary: N/A

Part II. Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) – (Government Code Section 30061(b)(4))

A. Information Sharing and Data

Describe your information systems and their ability to facilitate the sharing of data across agencies within your county. Describe the data obtained through these systems and how those data are used to measure the success of juvenile justice programs and strategies.

The Juvenile Division of the Santa Cruz County Probation Department relies heavily on the AutoMon Caseload Explorer case management system for a wide range of case management tasks. Regular staff training is essential to ensure everyone remains up to date with system updates while also empowering staff to suggest additional functionalities to enhance the system as needed.

An overview from AutoMon is as follows: Caseload Explorer enables efficient tracking and management of juvenile data while ensuring compliance with jurisdictional security and judicial requirements. The system stores demographic and personal details such as gender, date of birth, address, and phone number, along with offense-related information, including charge type, restrictions, and conditions. Additionally, Caseload Explorer monitors active referrals or case files, as well as the assigned supervisor and/or caseworker. For youth placed in a juvenile facility, Caseload Explorer streamlines intake management through a customizable intake and release process. This allows case workers to monitor appointments and release details, manage property, document behavioral patterns, and easily access event and disciplinary records.

The data obtained from our internal case management system plays a crucial role in ensuring quality assurance. It supports the analysis of recidivism rates, the monitoring of caseload demographics and size, and the evaluation of program effectiveness to assess public safety outcomes. Ultimately, the department is responsible for maintaining accurate and reliable data, enabling informed decision-making on resource allocation for programs designed to maximize the success of youth on probation.

In addition to utilizing Caseload Explorer, the department has established independent databases to capture program-specific information. One such database, developed by our Department Data Analyst, is the Evening Center Database. This system enables nightly data entry and real-time tracking of youth participating in the Evening Center program. Key data points recorded include name, zip code, date of birth, ethnicity, and reason for referral. While all this information is crucial for departmental monitoring, the reason for referral is especially valuable in identifying trends, facilitating meaningful

discussions for the annual division report, and guiding resource allocation decisions. Referral reasons for the program include positive drug tests, probation violations (non-compliance), school infractions, new offenses, Alternative to Detention (ATD) breaches, and self-referrals.

Every four years, the Juvenile Division of the Santa Cruz County Probation Department issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) to organizations serving youth. These proposals aim to deliver culturally responsive, evidence-based services focused on juvenile delinquency prevention, intervention, and engagement with youth, families, and schools—all designed to support the well-being of justice-involved youth. The selection of required service areas is directly informed by probation data. Our department is currently planning for the issuance of an RFP in the coming year to ensure continued support for young people and families. Additionally, there is a growing expectation that funded providers will independently track data and submit monthly or quarterly reports to the Probation Department.

Our department recognizes the vital role of data in measuring the collective impact of our work alongside our partners in serving youth and families. Internally, we distribute a monthly *Data Blast* to keep our staff informed on progress and key trends. Additionally, we produce annual Juvenile division reports that highlight our collaborative efforts with the community in supporting youth and families. These reports are shared with various stakeholders and commissions to showcase the meaningful outcomes driven by our partnerships.

In November 2025, our Juvenile Division hosted a groundbreaking justice convening, *Transformation in Juvenile Justice: Reflecting on the Past and Shaping the Future*. The event featured esteemed leaders from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Office of Youth and Community Restoration, former probation leadership, and local system and community representatives. It served as a powerful platform to reflect on 30 years of key data points of juvenile justice reform in Santa Cruz County while setting a vision for the future.

B. Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils:

Does your county have a fully constituted Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) as prescribed by Welfare & Institutions Code Section 749.22?

Yes No

If no, please explain what vacancies exist on your JJCC, when those vacancies began, and your plan for filling them:

C. Funded Programs, Strategies and/or System Enhancements

Using the templates below, provide details for each program, strategy, and/or system enhancement that will be funded by the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA), identifying any program that is co-funded with Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) funds.

To include multiple programs, copy and paste the template fields "1. Program Name," "2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based," and "3. Description" as many times as necessary.

JJCPA Funded Program, Strategy and/or System Enhancement

This template should be copied as many times as needed to capture every program, strategy, and system enhancement you plan to fund next year.

