COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

SB 823 JUVENILE JUSTICE REALIGNMENT BLOCK GRANT ANNUAL PLAN

2026-2027

Alameda County SB 823 Realignment Subcommittee

March 25, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

California SB 823 Realignment

On September 30, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 823 into law, initiating a significant transformation in California's juvenile justice system. The bill ended new admissions to the State Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) as of July 1, 2021, and mandated the full closure of DJJ facilities by June 30, 2023. It also adjusted local jurisdiction by extending the juvenile court's authority over young people up to age 23, or up to 25 for those adjudicated for serious offenses under Welfare & Institutions Code (WIC) Section 208.5.

Additionally, SB 823 established the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) to oversee statewide juvenile justice realignment efforts. To support this transition, the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) Program, created under WIC Sections 1990-1995, provides counties with funding to develop local programs and services tailored to realigned young people. This ensures that care, custody, and supervision of young people previously under DJJ jurisdiction are now managed at the county level.

To be eligible for JJRBG funding, counties must establish a subcommittee of the multiagency juvenile justice coordinating council to develop the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant Plan. The subcommittee must meet no less frequently than twice a year and shall update the plan annually. Our current plan is being updated per the template provided to the counties to reflect the amendments to WIC §1995 under AB 505 (effective January 1, 2024) and AB 118 (effective January 1, 2026), with full ongoing participation and commitment from the majority of the subcommittee members. All citations are to the law as amended.

Alameda County Probation Department

The Alameda County Probation Department (ACPD) has a strong history of working with justice-involved young people, using reformed, rehabilitative, youth-centered approaches, grounded in therapeutic milieu, and a positive youth development approach. In the past 20 years, the department has made significant shifts from a more punitive approach, that emphasizes detention and incarceration, towards more integrated health-education-legal-correctional services.

The Alameda County Probation Department works to advance community safety and well-being by promoting early intervention, rehabilitation, and successful reentry, centering healing, strengthening families and community partnerships, and delivering equitable, data-driven, and culturally responsive services that empower individuals to thrive. In 2023, the Alameda County Probation Department presented its Strategic Plan,

intentionally shifting toward a therapeutic milieu that emphasizes trauma-informed care, individualized treatment, and community-based alternatives to detention. Aligned with Vision 2030, this approach advances early intervention, rehabilitation, and successful reentry;

centers healing and victim awareness; and strengthens families and community partnerships. This transformation reflects a broader commitment to equity, culturally responsive and data-driven practices, and reducing recidivism—ensuring that young people receive the support, care, and supervision they need to successfully reintegrate into their communities and thrive as caring, confident adults.

PART 1: SUBCOMMITTEE COMPOSITION

(Welfare & Inst. Code § 1995(b))

Agency	Name and Title	E-mail	Phone #
Chief Probation Officer (Chair)	Brian K. Ford Chief Probation Officer or Designee	brford@acgov.org	510-268-7233
Alameda County Bar Association	Cynthia Chandler, Court Appointed Attorneys Program (CAAP) or Designee	cynthia@acbanet.org	510-302-2222
Public Defender's Office or Representative	Brendon Woods, Public Defender or Alphonso Mance (Designee) Deputy Public Defender	brendon.woods@acgov.org alphonso.mance@acgov.org	510-272-6622 510-667-4496
Alameda County Behavioral Health Department Representative	Karyn Tribble, Director or Juan Taizan (Designee)	karyn.tribble@acgov.org juan.taizan@acgov.org	510-383-8535
Resource Connection Network (RCN)	Emily Young, RCN Chair or Designee	emily.young@hayward-ca.gov	510-293-7048
Free Our Kids Coalition	Ericson Amaya or Designee	eamaya@afsc.org	510-822-1279
Court Representative	Honorable Arturo Castro or Designee	Acastro@alameda.courts.ca.gov	510-618-1102
Oakland Police Department	James Beere, Interim Chief of Police Sgt. DaSean Spencer (Designee)	jbeere@oaklandca.gov dspencer@oaklandca.gov	510-238-3366
Department of Social Services Representative	Andrea Ford, Agency Director Michelle Love (Designee) Assistant Agency Director	aaford@acgov.org lovemi@acgov.org	510-567-8100

Agency	Name and Title	E-mail	Phone #
District Attorney's Office or Representative	Kevin Ikuma, District Attorney	kevin.ikuma@acgov.org	510-667-4470
Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJDPC) Representative	Shani Shay, Commissioner	shanishay@berkeley.edu	510-850-2634
Office of Education Representative	Alysse Castro, Superintendent Eric Guthertz, Chief of Schools (Designee)	acastro@acoe.org eguthertz@acoe.org	510-670-4144 415-250-4376
*Community Member District 1 Representative	Keenan Wilkins	keenanwilkins592@gmail.com	925-750-4185
*Community Member District 2 Representative	Nicole Berrow	nberrow@yahoo.com	
*Community Member District 3 Representative	Adrienne Hogg	ahogg@communityworkswest.org	510-206-0775
*Community Member District 4 Representative	Kelvin Potts	percypotts1952@gmail.com	510-813-6691
*Community Member District 5 Representative	Erin Palacios	epalacios@prismalegal.org	510-507-7811
*Youth Representative	Jesus Cortez	jesus.cor925@gmail.com	925-758-8072

*Non-permanent members; two-year term end 4/30/2027

Subcommittee Membership and Changes

Consistent with WIC §1995(b), the subcommittee includes the Chief Probation Officer as chair and one representative each from the District Attorney's office, the Public Defender's office, County Agencies including Social Services, Public Health and Health Care Services Agency, Office of Education, and a representative from the court. The subcommittee also includes five community members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, defined as individuals who have experience providing community-based services to young people, youth justice advocates with expertise and knowledge of the juvenile justice system, a youth representative, and individuals who have been directly involved in the juvenile justice system.

Quorum and Majority Voting: To ensure effective decision-making and broad representation, the Subcommittee requires a quorum of ten members to conduct official business. Decisions are made by majority vote, meaning more than half of the eligible voting members present must vote in favor for a motion to pass. By adhering to parliamentary procedures, the Subcommittee maintains a structured, transparent, and inclusive decision-making process that reflects the collaborative nature of its work.

Subcommittee Bylaws, Charter and Values

The Subcommittee's Bylaws and Operational Procedures were developed in the original Realignment Plan 2021 and partly as summarized below, in alignment with best practices for state legislative bodies and the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council's (JJCC) guidelines. These include clear protocols for membership turnover and overall governance. The following Charter, including Goals and underlying Values statements, were developed to guide the Subcommittee's work.