1. Program Name:

Luna Evening Center (LEC)

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

The principles guiding the center's operations are outlined in the California Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) for Children, Youth, and Families. This model is built on five key components: engagement, assessment, service planning/implementation, monitoring/adapting, and transitions. Additionally, the ICPM is founded on 12 core principles: team-based approach, family voice and choice, natural supports, collaboration and integration, trauma informed, evidence based, community-based services, cultural respect, individualized care, strengths-based approach, persistence, and outcomes-based practices.

3. Description:

The Luna Evening Center (LEC) is a collaborative initiative involving Probation, community organizations, and county agencies, designed to support probation-involved youth while also serving as a key prevention and diversion effort. LEC assists youth facing challenges such as court compliance, substance use, and behavioral concerns by providing a structured, after-school environment where they engage in targeted interventions, develop decision-making skills, and receive individualized coaching to support positive life choices. As a short-term, community-based alternative to detention, LEC reduces reliance on Juvenile Hall and helps prevent deeper system involvement.

Operating Monday through Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., LEC provides participants with meals and transportation, ensuring safe pickup and return home. The program accommodates up to eight youth at a time and is facilitated by Probation and County Behavioral Health staff. In collaboration with the Luna Familia Center, LEC also provides youth and their families with essential tools and resources to strengthen family dynamics and promote long-term success. Services follow a structured weekly schedule, utilizing assessments and evidence-based practices to address each participant's specific needs.

The program, which has been in existence for almost two decades, is designed to serve young people while at the same time allowing them to remain in the community. Providing a probation response in lieu of court hearings is achieved through supportive programming aimed at addressing critical thinking skills. The LEC provides a structured after-school environment where young people can examine their thoughts and feelings that impact their decision-making. Staff at the LEC work with the participants to identify a variety of ways they could make better choices and minimize their contact with the juvenile justice system.

Over the past several years there has been a significant evolution in how the program serves young people in the County. The focus, especially during the pandemic, has been to assess the needs of young people and families and provide much needed emotional and educational support and improve the overall well-being of young people and their families. These efforts are confirmed by looking at the program data for the past three years, beginning in January of 2022 in which a total of 203 referrals were made to the LEC. A considerable number of referrals, almost 33%, were self-referrals from young people who had previously been in the program, followed by referrals to support probation responses and identified needs that support young people remaining in the community. These were followed by educational support, referrals from the court and the ATD program.

The high number of self-referrals speaks to the positive experience the young person had while attending previously and further demonstrates the need for this type of support and outreach. Another example of working with families as part of Evening Center programming is the weekly Cara Y Corazon family sessions that are facilitated by Santa Cruz County Children's Behavioral Health. In 2023, there were 42 adults and 46 young people who participated in the program.

In February 2020, the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County (CAB) secured grant funding to launch the Luna Y Sol Familia Center, a "one-stop" service center that enabled the LEC to expand its services to youth and families. This initiative increased diversion efforts and extended support to non-justice-involved young people and families at the Hub, as mentioned earlier. Since the completion of the grant in 2023, the Luna Y Sol Familia Center has continued to sustain its services and provide ongoing support to LEC youth.

In 2023, Probation partnered with CAB to assist them in applying for a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) under the Children Exposed to Violence (CEV) program. CAB was awarded the grant to further expand the Luna Y Sol Familia Center and collaborate with other community-based organizations to support youth and families by adding clinical support as an additional resource. The focus and goal are to provide comprehensive case management support and mentorship for both system-involved and non-system-involved families exposed to violence. Families are connected to a navigator who engages them, assesses their needs, and ensures they are linked to supportive services while providing ongoing case management.

1. Program Name:

Family Nights

Family Nights are a blend of engaging youth and families in art centered activities and education opportunities to learn about and inform needed community resources. Family Nights programming is a result of youth and family input from focus groups requesting safe places to gather as families and engage in fun activities and learning opportunities to prevent juvenile justice system contact or reduce instances of youth moving to deep end of the system.

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

Research indicates that arts-based interventions can enhance family cohesion and improve communication, particularly for families experiencing stress or adversity. A guided art session is facilitated by a local artist with expertise in youth and family engagement. This approach is designed to foster emotional expression, strengthen familial bonds, and encourage positive interactions through creative collaboration and pro-social engagement.

3. Description:

The Community Action Board (CAB) is committed to supporting families by fostering and strengthening their relationships through the "Una Comunidad Sana y Segura - Family Night Series." The primary goal is to enrich youth and family bonds across all facets of life. This encompasses nurturing stronger family ties, cultivating social skills, enhancing communication, and fostering a sense of belonging within both the family unit and the broader community. Furthermore, the series aims to create a safe and welcoming space where community members can come together. Throughout the sessions, families have the opportunity to interact socially, share meals, and engage in themed activities such as art projects and valuable opportunity to learn about various community services and relevant topics such as immigration, mental health, positive discipline, rental assistance, etc. Each family participating in the program will attend two sessions per month, spread over the course of a month, providing consistent opportunities for families to bond and grow together. Una Comunidad Sana y Segura Family Night Sessions will take place at Luna y Sol Familia Center.

1. Program Name:

Restorative Justice

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

Research supports that Restorative Justice Circles (RJC's) serve as effective alternatives to traditional punitive measures by promoting accountability, community engagement, and skill development among youth. COE integrates RJ principles and practices into its service delivery model, aligning with evidence demonstrating that restorative interventions reduce recidivism, enhance youth decision-making, and improve civic engagement.

3. Description:

The Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE) Law-Related Education and Prevention programs are diversion interventions for first time justice impacted youth. Restorative Justice holds youth accountable, while educating them in the justice system, and providing them with an avenue for developing, enhancing and practicing life skills to prevent formal juvenile justice involvement.

The principles of Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices are integrated into the Law-Related Education and Prevention Programs system. Restorative Justice views crime as a wound needing to be healed by addressing three elements: Accountability, Community Safety and Competency Development. Accountability addresses the young person's ability to be accountable for their criminal actions. Community Safety addresses the issue of protecting the larger community from further actions by the young person. Competency Development addresses the young person's ability to be enriched by new skills and education. Restorative Practices are incorporated by allowing the respondent to be listened to by their peers, by creating space for healing to occur through relationship building as well as creating and fostering a sense of community and belonging.

1. Program Name:

TODOS Program

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

The TODOS program utilizes evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism and enhance life skills and competencies for justice-involved youth and their families. Research demonstrates that family engagement is a critical factor in achieving sustainable positive outcomes. To support this, the program integrates Functional Family Case Management (FM) and Mental Health Services, utilizing structured interventions based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Motivational

Interviewing (MI). These evidence-based approaches have been shown to improve decision-making, emotional regulation, and overall well-being.

3. Description:

The TODOS Program (Together Obtaining Desired Outcomes for Success) through Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance provide three core services: Functional Family Case Management (FCM), Individual Case Management Support Services, and Behavioral Health Services. Functional Family Case Management (FCM) is a key service in behavioral health, substance use, and justice settings, designed to prevent the need for more intensive interventions. This family-centered approach focuses on reducing risk factors that impact both individual and family functioning. Behavioral Health Services will support youth in need of therapy who are not Medi-Cal eligible or cannot access services through their primary care provider. The TODOS program uses evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism and increase life skills and competencies for youth and families currently involved in the juvenile justice system.

1. Program Name:

Wraparound Services

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

The Wraparound approach is rooted in strength-based, individualized care that aligns with best practices in juvenile justice and behavioral health. Studies indicate that Wraparound services mitigate criminogenic risks, improve family resilience, and foster sustainable community integration by:

- Reducing recidivism through individualized interventions addressing risk factors associated with delinquency.
- Enhancing youth and family coping mechanisms by strengthening problem-solving and communication skills.
- Increasing access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services, which research shows is a key factor in reducing disparities in mental health outcomes.

3. Description:

Encompass Community Services provides Wraparound services, offering short-term, intensive outpatient behavioral health support and transitional assistance to youth and

their families, including caregivers. These services aim to preserve and strengthen the home environment while enhancing the ability of youth and families to successfully function within the community, ultimately reducing out-of-home placements.