The Alameda County SB 823 Subcommittee is responsible for developing a comprehensive plan to serve young people realigned under SB 823. This plan goes beyond detention and housing to encompass treatment, services, reentry preparation, and long-term success of young people served by SB 823 beyond the justice system. Our charge is to identify and implement evidence-based and promising practices that meet the following Goals:

- Improve outcomes for young people and public safety
- Reduce the transfer of young people into the adult criminal justice system
- Ensure dispositions occur in the least restrictive, most appropriate environment
- Address and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities
- Minimize reliance on confinement by prioritizing community-based interventions

Values and Principles

The ACPD and Subcommittee are guided by the following values and principles in implementing SB 823:

- **Evidence-Based, Innovative**: The Alameda County SB 823 Subcommittee is committed to supporting system-involved young people through innovative, evidence-based strategies and best practices that work to most effectively and efficiently address the needs of young people and their families, enhance public safety, and foster community well-being.
- **Healing-Centered and Trauma-Informed**: We recognize that many system-involved young people have experienced significant trauma and neglect, often leading to their justice system involvement. As such, we prioritize healing-centered and trauma-informed services to break cycles of harm and prevent future justice involvement. Our commitment extends beyond compliance with SB 823, striving to provide education, programming, treatment, and services that are both developmentally and therapeutically appropriate, ensuring the best possible outcomes for young people.
- **Restorative**: Our approach is rooted in restorative justice principles, centering the needs of those harmed while providing the necessary support and structure for young people to take responsibility and repair the harm they have caused.
- **Public Health Approach**: The Subcommittee's work is guided by the public health approach, which engages communities and applies strong evidence-based strategies and practices that eliminate the need for juvenile detention and promote healthy development and outcomes for system-involved young people, including reducing recidivism and enhancing public safety. A public health approach focuses on rehabilitation and reintegration, partnering with social services and mental health professionals to provide support and resources to individuals exiting the criminal justice system. This reduces the chances of them re-offending, creating safer communities in the long run. The public health approach prioritizes prevention (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and focuses on identifying and reducing risk factors in young people's environments individually and as a group and promoting protective factors.
- **Youth-Centered, Family-Engaged**: Family engagement and reunification are critical components of success for young people. We define family broadly and seek every opportunity to strengthen familial connections as part of the healing and reentry process.
- **Equity-Centered**: Recognizing the disproportionate impact of the juvenile justice system on communities of color, we are committed to dismantling racial and ethnic inequities that perpetuate harm. Best practices include community-driven decision-making, culturally responsive programming, and restorative justice approaches to promote meaningful change. By integrating trauma-informed care, workforce diversity including those with lived experience, and data-driven accountability measures, we

ensure that policies and interventions address systemic disparities. Through culturally affirming practices and programs, we strive to advance equity, ensuring all young people have access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Subcommittee Process Information

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

During the May 16, 2024 Subcommittee meeting, the discussion focused on AB 505 and its impact on Welfare and Institutions Code 1995, particularly the provision allowing for a co-chair. After deliberation, the body determined that the Chief Probation Officer would remain the sole chair.

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

- November 20, 2025
- February 19, 2026
- March 25, 2026

The subcommittee continues to meet at minimum twice per year as required by WIC §1995(b). Meetings are used to review plan progress, approve the annual plan update, review data and outcomes, and discuss policy changes including those under AB 505 and AB 118.

Plan Revision Process and Methods

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

The Alameda County Probation Department partnered with an external consultant to gather data and provide information on specific sections of the 2026-2027 plan update. The plan was developed using a multi-method approach that included quantitative data collection and analysis; surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions; partner data submissions; and subcommittee review. Key elements of the plan development process included:

- **Quarterly data collection and analysis**: ACPD's Research & Evaluation Unit, in collaboration with the external consultant, compiled and analyzed quarterly SB 823 data reports covering young people's demographics, offenses, placement, risk/needs, incidents, and grievances for all four quarters of calendar year 2025.
- **Youth surveys**: In December 2025, a voluntary, confidential survey was administered to 16 young people in Firm Roots Academy, capturing satisfaction ratings across key domains including safety, programming, staff interactions, reentry preparation, and

family engagement. Surveys were administered at the beginning of the youth focus groups.

- **Family surveys**: Three families of young people in Firm Roots Academy completed surveys in December 2025 regarding their experiences with communication, visitation, and involvement in their young person's care. Families were identified and invited to participate via phone outreach conducted by the Firm Roots Academy DPO to ensure confidentiality. Surveys were administered at the beginning of the family interview sessions.
- **Staff surveys**: Twelve ACPD Facilities staff completed surveys in December 2025 assessing program operations, training, relationships between staff and young people, and areas for improvement. Participants included staff in the following classifications: Juvenile Institutional Officer (JIO), Institutional Supervisor 1 (IS1), and Deputy Probation Officer (DPO). Surveys were administered at the beginning of the staff focus group session.
- **Partner surveys**: Sixteen community-based partners completed online surveys in January 2026 regarding collaboration, service delivery, and areas for growth. The online surveys were administered prior to the partner listening session.
- **Focus groups and listening sessions**: In December 2025 and January 2026, structured focus groups were conducted with four groups of young people (n=16), three families (representing n=5 participants), Firm Roots Academy staff (n=11), and community-based partners (n=11). Young people were invited to participate during a designated session at Firm Roots Academy. Families were contacted directly by the Firm Roots Academy and invited to participate in an individual interview. Staff were invited to participate by fellow Firm Roots Academy staff. Partners were invited to participate by both Firm Roots Academy staff and the consultant. Verbatim quotebooks were compiled to document direct quotes from participants organized by theme, to capture key findings and recommendations in participants' own words.
- **Partner data submissions**: Service providers including GROW, Alameda County Behavioral Health (Guidance Clinic), Incarceration to College (UC Berkeley), Hayward Adult School/Raising Leaders, Kolea Counseling, DSAL, and Milk & Honey Consulting submitted aggregate 2025 program data for integration into this plan.
- **Subcommittee review and approval**: The plan was presented to the full subcommittee for review, discussion, and approval prior to submission to OYCR.

PART 2: TARGET POPULATION

(Welfare & Inst. Code § 1995(D)(1))

Per WIC §1995(d)(1), the target population includes young people 14 or older who have been adjudicated for offenses listed in WIC §707(b), including those committed to a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF). This section presents data on Alameda County's target population

for calendar year 2025, including all young people with sustained 707(b) adjudications, young people committed to SYTF, and their demographic characteristics, offense histories, and risk/needs profiles.

Realignment Population

In calendar year 2025, Alameda County had 72 sustained 707(b) referrals involving 67 unique young people, representing a 14% decline from 84 sustained referrals involving 75 unique young people in 2024. [redacted] new young people were committed to the Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) in 2025, continuing a downward trend from [redacted] commitments in 2024, [redacted] in 2023, and [redacted] in 2022.

Table 1. Sustained 707(b) Referrals by Year

Year	Sustained 707(b) Referrals	Unique Youth
2025	72	67
2024	84	75
2023	87	81
2022	70	67

Table 2. SYTF Commitments by Year

Year	New SYTF Commitments	SYTF Reinstated	DJJ Returnees
2025	[redacted]	0	0
2024	[redacted]	[redacted]	0
2023	[redacted]	0	[redacted]
2022	[redacted]	0	[redacted]

Youth Eligible for SYTF Under WIC 875(a)

As of the end of 2025 (Q4), a total of 152 young people active on probation were eligible for SYTF commitment under WIC 875(a), representing a significant decrease from 203 eligible young people in 2024. The majority of eligible young people are male (136, or 89%) and Black (105, or 69%).

Table 3. Youth Eligible for SYTF by Race/Ethnicity and Gender (End of Year 2025)

Race/Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Black	[redacted]	[redacted]	105
Hispanic	[redacted]	[redacted]	32
White	[redacted]	0	[redacted]
Asian/Pacific Islander	[redacted]	0	[redacted]
Other	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Total	136	16	152

Youth Screened for SYTF

During 2025, a total of 15 young people were screened for potential SYTF commitment across all four quarters: [redacted] in Q1, [redacted] in Q2, [redacted] in Q3 ([redacted] for SYTF, [redacted] for adult transfer), and [redacted] in Q4.