Wraparound services positively impact the community by addressing individual and family behavioral health needs and criminogenic risks, leading to lower recidivism rates, increased use of community-based alternatives to detention, and overall improvements in family functioning through enhanced skills and capacities. The program delivers strength-based, family-centered, integrated, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services tailored to the needs of each referred youth and their family or caregiver.

1. Program Name:

FOOD, WHAT?!

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

As an empowerment-based intervention, FW is committed to a strengths-based, healing-centered framework. By fostering a sense of belonging and self-determination, FW supports youth in overcoming systemic barriers, strengthening resilience, cultivating positive identity development, and improving mental health outcomes. This holistic, research-supported approach positions FW as a catalyst for long-term personal and community transformation.

3. Description:

"Food, What?!" (FW) is a youth empowerment and food justice organization that uses organic farming as a vehicle for growing strong, healthy and resilient youth. FW's programming offers youth a relevant toolkit of skills and experiences geared toward breaking cycles of poor health, poverty and violence. FW youth find their power through farming and gardening, empowerment workshops, culinary arts, co-organizing community service projects, and increasing healthy food access for low-income communities. Above all else, FW is a safe space where youth are supported and uplifted to be agents in their own transformation. FW seeks to recruit and partner with youth who suffer disproportionately from common problems associated with poverty: diminished school success, severely limited employment options, trauma, substance dependency, housing and food insecurity, and compromised health.

FW programming includes interventions such as leadership development (communication, responsibility, entrepreneurship), holistic job training (transferable job skills, professionalism, culinary training, employment linkages, self-care), personal growth (emotional recognition, prosocial skills, self-esteem), social capital development (transformative mentorship, prosocial relationship building, community service, social justice), health and nutritional empowerment (radical diet changes, food justice, wellbeing improvements), and drop-out prevention (individualized support, positive

reinforcement, prosocial peer groups, close partnership with schools, etc.). These interventions are delivered over the course of three distinct core programs through FW's graduated leadership model and anchored by their adaptive and depth-focused youth empowerment pedagogy.

1. Program Name:

Youth Employment Opportunities

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

The program follows a youth-centered, strength-based approach, allowing for flexible career exploration through job-shadowing, paid employment, and/or volunteer assignments. Workforce development research underscores the importance of hands-on experience in career decision-making and long-term employment success. Mentorship and career coaching model, providing high-touch, individualized support to ensure youth remain engaged in their career pathways. Studies show that mentorship and adult guidance significantly increase career persistence, self-efficacy, and successful transition to employment or further education.

3. Description:

The Community Action Board (CAB) provides comprehensive employment services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Through workforce mentoring, CAB offers job readiness training, career exploration, job shadowing, work experience opportunities, and direct job placement for youth referred by probation. Additionally, CAB helps participants overcome employment barriers by providing personalized supportive services tailored to their needs. Youth engage in meaningful work experiences and employment opportunities, gaining essential life and job skills while strengthening their connections within the community. These pro-social, work-related experiences with local employers not only enhance their employment prospects but also promote long-term personal and professional growth.

Each participant receives one-on-one and group training sessions, along with workforce case management services, which include the development of an individual portfolio containing a resume, cover letter, sample application, and other relevant materials. The program also focuses on job preparedness, covering key topics such as effective job searching, professional attire, interview skills, and workplace success strategies. Special emphasis is placed on essential employability skills, ensuring youth are equipped to secure and maintain meaningful employment.

1. Program Name (Supervision Strategy):

Connecting and Promoting Success (CAPS)

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

This supervision strategy uses principles from research shown to be most effective in the field of community supervision by utilizing the principles of risk, need, treatment and fidelity. Officers use evidence-based risk/needs assessment tools to determine the level of risk for re-offending and to target resources to both higher risk and higher need offenders, and to match intensity of services and supervision to level of risk.

The assessment tools allow staff to identify criminogenic needs and protective factors that should be considered in creating individualized case planning decisions. Case planning efforts are trauma-informed and are inclusive of young people and families in establishing goals. There is also every effort made to identify natural supports and include them in Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) so that the young person's voice and choice is lifted and supported by those who know the young person best. Probation Officers use motivational interviewing techniques and Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) when working with justice involved youth. Additionally, probation staff are being trained in and utilizing The Coaching Model to build and foster positive engagement strategies to support positive outcomes for those they serve.

3. Description:

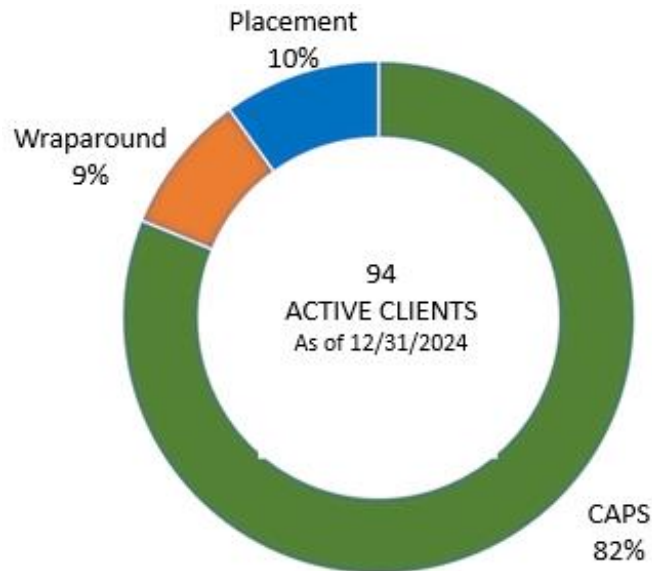
Probation supervision in Santa Cruz County has steadily evolved and moved in a direction where probation staff are spending their time engaging with young people and their families to identify ways to promote equitable opportunities for success. This does not discount the need for continued accountability with terms and conditions of probation, but it allows young people the space to move forward and focus on ways to better themselves and hopefully prevent future contacts with the justice system. Reimagining what the goals of specific caseloads could be, and now seeing ourselves as coaches and not referees, has led to the renaming and re-shaping our juvenile supervision caseloads. The goal is to be strength based in our focus and aligned with the outcomes for our youth and families to be successful when they exit our system. We see our role as connecting young people and family to supports in the community that will sustain their well-being far beyond their term of supervision.

Probation staff assigned to supervising the CAPS caseloads work closely with our community-based partners utilizing a variety of assessment tools and making referrals to available resources in the community. In the prior years there have been projects such as Stable Transition After Reentry (STAR), Luna y Sol Familia Center, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Children Exposed to Violence (CEV) program in the County which have greatly enhanced the number of resources and the number of staff who are working together with young people on probation and their families. Many of the services are focused on prevention and diversion and others provide counseling and mental health assistance, job readiness, educational and vocational support, and increasing wellbeing and wellness.

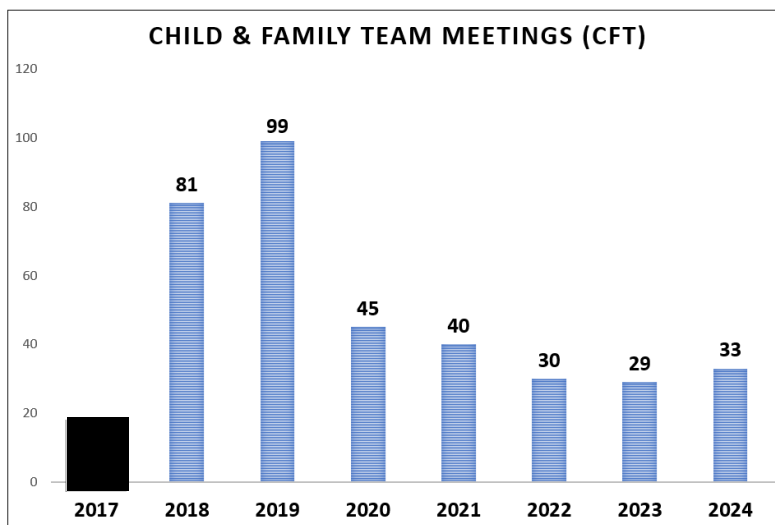
Probation Officers assigned to supervise youth on the CAPS caseloads are trained in using tools to assist in case planning and overall supervision. The utilization of the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) allows officers to better serve youth as "agents of change" who genuinely connect with youth and families, encourage pro-social behaviors, and improve decision-making skills. It should be noted that officers have been trained to develop case plans based on risk and needs and using a trauma informed lens when considering supervision goals for young people and the impact of previous trauma. Every month, JAIS information is compiled by the Department's Data Analyst and shared with staff in the form of a monthly Data Blast. Included in this monthly report is information on the number of JAIS assessments completed during the month, the number of reassessments due, and the number of overdue reassessments.