Current SYTF Population (End of Year 2025)

As of the end of 2025, there were a total of 14 young people in the SYTF (Firm Roots Academy). All 14 are young people from Alameda County. The mean length of stay for current young people is 397 days as of December 31, 2025. Since program inception, 28 young people have been released or transferred, with a mean length of stay of 351 days for those closures.

Step-Downs to Less Restrictive Programs

In 2025, [redacted] young people were successfully stepped down from Firm Roots Academy to less restrictive placements – [redacted] in Q3 and [redacted] in Q4. Step-down placements included Camp Wilmont Sweeney (an unsecured residential facility regulated under Title 15, Subchapter 5), community supervision with GPS monitoring, and interstate compact transfers. This represents meaningful progress in the phased approach to community reintegration described in Part 4.

Target Population by Placement/Facility (End of Year 2025)

Of the [redacted] young people served by the SYTF program during 2025, 14 remained in secure custody at Firm Roots Academy (the SYTF within the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center in San Leandro), and [redacted] were stepped down to the less restrictive placements described above. All 14 current SYTF young people participate in the full complement of Firm Roots Academy programming including education, behavioral health, mentoring, vocational training, recreation, and additional services detailed in Part 3.

Petitions Filed for 707(b) Offenses

A total of 215 petitions were filed for 707(b) offenses across all four quarters of 2025 (Q1: 44, Q2: 64, Q3: 56, Q4: 51). Approximately 84% of petitions involved young people who identified as male and 16% who identified as female.

Table 4. Petitions Filed for 707(b) Offenses by Quarter and Gender, 2025

Quarter	Male (N)	Male (%)	Female (N)	Female (%)	Total
Q1	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	44
Q2	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	64
Q3	43	77%	13	23%	56
Q4	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	51
Total	**180**	**84%**	**35**	**16%**	**215**

Adult Transfer Motions

As of Q4 2025, [redacted] young people had pending motions for transfer to adult criminal court. The underlying offenses for these pending motions include murder ([redacted]), attempted murder ([redacted]), and lewd acts ([redacted]). Notably, zero (0) young people were actually transferred to adult court in 2025, consistent with zero transfers in 2024 and 2023. Since the inception of SB 823 implementation in 2021, [redacted] been transferred to adult court (in 2022).

Table 5. Transfers to Adult Criminal Court by Year

Year	Transfers to Adult Court
2025	0
2024	0
2023	0
2022	[redacted]
2021	0

Demographics of Youth Committed to SYTF (End of Year 2025)

The following demographic profile describes the 14 young people committed to SYTF at Firm Roots Academy as of the end of Q4 2025.

Table 6. Race/Ethnicity of SYTF Youth (End of Year 2025)

Race/Ethnicity	N	%
Black	[redacted]	[redacted]
Hispanic	[redacted]	[redacted]
Asian/Pacific Islander	[redacted]	[redacted]
White	[redacted]	[redacted]
Total	14	100%

Table 7. Gender of SYTF Youth (End of Year 2025)

Gender	N	%
Male	[redacted]	[redacted]
Female	[redacted]	[redacted]
Total	14	100%

Table 8. City of Residence of SYTF Youth (End of Year 2025)

City	N	%
Oakland	[redacted]	[redacted]
Out of County	[redacted]	[redacted]
Berkeley	[redacted]	[redacted]
Fremont	[redacted]	[redacted]
Hayward	[redacted]	[redacted]
San Leandro	[redacted]	[redacted]
Total	14	100%

Table 9. Age of SYTF Youth (End of Year 2025)

Age Measure	Mean	Range
Current Age	18.1 years	16-21
Age at Commitment	16.9 years	15-19
Age at First Referral	13.8 years	10-16

Table 10. Prior Justice Involvement

Measure	Mean
Referrals prior to commitment	5.5
Time between 1st referral and commitment	3.1 years
Bookings prior to commitment	3.8
True findings prior to commitment	3.3

Additionally, 43% of current SYTF young people had a WIC 300 (dependency) history, 50% had prior placement history (of whom 86% went AWOL from placement), and 43% had prior camp placement (of whom 67% went AWOL from camp). These indicators reflect the depth of prior system contact and the challenges young people have faced in maintaining stability in prior placements.

Table 11. Education Level of SYTF Youth (End of Year 2025)

Education Level	N	%
Some Middle School	[redacted]	[redacted]
Some High School	[redacted]	[redacted]
HS Diploma/Equivalent	[redacted]	[redacted]
Total	14	100%

Offense Types

Table 12. Most Serious Offenses of Current SYTF Youth (Q4 2025)

Offense	N	%
Murder (PC 187a)	[redacted]	[redacted]
2nd Degree Murder	[redacted]	[redacted]
Voluntary Manslaughter	[redacted]	[redacted]
1st Degree Robbery	[redacted]	[redacted]
2nd Degree Robbery	[redacted]	[redacted]
Carjacking	[redacted]	[redacted]
Assault with Deadly Weapon	[redacted]	[redacted]
Total	14	100%

The offense profile of committed SYTF young people is consistent with the serious offenses defined under WIC §707(b). Violent person offenses, including murder, manslaughter, robbery, and carjacking, account for 100% of the most serious sustained offenses among the current SYTF population.

Needs/Risks of Target Population

YLS/CMI 2.0 Assessment Results (2022–2025)

The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI 2.0) is administered to all SYTF young people to assess risk and need levels across eight domains. Over the past four years (2022–2025), YLS/CMI assessments have consistently classified the majority of young people in the High-risk range, with overall average scores ranging from 23.9 in 2022 to 24.7 in 2025 (see Table 13a, Table 13b, and Appendix E for complete YLS/CMI data by domain and year). The mode risk level has remained High or High/Moderate throughout, indicating that most young people assessed fall within the upper end of risk classification. In 2025, quarterly assessments of the SYTF population (N=13–14 per quarter) show overall average scores ranging from 23.9 to 25.3, with a full-year average of approximately 24.7. The mode risk level remained High/Moderate across three of the four quarters.

Despite some fluctuations in individual risk domains, the most persistent high-risk factors have remained largely unchanged across all four years, particularly in Offenses/Dispositions, Peer Relations, and Leisure/Recreation. These domains reflect ongoing needs related to peer relationships, constructive use of free time, and accountability for past offenses. In 2025, Peer Relations and Leisure/Recreation continued as the highest-mode domains, with Peer Relations scoring High across all four quarters and Leisure/Recreation consistently classified as High (average scores 2.0–2.3 across quarters). Education/Employment emerged as a more prominent risk area in 2025, scoring High in three of four quarters (Q1, Q3, Q4).

The data also shows a persistent presence of Very High-Risk cases. In 2022, no young people were classified as Very High Risk in any category. By 2023, [redacted] fell into this category, and in 2024, the number increased to [redacted] In 2025, each quarterly report noted that the High category included [redacted] with Very High total scores, indicating that while the number has stabilized, a subset of young people continues to present with the most severe risk profiles requiring the highest level of intervention.

The table below presents the quarterly YLS/CMI 2.0 domain scores for all four quarters of 2025. The Q4 2025 data (N=14) shows the highest-need domains remain Peer Relations and Education/Employment (both scoring 3.5 average), followed by Family/Parenting (3.7) and Personality/Behavior (3.5). This profile underscores the need for intensive, targeted programming in peer mentorship, educational support, family engagement, and behavioral interventions.