Additionally, the juvenile division's monthly Data Blast tracks the number of youth who had their risk score increase, the number of risk scores which decreased and the number that stayed the same. In reviewing the February 2024 monthly data typically indicates around 33% of the youth risk scores stay the same or are stable and about 43% of the risk scores decrease which are indicative of noteworthy progress toward successful completion of probation. The Data Blast also captures the number of EPICS sessions completed during a given month. EPICS (Effective Practices in Community Supervision) is a structured dialogue to help guide youth in a positive direction and provide effective responses to their needs. Field visits and virtual visits are conducted during each month and captured which demonstrate staff's on-going engagement with youth and families. This monthly sharing of data with staff assists in meeting young people where they are at and strengthens engagement.

At the end of December 2024, there were 94 young people on probation in Santa Cruz County and 77 were being supervised on CAPS caseloads. The remaining 12 young people were assigned to either Wraparound (8) or to the Placement Unit (9).



To assist in the supervision and engagement with the young people on their caseloads the CAPS officers routinely hold Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM). In 2024, there were a total of 33 CFTM and most of those involved young people on CAPS caseloads. The CFTM allows for the young person to identify who they would like to be part of their CFTM which often addresses resources needed by the young person as part of their case plan. In addition to the young person and their family, the CFTM provides an opportunity for natural supports to attend and participate and often includes multiple community-based providers and other connected county agencies. The CFTM epitomizes a “teamwork” approach that is a best practice in juvenile justice and a staple of the CAPS caseloads.



Part III. Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) – (Welfare & Institutions Code Section 1961(a).

A. Strategy for Non-707(b) Offenders

Describe your county's overall strategy for dealing with non-707(b) youthful offenders who are not eligible for commitment to the Division of Juvenile Justice. Explain how this Plan relates to or supports that strategy.

Assessments: When a young person enters the juvenile justice system in Santa Cruz County, our staff promptly conduct assessments to determine the appropriate level of probation involvement and coordinate with the district attorney and court partners as needed. If the case does not require a mandatory referral to the district attorney's office and the young person qualifies for diversion services, probation intake staff will refer them to one of several county diversion programs. This informal approach aims to prevent further involvement in the justice system.

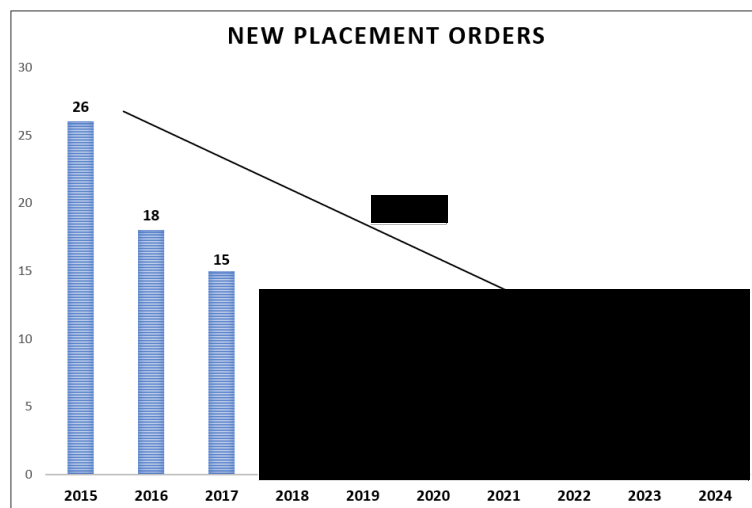
However, if the young person is not eligible for diversion, the case is forwarded to the district attorney's office for review and possible petition filing for a law violation. If a young person's case results in a sustained petition and they are placed on probation, probation staff will meet with the youth and their family to conduct a comprehensive assessment using a validated risk and needs assessment. This tool helps determine the appropriate level of supervision, ensuring that services are provided without unnecessarily deepening the young person's involvement in the juvenile justice system.

By supervising young people based on their assessed risk level to recidivate and regularly reassessing their needs, probation staff can prioritize higher levels of supervision for those identified as moderate to high risk. Additionally, through treatment and intervention matching, staff ensure that youth receive the appropriate level of support without over-engaging those with lower risk factors, thereby avoiding "net-widening." Through evidence-based practices, risk-based supervision, the use of JAIS assessments, and trauma-informed case planning focused on the youth's specific needs, the department aims to enhance opportunities for success on probation while promoting overall well-being.

Out of Home Placements: One of the county's key strategies is to provide youth with appropriate services based on their level of need, equipping them with the necessary skills for success in out-of-home placements. In alignment with AB 403, the 2017 Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) aimed to phase out traditional group homes and

replace them with Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs). These programs place a stronger emphasis on mental health treatment while reducing the length of stay. Unlike traditional group home placements, which often lasted over a year, STRTPs are designed for stays of approximately six to nine months. While the Probation Department strives to utilize local STRTPs, Santa Cruz County currently does not have any available programs.

As a result of having limited options to place young people in a local STRTP program, we have had to utilize STRTP programs outside of Santa Cruz County. However, the division's concerted efforts on diversion along with our robust continuum of services and dedication to youth and family engagement have jointly supported the decrease in out-of-home placement. The division continues to scale the efforts that started in 2015 to reduce the use of out-of-home placements and serve young people in their community. In 2024, there were [REDACTED] new placement orders which have been the lowest over the span of 10 years and reflects the department's [REDACTED] in out of home placements.



The following programs were utilized during the course of the year: DN Associates, Fresno County; Promesa, Fresno County; Sierra Quest, Mariposa County; Core Conditions, Fresno County; Greater New Beginnings, Alameda County; The average length of stay for youth in the STRTP programs in 2024 was 173 days.

YOBG funds support contracts for various clinical assessments ordered by the court to determine and provide the appropriate level of care for youth. Additionally, these funds support probation officers responsible for supervising young people removed from their homes and placed in an STRTP, Ranch Camp, or Secure Youth Treatment Facility

(SYTF). In 2024, no youth were committed to Ranch Camp programs. Historically, Ranch Camp programs have served as an alternative to committing youth to the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), and they will continue to be used whenever possible as an alternative to the new Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) programs.

The Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) legislation has significantly reduced the length of time young people spend in Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP) while ensuring they receive a higher level of treatment and support. CCR has also established clear timelines for holding Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs), which play a critical role in case planning. When a youth is ordered into an STRTP, probation staff work diligently to secure appropriate placements as quickly as possible while simultaneously planning for the youth's transition back into a stable home environment. This includes participating in CFTMs throughout the youth's placement and working closely with families to maintain connections and prepare them for reunification. YOBG funds help support these efforts by providing youth and families with access to services that facilitate engagement, connection, and successful transitions.

A valuable resource supporting placement staff in planning transition services is the involvement of re-entry navigators through the Stable Transitions After Reentry (STAR) grant project. Navigators are introduced to youth and their families at least 90 days before the anticipated completion of the STRTP program to begin preparing for the youth's return home. In addition to working closely with families, the navigators assist with school enrollment, vocational training, and employment opportunities to help ensure a smooth and successful transition.

The Juvenile Division remains committed to prioritizing diversion programs that address the root causes of youth behavior and reduce their risk of entering the juvenile justice system. YOBG funds help support staffing in the Intake Unit, which plays a critical role in these efforts. As a result, 2024 saw a remarkable 119% increase in the diversion of Latino youth from system involvement. By expanding community-based interventions and providing targeted support, the division strives to keep young people engaged in positive pathways while avoiding unnecessary justice involvement. This approach not only reduces initial system contact but also significantly decreases the need for out-of-home placements by connecting youth to appropriate services within their communities.

B. Regional Agreements

Describe any regional agreements or arrangements to be supported with YOBG funds.

N/A

C. Funded Programs, Placements, Services, Strategies and/or System Enhancements

Using the templates below, provide details for each program, strategy, and/or system enhancement that will be funded by the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA), identifying any program that is co-funded with Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) funds.