Table 13a. YLS/CMI 2.0 Domain Scores by Quarter, 2025

YLS/CMI Domain	High*	Moderate	Low	Average	Mode Level
Offenses/Dispositions	10	1	3	3.1	High
Family/Parenting	5	6	3	3.7	Moderate
Education/Employment	7	5	2	3.5	High
Peer Relations	11	2	1	3.5	High
Substance Abuse	4	7	3	1.9	Moderate
Leisure/Recreation	11	2	1	2.0	High
Personality/Behavior	6	7	1	3.5	Moderate
Attitudes/Orientation	9	4	1	3.3	High
Overall Score	6	6	2	24.4	High/Mod
**High includes [redacted] with Very High total scores. N=14.*					

Table 13b. YLS/CMI 2.0 Average Domain Scores, Quarterly Comparison (2025)

Domain	Q1 (N=13)	Q2 (N=14)	Q3 (N=14)	Q4 (N=14)
Offenses/Dispositions	2.6 (H)	2.6 (H)	2.8 (H)	3.1 (H)
Family/Parenting	4.1 (H)	3.9 (H)	4.1 (H)	3.7 (M)
Education/Employment	3.2 (H)	2.6 (M)	3.2 (H)	3.5 (H)
Peer Relations	3.3 (H)	3.4 (H)	3.4 (H)	3.5 (H)
Substance Abuse	2.3 (H)	2.1 (M)	2.4 (M)	1.9 (M)
Leisure/Recreation	2.2 (H)	2.3 (H)	2.2 (H)	2.0 (H)
Personality/Behavior	4.0 (M)	3.9 (M)	3.9 (H)	3.5 (M)
Attitudes/Orientation	3.5 (H)	3.4 (H/M)	3.4 (H)	3.3 (H)
Overall Score	25.3 (H/M)	23.9 (M)	25.3 (H/M)	24.4 (H/M)
Note: Values show Average Score (Mode Level). H=High, M=Moderate, H/M=High/Moderate.				

Youth Perceived Impact of Firm Roots Academy

The perspectives of young people and their lived experiences within the Firm Roots Academy are critical components of the Department's ongoing commitment to a youth-centered programming approach. In December 2025, a voluntary, confidential survey was administered to 16 Firm Roots Academy young people to assess their perceptions of the program. Young people rated their level of agreement with statements across key domains on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Overall, young people reported the highest agreement on the following items: feeling confident and hopeful about their future (Q15: 4.62), feeling ready to return to their community (Q14: 4.60), and family support (Q10: 4.44). Below is a summary of findings, which represent an update from the February 2025 survey reported in the prior year's plan.

Table 14. Youth Survey Results, December 2025 (N=16)

Domain	Statement	Mean	Score Range
Learning	Q1: Firm Roots helps me understand myself	3.25	2-5
Learning	Q2: I get to try new things and learn new skills	3.44	2-5
Staff	Q3: Firm Roots staff support me when I need help	3.31	2-5
Staff	Q4: I can talk to Firm Roots staff if I have a problem	3.44	2-4
Staff	Q5: Community staff support me when I need help	4.13	3-5
Staff	Q6: I can talk to community staff if I have a problem	3.81	2-5
Environment	Q7: The rules here are clear to me	3.75	2-5
Environment	Q8: I feel safe where I stay and spend time	3.50	1-5
Connections	Q9: I get along well with other youth	3.81	3-5

Domain	Statement	Mean	Score Range
Connections	Q10: My family supports me while I'm here	4.44	3-5
Skills	Q11: I have improved how I communicate	3.69	2-5
Skills	Q12: I can solve problems and manage conflict better	3.88	2-5
Readiness	Q13: I learned skills to get a job or continue school	3.80	2-5
Readiness	Q14: I feel ready to return to my community	4.60	3-5
Readiness	Q15: I feel confident and hopeful about my future	4.62	3-5

Young people also rated their level of satisfaction with Firm Roots Academy programs and services on a scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied). Please note that response counts vary because young people who had not participated in a program skipped that item.

Table 15. Youth Program Satisfaction, December 2025 (N varies by program)

Program/Service	Mean Satisfaction	N	Range
Rites of Passage (ROP)	4.27	15	3-5
MC3/CTWI	4.08	12	2-5
Arts & Music	4.08	12	2-5
Credible Messengers	4.00	12	3-5
Family Dinner Nights	3.92	12	1-5
DSAL	3.79	14	1-5
Academic Program	3.62	16	2-5
CHOICES	3.56	16	2-5
ART	3.50	14	2-5
Interactive Journaling	3.47	15	2-5
Mental Health & Wellness	3.25	16	2-5
*Facilities	2.88	16	1-5

** "Facilities" refers to young people's satisfaction with the physical space at Firm Roots Academy.*

Qualitative Findings from Youth Focus Groups (December 2025)

Four focus groups were conducted with Firm Roots Academy young people in December 2025. Key themes included:

- **Value of Programs**: Young people consistently highlighted the MC3 construction program, GROW (peer mentoring with lived experience), music programs including Dope Era, and college access programming (Incarceration to College, college fairs) as meaningful and impactful.

> *"People that can relate to us come in and speak to us about their past and try to give us insight on the things they did that can help us try to*

> *better ourselves and our outcome from letting us know that we have a second chance at life." — Youth Focus Group Participant*

- **Desire for more programming time**: Young people want more time in the programs they value most, particularly outdoor activities, vocational training, and music.

> *"Programs and the little music class we got let us get our feelings and our emotions."*
> *— Youth Focus Group Participant*

- **Positive staff relationships**: Young people valued role models and staff who "come in with positivity" and genuinely care. Mentors were named repeatedly as having transformative impact.

> *"He shows empathy, and he tells me right from wrong. He said, like, I help you, I support you. He just really showed me that he cares. He really want me to succeed."*
> *— Youth Focus Group Participant*

- **Inconsistency in rules and enforcement**: Young people expressed frustration with rules when applied differently depending on which staff were working, and when consequences felt disproportionate to the behavior.

> *"So, they tell us do one thing, the next day it's a totally different thing. So, like, they make up new rules as they go along. And then sometimes it's just no rules that's even written down, but just because one supervisor said it." — Youth Focus Group Participant*

Family Survey and Interview Findings (December 2025)

Three families completed surveys and participated in interviews. Key themes included appreciation for the mental health focus and emotional support provided to young people, with families reporting that staff knew families by name and created a welcoming visitation environment. Families expressed concern when family contact was affected by disciplinary responses. Other themes included a desire for more communication about their child's ongoing progress, stronger transition planning for young people aging out, and broader post-secondary options that include trades alongside college pathways.

PART 3: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

(Welfare & Inst. Code §1995(D)(2))

This section describes the facilities, programs, placements, services, supervision, and other responses provided to the target population under Alameda County's SB 823 realignment plan. Programming is grounded in a therapeutic milieu that emphasizes trauma-informed care, positive youth development, restorative justice, and culturally responsive practices.

Gender-Responsive Approach: Girls and young women comprise only a small number of the current SYTF population. We define "girls" to refer to all young people who identify as such including those who may be classified as transgender or gender expansive young people. All partners agree that girls will be housed in separate units, closer to their homes and communities, in the least restrictive environment. Young people will also receive community-based services designed to maintain healthy family relationships. ACPD has a policy to guide the care and services of transgender and intersex young people that is honored for Firm Roots Academy young people as well. The addition of [redacted] in 2025 led ACPD to pivot to provide more gender responsive services. The service provider Milk & Honey provides gender-responsive cognitive behavioral therapy groups, supporting young people in understanding how their gender expression, culture, environments, systems, and communities impact their experiences.

Principles for Classification and Housing Young People in Secure Track

The ACPD classifies and houses young people in secure track based on court order, objective classification factors, and the principles below:

- House young people according to their stated gender identity.
- Consider young people's preferences in housing unit placement.
- Take a holistic approach to classification drawing on all types of information about young people, including mental health, behavioral issues, personality, vulnerability to sexual abuse, size and strength, and information obtained from families.
- Maintain flexibility around housing unit placement as young people's needs and situations may change and require re-classification.
- When possible, limit the number of young people in each housing unit.
- Avoid grouping young people by race, ethnicity, sexuality, or gang affiliation.
- Maintain transparency and keep families informed about housing classification decisions.

These principles and values underlie all aspects of facilities, programming, and services provided throughout ACJJC including the SB 823 population.

- *Youth Safety and Protection*: Alameda County ensures the safety and protection of all SYTF young people through multiple mechanisms. Young people of different ages are housed in units appropriate to their developmental level, with SYTF young people (ages 14–25) separated from the general detained population. Gender-responsive housing follows the young person's stated gender identity, with separate units for female-identified young people and access to the Milk & Honey gender-responsive CBT program. Young people with special needs, including mental health conditions, receive individualized support through the Guidance Clinic and behavioral health staff embedded within the facility. The facility's classification system is reviewed regularly, and young people may be reclassified as needs change. Staff-to-youth ratios are maintained to ensure adequate supervision, and all Juvenile Institutional Officers (JIOs) receive ongoing training in trauma-informed care, de-escalation, and crisis intervention. Incidents and grievances are tracked monthly (see tables 21a, 21b, 22a, and 22b) and reviewed to identify systemic issues and improve safety protocols.

Facilities

Overall, the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center (ACJJC) is designed to provide a secure, supportive, and rehabilitative environment for young people, with a focus on comprehensive care and successful reintegration into the community. The Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) is a 24-hour secure facility in San Leandro that includes spaces designed to support youth development, programming, and rehabilitation, and provides secure detention and comprehensive services for up to 358 young people ages 12–25 (14–25 for Secure Track). Juvenile Institutional Officers (JIOs) provide custody, care, and supervision of detained young people. The JJC serves both pre- and post-adjudicated young people who are waiting for court hearings or serving short-term commitments.

- **Housing & Security**: The JJC is a locked facility with separate units for different populations based on age, gender, and risk level. Housing units are each designed to accommodate a specific number of young people, with an emphasis on safety and individualized care.
- **Education & Programming**: The West Side Classrooms are utilized for programming during waking hours, providing spaces for educational and rehabilitative activities. A dedicated classroom for the SB 823 population is also within the housing unit.
- **Health & Mental Health Services**: Young people have access to medical, dental, and mental health care through the Guidance Clinic and Transition Center, including trauma-informed and behavioral health services designed to support long-term recovery.
- **Rehabilitation & Reentry Support**: The facility offers counseling, case management, and life skills programs to support rehabilitation and reduce recidivism. Community-based organizations also provide additional resources through in-facility programming.
- **Legal & Family Visitation**: The JJC houses an adjacent court facility with five courtrooms and offices for legal and support services, including the District Attorney, Public Defender, Behavioral Health, and social workers. Family visits are crucial for maintaining connections and ensuring fair legal representation. Rooms are established for confidential visits.
- **Family Engagement**: Family visitation occurs weekly at the JJC, with family engagement nights and virtual visiting also available.

Firm Roots Academy operates within a dedicated unit at the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center. The facility has been progressively adapted to provide a more therapeutic, home-like environment while maintaining required security standards.

Key Features of the Facility:

- Dedicated housing unit for Firm Roots Academy (SYTF) young people who identify as male, separate from the general juvenile hall population. Due to the low number of female identifying young people, these individuals are housed in an all-female unit with pre-disposition youth.
- On-site educational classroom space has been expanded and includes a designated post-secondary classroom and Technology Lab (Expansion 2025).
- Gold Room: Incentive-based privilege space with recreational equipment for young people achieving Gold/Platinum status in the Behavior Management Point system.
- Honors Unit (Unit 11): Weekend dedicated space for Platinum-status young people offering expanded privileges and reduced restrictions (2025).
- Indoor gymnasium and newly renovated outdoor recreation area with CrossFit-themed equipment (construction completed late 2024, partially funded by BSCC grant).
- On-site Guidance Clinic providing behavioral health services in unit.
- Visitation areas designed to be welcoming for family engagement.
- De-escalation spaces.

Programs

Firm Roots Academy — Program Overview

Firm Roots Academy's mission is to: "*Empower youth by offering a supportive and nurturing environment that fosters personal growth, accountability, education, and skill-building.*" Aligned with this mission, the program is designed to foster positive behavioral change through a structured phase system, evidence-based programming, and comprehensive support services. Within its therapeutic milieu, everyone is supported through positive relationships, restorative care, healing, and self-empowerment.

Firm Roots Academy is deeply committed to the belief that a strong support system is crucial for encouraging positive behavioral change in young people by fostering such support through responsive programming and continued family-engagement. In response to the unique challenges faced by today's young people, especially youth of color, the program delivers programming that is culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and trauma informed. Through a comprehensive programming and assessment process, the academy ensures that each young person receives the individualized care needed to promote restoration and healing.

Leadership Structure & Staffing

Firm Roots Academy operates under a dedicated leadership structure that includes a Superintendent overseeing overall operations (including Camp Sweeney), and an Institutional Supervisor II (IS2) and Institutional Supervisor I's (IS I) ensuring effective program implementation. The facility is staffed with Juvenile Institutional Officers (JIOs) across three shifts: day (7 AM – 3 PM), swing (3 PM – 11 PM), and graveyard (11 PM – 7 AM). This leadership framework has been instrumental in strengthening the infrastructure necessary to integrate community-based organizations and county partners.

Culture of Collaborative Care: Firm Roots Academy leadership and staff actively foster a culture of collaborative care that builds upon the existing multidisciplinary team (MDT) framework. Young people in the Firm Roots Academy currently receive comprehensive support from a dedicated team of Academy Community Members, including probation officers, administrative staff, educators, clinicians, family members, and other key stakeholders. This interdisciplinary team works together to develop and continuously monitor each young person's Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP). With clearly defined roles and responsibilities, the community members meet regularly to review progress, make informed recommendations, and ensure that each IRP remains aligned with court expectations.

Firm Roots Academy Community Members

Young people at Firm Roots Academy receive comprehensive support from a dedicated team of Academy Community Members, including:

- **Firm Roots Academy Youth**: The young person residing at an Alameda County juvenile facility, receiving personalized rehabilitative care geared towards positive behavioral change.
- **Juvenile Institutional Officers (JIO)**: A direct care mentor providing daily in-unit supervision, guidance, and care to the young person.
- **Institutional Supervisor I (IS1)**: The Community Shift Group Leaders/Supervisors is responsible for overseeing daily operations within the living units, ensuring they consistently align with the care-driven approach.
- **Institutional Supervisor II (IS2)**: The Community Team Leader/Supervisor is responsible for overseeing the Supervisors, ensuring all State requirements are being met and collaborating with community stakeholders ensuring the academy program aligns with the care-driven approach.
- **Deputy Probation Officers (DPO)**: Probation Officers play a vital role in guiding young people throughout their journey at Firm Roots Academy, ensuring ongoing case management. They facilitate collaborative meetings centered around the young person's progress, monitor and adjust Individual Rehabilitation Plans (IRPs) to reflect evolving goals, and provide a clear roadmap for both the young person and their family. Additionally, Probation Officers are responsible for drafting court-mandated progress reports, ensuring accurate and timely documentation of each young person's development and achievements.
- **Credible Messengers**: Community members with lived experience working collaboratively with other community members to mentor, coach, and guide young people.
- **Program Providers**: Community members providing high quality programming to young people to assist in skills development, behavior change, and recreational opportunities.
- **Behavioral Health**: Behavioral health experts working collaboratively with community members to help assist, diagnose, and treat young people experiencing emotional and mental distress.
- **Medical Clinic**: Medical experts work collaboratively with community members to help foster health and wellness within the therapeutic milieu.
- **Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE)**: Educational experts working collaboratively with community members to assist with meeting the educational needs of young people.