To include multiple programs, copy and paste the template fields "1. Program Name," "2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based," and "3. Description" as many times as necessary.

YOBG Funded Program, Placement, Service, Strategy and/or System Enhancement

This template should be copied as many times as needed to capture every program, placement, service, strategy, and system enhancement you plan to fund next year.

1. Program Name (Court ordered psychiatric and psychological assessments):

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

Psychiatrist and psychological evaluations guide court decisions regarding the type of programs, treatment plans, and rehabilitative services a young person will receive, aligning with California's emphasis on rehabilitation over punitive measures. The use of evidence-based evaluations improves outcomes by ensuring that appropriate behavioral health interventions—such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) which is utilized by Children's Behavioral Health with the justice population, multisystemic therapy (MST), or psychotropic medication management—are integrated into the juvenile justice process, reducing recidivism and supporting long-term rehabilitation.

3. Description:

Psychiatric and psychological evaluations for juvenile offenders assess a youth's mental health, cognitive functioning, and emotional well-being to inform court decisions, treatment plans, and rehabilitation efforts. Conducted by licensed psychiatrists or psychologists, these evaluations typically include clinical interviews, psychological testing, and a review of medical and legal history. The goal is to determine whether a youth has underlying mental health disorders, competency to stand trial, or needs for specialized treatment, such as therapy or medication. These assessments help courts, probation officers, and treatment providers develop appropriate interventions to support rehabilitation and reduce recidivism.

1. Program Name (Strategy):

Intake Unit

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

The Intake Unit utilizes best practice tools to guide decision-making and ensure appropriate interventions. The Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) is a validated tool designed to assess a youth's risk level at the point of intake, helping to prevent unnecessary detention while maintaining public safety. Research supports the use of structured risk assessments in reducing biases and improving outcomes by ensuring that detention decisions are based on objective criteria rather than subjective judgment.

Additionally, the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) is a research-driven, gender-responsive assessment tool that combines risk, needs, and strength-based analysis to develop individualized case plans. Studies have shown that tools like JAIS improve intervention effectiveness by matching youth to the most appropriate services, ultimately reducing recidivism and promoting long-term rehabilitation.

3. Description:

The Intake Unit evaluates, and processes juvenile offenses referred by law enforcement, facilitating both judicial and non-judicial interventions. Its goals include early intervention through diversion, rehabilitation, family preservation, public safety, and restorative justice.

By providing guidance, treatment, and accountability in the least restrictive and most culturally responsive manner, the unit prioritizes youth well-being and community safety. A continuum of services supports youth, families, victims, and the community, leveraging the Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) to prevent the need for unnecessary detention and the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) to support diverting youth whenever possible from formal system involvement. The Intake Unit has strategically expanded staffing to increase diversion efforts, leading to a reduction in youth system involvement. In 2024, the number of diverted cases increased by 80% compared to the previous year.

1. Program Name (Strategy):

Placement Unit

2. Evidence Upon Which It Is Based:

The Placement Unit utilizes the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) as an evidence-based tool to determine the appropriate level of supervision and individualized support for youth in out-of-home placements. JAIS combines risk

assessment, needs evaluation, and strength-based analysis to develop tailored intervention plans that align with each youth's unique circumstances. By integrating JAIS into supervision decisions, the Placement Unit enhances its ability to provide targeted, evidence-based support, ultimately improving youth rehabilitation and increasing the likelihood of successful reintegration into the community.

3. Description:

The Placement Unit oversees court-ordered out-of-home placements for youth who require a higher level of care and supervision than can be provided in their home environment. This unit ensures that youth are placed in licensed, therapeutic, and evidence-based programs that address their individual needs, including mental health treatment, substance use rehabilitation, educational support, and life skills development.

The Placement Unit works closely with families, service providers, and the courts to monitor progress, facilitate reunification when appropriate, and support long-term stability. The goal is to provide youth with the necessary resources and interventions to promote rehabilitation, reduce recidivism, and support successful reintegration into the community. The Placement Unit staff utilize Motivational Interviewing which is evidence-based and they work to engage natural supports to facilitate support for youth in placements and referrals to needed services or programs such as Wraparound to provide opportunities for successful re-entry.