Day-to-Day Program Structure

Young people follow a structured daily schedule that includes education, vocational training, evidence-based programming, and recreational activities. Programming is organized across morning and evening shifts with designated time blocks for academics, group sessions, recreation, and individual reflection.

- **Developmental Phase System (DPS):** The young people at Firm Roots Academy advance through a four-phase developmental system focused on fostering behavioral change and personal growth. This structured, task-oriented framework encourages positive behavior and skill development, offering rewards and incentives as young people move through each stage.
- **The Behavior Management System (BMS)**: The BMS at Firm Roots Academy is a structured approach designed to encourage positive behavior and active participation in the program. This system rewards young people for following rules, engaging in programming, and demonstrating prosocial behavior. Young people earn points which contribute to status levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum), each offering progressively greater privileges and incentives.
- **Academic Advisory Meetings:** Bi-weekly meetings to inform young people of their goals, achievements, and progress, including IS2, IS1, DPO, JIO mentor, ACOE Teacher, Credible Messenger, and Guidance Clinic.

Key Weekly Programs

- **Aggression Replacement Training (ART):** Implemented by trained staff following the completion of the CHOICES cohort, expanding the use of evidence-based interventions that promote prosocial skill development and emotional regulation (2025).
- **AirBallin:** Culturally Responsive Expressive Art Therapy and youth engagement to support the development and wellness of young people. Through drawing, painting, stenciling, and airbrushing, young people explore creative expression as a tool for healing, skill-building, and positive identity development.
- **Alameda County Library:** A full-service library which provides young people with access to a wide range of educational and recreational resources, including books that support learning, personal growth, and positive engagement. The library also offers tutoring and academic support.
- **Athletic Programs:** Structured weekly athletics including flag football, basketball, indoor soccer, and kickball.
- **Golden Mean Management Program:** Provides music recording, production, and creative expression opportunities. Young people identified this program positively in focus groups as a valued recreational and creative outlet.

- **DSAL—Physical Fitness Programming**: Provides structured indoor and outdoor group activities totaling approximately 3,640 hours of recreational programming annually. In 2025, DSAL reported approximately 3,244 total program participations across all JJC units; a Firm Roots Academy–specific unduplicated count is being finalized.
- **Family Springs:** Offers specialized mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment for adolescents, and young adults. Delivers specialized substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and prevention programming, along with anger management service**.**
- **GROW (Growth Reinforces Our Worth)—Mentoring and Life Skills:** GROW provides gang prevention and intervention (young people prefer the term 'Negative Peer Associations Prevention'), violence interruption, behavioral modification, restorative justice, anger management, emotional regulation, reentry readiness, relapse prevention planning, SMART goal setting, writing towards authorship, physical wellness coaching, and mentorship. In 2025, GROW served 23 young people, completed 12 reentry packets, appeared in 18 court hearings, and facilitated 2 young people's verbal and written denouncements of gang associations. GROW also facilitated continued mentorship for [redacted] post-incarceration and employment of [redacted] who exited Firm Roots Academy. The program expanded its service model to include writing towards authorship (an anthology of youth and facilitator writings).
- **Liberty Ministries:** The Religious and Spiritual Services Program provides voluntary, multi-faith spiritual support for youth in Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) facilities in accordance with Title 15 standards. The program ensures access to diverse religious services, counseling, and spiritual resources that reflect the varied faith traditions of youth in custody. Services include weekly and daily worship opportunities, small group studies, one-on-one counseling, access to clergy, religious materials, and observance of faith-based events. Chaplains and trained volunteers deliver inclusive, culturally responsive support while coordinating services, tracking participation and satisfaction, and ensuring youth have access to faith practices that support well-being, reflection, and personal growth.
- **Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3)—Construction Course:** A standardized, comprehensive, 120-hour construction course designed to help young people choose and succeed in registered apprenticeship programs. MC3 was consistently identified by young people as one of the most valued programs in the December 2025 focus groups.
- **Origin Tablet:** The tablet program provides young people with access to a range of educational, career readiness, personal development, and rehabilitative courses designed to support their growth while in custody and prepare them for success after release. Through interactive lessons, eBooks, and vocational training modules, young

people can strengthen academic skills, explore career pathways, build financial and workplace knowledge, and develop positive thinking and decision-making habits. These programs allow young people to work at their own pace while gaining practical skills that support education, employment, and personal development.

- **Raising Leaders (Hayward Adult School)—Paid Internships:** Oversees youth payroll in Firm Roots Academy and Camp Sweeney. Young people are paid $20 per hour. In 2025 at Firm Roots Academy: 14 young people served; 3,089 total hours worked; and $89,581 invested in youth wages.
- **RJOY Credible Messengers:** This program provides daily credible messenger mentoring, conflict management, and life coaching services to youth detained at Alameda County Juvenile Hall, including both SB 823 and non-SB 823 populations. Services are delivered onsite and focus on relationship building, goal setting, life planning, and the development of social-emotional and conflict resolution skills. The program includes tailored services for justice-impacted female youth, addressing gender-responsive needs through targeted support, mentorship, and skill-building. Credible messengers work closely with Probation staff as part of the therapeutic milieu, offering individualized support, facilitating mediation, and contributing to multidisciplinary team efforts. The program aims to reduce conflict, strengthen interpersonal skills, and support positive behavior change among youth in custody.
- **Safe Passages:** Provides up to 12 months of intensive reentry coordination for released from ACPD's Firm Roots Program. In collaboration with ACPD and community partners, services will focus on comprehensive system navigation and stabilization to support successful reintegration. Core services include individualized case management and life planning; housing, education, and employment support; connection to medical, behavioral health, and substance use services; court and appointment accompaniment; transportation assistance; family engagement; restorative and culturally responsive supports; and ongoing counseling as appropriate. The program's goal is to promote stability, accountability, and long-term success while reducing recidivism through coordinated, wraparound reentry services (2025).

Program Interventions:

- **CHOICES—Life Skills Training:** An evidence-based curriculum that focuses on teaching critical thinking, historical analysis, and problem-solving skills through complex current issues and diverse perspectives. Promotes informed decision-making, media literacy, and navigating complex topics with nuance.
- **Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI)—Therapeutic Journaling:** A structured journaling approach where young people use guided prompts and exercises to identify and modify negative thought patterns and behaviors, applying CBT principles through the act of writing.

- **Evidence-Based Programming (EBP):** Firm Roots Academy utilizes a variety of EBPs based on individual needs, including Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and an EBP Journaling Curriculum. DBT is provided selectively to youth who demonstrate a clear need. Aggression Replacement Training (ART) was added in 2025, with staff completing training and beginning implementation. ART includes Skillstreaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning Training.
- **Kolea Counseling—Individual Therapy:** Provides individual psychotherapy to SYTF young people. The lead clinician provided consistent weekly or biweekly sessions to 5 clients throughout 2025, totaling approximately 200 individual therapy sessions for the year.
- **Milk & Honey Consulting—Gender-Responsive Programming:** Program has expanded to deliver a 12-week gender-responsive CBT curriculum integrating mindfulness, trauma-informed practices, and psycho-educational sessions. In 2025, Cohort #1 consisted of [redacted] successfully completed all sessions with active engagement. [redacted] remains in Firm Roots Academy for Cohort #2. Curriculum topics include Planning the Future Me, Life Skills, Financial Literacy, Women's Health and Self-Care, Consent/Human Trafficking awareness, Time Management, Challenging Anti-Social Thinking, Pre-Employment, Family Systems, Peer Associations, and Environment and Empowerment (Expansion 2025).
- **Occupational Therapy Training Program (OTTP):** Provides occupational therapy services to enhance self-regulation, decision-making, and vocational skills.

Additional Supportive Programs

- **Niroga:** Provides guided yoga sessions designed to promote emotional regulation, stress management, and overall well-being. Through mindfulness, breathing techniques, and movement, youth learn strategies to improve focus, manage stress, and maintain calm during challenging situations. The program supports healthy coping skills and encourages self-awareness and emotional balance (2025).
- **Rites of Passage (ROP)**: Provides individualized and group life coaching that supports emotional development, goal setting, and practical skill-building. The program promotes self-awareness, accountability, and structured planning to help youth navigate challenges and prepare for future success.
- **Youth Advisory Council (YAC):** Supported a cohort of young people in Juvenile Facilities and Firm Roots Academy in learning the fundamentals of youth council participation and leadership development. The program provided a structured platform for young people to share feedback, build leadership skills, and advocate for issues

affecting their peers while promoting civic engagement and awareness of local government and community decision-making (2025).

- **Incarceration to College (UC Berkeley)—Higher Education:** Provides cross-enrollment support, individualized tutoring, college application assistance, and academic coaching. In 2025 at Firm Roots Academy: 3 students cross-enrolled at UC Berkeley, 16 students used tutoring services, [redacted] received application support, 16 total college applications submitted ([redacted] UC, [redacted] CSU, [redacted] out-of-state), and [redacted] college acceptances achieved.
- **Young Women Freedom Center—Gender-Responsive Programming:** A gender-responsive program that provides young people with support, empowerment, mentorship, training, and employment opportunities. The program serves young people who have been involved in the juvenile justice system, criminal justice system, and/or the underground street economy. Its goal is to help young people build skills, develop positive relationships, and access opportunities that promote personal growth and long-term success. Through these supports, the program aims to empower young people to create positive changes in their lives and contribute to healthier communities.
- **Youth Advisory Council (YAC):** Supported a cohort of youth in Juvenile Facilities and Firm Roots Academy in learning the fundamentals of youth council participation and leadership development. The program provided a structured platform for youth to share feedback, build leadership skills, and advocate for issues affecting their peers while promoting civic engagement and awareness of local government and community decision-making (2025).

Prosocial Activities:

- **Blue Water Sailing:** The Blue Water Sailing Program provides young people with a unique pro-social experiential learning opportunity through structured sailing instruction on the San Francisco Bay. Young people participate in hands-on maritime activities that build teamwork, responsibility, communication, and problem-solving skills while learning the fundamentals of sailing and water safety. The program also exposes young people to new environments outside of the facility, helping build confidence, resilience, and positive peer engagement (2025). [redacted] participated and successfully graduated from the program.

Education:

- **Dual Enrollment in High School and College:** Collaboration with ACOE to establish dual enrollment enabling young people to earn college credits while completing high school requirements.
  Post-Secondary In-Class College Program: for the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) and Peralta Community College provides young people with enrollment support, asynchronous and synchronous instruction, and educational and Career reentry planning. The Technology Lab (opened May 2024) offers introductory computer technology, advanced coding, and music production.
- **College/University On-Campus Visits:** Firm Roots Academy provides young people with supervised visits to local college and university campuses as part of its pro-social enrichment activities. These experiences allow young people to tour campuses, meet with program staff, and learn about educational and career pathways available after release. The visits are designed to broaden young people's perspectives, increase motivation toward education, and help young people envision positive future opportunities (2025).

"Being able to [physically] visit Sac State was overwhelming in a good way…it made me see what life on the outs was like and gave me motivation to do well in college."

-SYTF Participant

Education	Youth Enrolled
High School	[redacted]
Dual Enrollment	[redacted]
2 Year College	[redacted]
4 Year College	[redacted]

Program Incentives:

- **Breakfast Club:** An incentive program developed, in addition to the cooking program; young people may earn at the end of the week based on their performance within the Behavior Management System (2025).
- **Camp Day Passes:** This program allows eligible young people to participate in selected activities and programming at Camp Wilmont Sweeney for the day. Young people who have reached Phase Four of the program and achieved Platinum status may earn this privilege, providing an opportunity to experience programming in a less

restrictive environment while reinforcing positive behavior and program engagement (2025).

- **Gold Room—Incentive-Based Privilege Space In-Unit:** The Gold Room is a designated incentive space within the living unit for young people who have achieved Gold and Platinum status. Equipped with gaming systems, a music station, and additional recreational activities designed to promote relaxation and social engagement, it fosters a motivational atmosphere that celebrates achievement.
- **Platinum Cooking Program and Prime Cut Grilling Program:** These programs teach young people basic culinary skills, healthy meal preparation, and kitchen safety. Young people learn how to follow recipes, prepare ingredients, and practice proper food handling and sanitation. As part of the program, young people complete training to earn their Food Handler's certification, gaining knowledge of food safety standards used in food service settings. The program helps young people build confidence in the kitchen while developing skills that support healthy habits and future employment opportunities (2025).
- **Platinum Honors Unit:** Young people may earn the privilege to attend the Honors Unit for the day, typically on the weekends. The Honors Unit provides a less restrictive approach to supervision and encourages engagement and participation by staff. The unit provides upgraded video game consoles, a softer environment, an outdoor area with patio furniture, and additional food/snack incentives (Opened 2025).
- **Platinum Spree:** To encourage positive behavior and choices, young people who earn and remain on Platinum status for a month become eligible for the Platinum Spree at the end of the month, where they receive a $100 gift card to send to a loved one. This incentive recognizes their effort while allowing them to contribute positively to their families (2025).
- **Tablet Incentives:** Young people who demonstrate positive behavior and program engagement may earn access to tablet-based incentives designed to promote motivation and strengthen family connections. Gold and Platinum status young people at Firm Roots Academy may participate in Virtual Visiting through the Therapeutic Interactive Video Engagement (ThrIVE) platform, a secure video system that allows young people to connect with approved visitors. Visits are scheduled in advance to ensure coordination with visitors and proper access to the system. In addition, the Music Bank Program allows young people to earn access to additional music on their tablets by completing designated educational activities. Participation is voluntary and is intended to encourage engagement in learning while rewarding constructive use of the tablet platform (2025).

Placements

The primary placement for SYTF-committed young people is Firm Roots Academy at the Alameda County JJC. Step-down placements include Camp Wilmont Sweeney (an unsecured facility for young people aged 15-25), Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs), and Transitional Housing Program Plus Foster Care (THP+FC). In 2025, [redacted] were successfully stepped down to less restrictive placements.

SERVICES

Table 16. Firm Roots Academy Service Providers and Partners (2025-2026)

Service Category	Provider	Contact	Description
Behavioral Health / Mental Health	ACBH Guidance Clinic	Jennifer Yun	On-site clinical services: wellness check-ins, individual therapy, crisis intervention, and care coordination.
Expressive Art Therapy	DeAndre Drake AirBallin	Deandre Drake	Airballin is a culturally responsive expressive art therapy program (drawing, painting, stenciling, airbrushing) to support healing, skill-building, and positive identity development.

Service Category	Provider	Contact	Description
Gang Prevention / Intervention	GROW (Growth Reinforces Our Worth)	George Smith	Gang prevention and intervention (Negative Peer Associations Prevention), violence interruption, behavioral modification, restorative justice, anger management, emotional regulation, reentry readiness, relapse prevention, SMART goal setting, writing towards authorship, physical wellness coaching, and mentorship.
Gender-Responsive Programming	Milk & Honey Consulting	Maisha Scott	12-week gender-responsive CBT curriculum integrating mindfulness, trauma-informed practices, and psycho-educational sessions.
Gender-Responsive Programming	Young Women Freedom Center	Jasmine Frye	Gender-responsive, trauma-informed program providing mentorship, leadership development, employment readiness, and advocacy support for young women involved in the juvenile justice system, criminal justice system, and/or underground street economy.

Service Category	Provider	Contact	Description
Higher Education	Incarceration to College / UC Berkeley	Shani Shay	Cross-enrollment support, individualized tutoring, college application assistance, and academic coaching.
Individual Therapy	Kolea Counseling	Karie Ochoa	Individual psychotherapy for SYTF young people.
Library Services	Alameda County Library	Lisa Harris	Full-service library providing educational and recreational resources, books, tutoring, and academic support.
Life Coaching	Positive Communication Practices / Rites of Passage (ROP)	Kelvin Potts	Youth Life Coaching: five 10-week cohorts per year, conflict resolution, communication skills, emotional development, goal setting, and practical skill-building.
Mental Health / SUD Treatment	Family Springs	Sam Himelstein	Specialized mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment for adolescents and young adults.
Credible Messenger Mentoring / Life Coaching	Restorative Justice for youth (RJOY)	Teiahsha Bankhead	Daily trauma-informed mentoring, life coaching, de-escalation, and community reintegration support. Also provides gender-responsive restorative justice programming focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships.

Service Category	Provider	Contact	Description
Occupational Therapy	OTTP (Occupational Therapy Training Program)	Katie Gordon	Occupational therapy services to enhance self-regulation, decision-making, and vocational skills.
Paid Internships / Employment	Raising Leaders / Hayward Adult School	Davida Scott	Youth payroll oversight at Firm Roots Academy and Camp Sweeney.
Post-Secondary Education	Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) / Peralta Community College	Lucia Moritz/ Roger Chung	Enrollment support, asynchronous and synchronous instruction, and educational and career reentry planning. Technology Lab (opened May 2024) offers introductory computer technology, advanced coding, and music production.
Recreation / Physical Fitness	Alameda County Deputy Activity League (DSAL)	Patrick Eiser	Structured indoor and outdoor group activities totaling approximately 3,640 hours of recreational programming annually.
Reentry Coordination	Safe Passages	Josefina Mena	Up to 12 months of intensive reentry coordination post-release. Services include individualized case management and life planning, housing/education/employment support, connection to medical/behavioral health/SUD services, court and appointment accompaniment, transportation, family engagement, and restorative and culturally responsive supports.

Service Category	Provider	Contact	Description
Religious / Spiritual Services	Liberty Vision Ministry / Genesis Worship Center	Liberty Ministry-Diane Robinson Genesis Worship Center George Matthews	Voluntary, multi-faith spiritual support in accordance with Title 15 standards. Weekly and daily worship, small group studies, one-on-one counseling, access to clergy and religious materials, and observance of faith-based events. Liberty Vision Ministry began January 1, 2026.
Staff Training / Technical Assistance	Behavioral Health Training & Consultation	Christine Gerchow	SB 823-funded staff training and capacity building. Not young people-facing.
Vision Care	Bay Area Community Health	Desire Campbell	Monthly eye exams, prescriptions, and eyewear.
Vocational Training	Construction Trades workforce Initiative CTWI	Jamie Mather	120-hour Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) construction course designed to prepare young people for registered apprenticeship programs. Consistently identified by young people as one of the most valued programs.
Leadership and Youth Development	Youth Advisory Council	Marguerite L. De Loney	A cohort focused on the fundamentals of youth council, civic engagement and leadership development
Arts and Expression	Golden Mean Management	Prashant Kumar	Audio recording and music production
Yoga / Mindfulness	Niroga	Daniel Durate	Guided yoga sessions promoting emotional regulation, stress management, and well-being through mindfulness, breathing techniques, and movement.

Supervision

Young people at Firm Roots Academy are supervised 24/7 by Juvenile Institutional Officers across three shifts. Deputy Probation Officers provide ongoing case management, conduct regular reviews of Individual Rehabilitation Plans, conduct multidisciplinary teams, and prepare progress reports for the Court. The Behavior Management Point (BMP) system provides a structured framework for incentivizing positive behavior and tracking the progress of young people through graduated privilege levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum).

Family Finding and Recruiting Resource Parents

Family Builders, the Foster Family Agency (FFA) contracted by Alameda County to approve Resource Parents, has had a dedicated social worker assigned to the JJC since 2017 to help identify family members for young people in custody who have been removed from their parents. In partnership with Alameda County Social Services Agency, efforts continue to recruit and support resource families for young people stepping down from secure placement.

Alameda County families housing high-needs young people can receive higher adjusted rates, increasing incentives to support young people with mental health or behavioral challenges. The Alameda County Placement Unit has joined the Department of Social Services Enhanced Recruitment campaign to further support recruitment of resource families.

Child-Specific Support — Strategy Utilized Since 2022

Beginning in FY 2021/22, the State began offering a new source of funding for individual youth services or care that will keep them in a family setting or the least restrictive environment. Examples of covered services include additional intensive services and supports for young people in resource family homes, support for resource families to meet the unique needs of young people, and supports for young people to maintain family connections.

Implementing less restrictive placements is vital to removing young people from locked facilities as soon as possible while ensuring community safety. The Alameda County Probation Department has initiated the process of exploring LRP's throughout California and will continue to work collaboratively with our partner agencies to effectively identify, provide, and access services and resources for young people stepping down to community placements.

PART 4: JUVENILE JUSTICE REALIGNMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS

(Welfare & Inst. Code § 1995 (D)(3)(A) AND (D)(8))

The County plans to apply grant funds to enhance mental health services, sex offender treatment, and trauma-based interventions for justice-involved young people. These funds support staffing, specialized training, culturally responsive programming, and community-based service contracts.

Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention and Treatment

Mental health assessments are conducted by the ACBH Guidance Clinic at the JJC. A primary clinician works with all SYTF young people, with support from the clinical manager and director. Youth treatment plans are updated annually, with multidisciplinary team (MDT) reviews conducted every six months. Young people with severe mental health needs are assigned a specialty therapist for weekly support.

Guidance Clinic Services (2025 Data)

In 2025, the Guidance Clinic served 17 young people at Firm Roots Academy and responded to 141 referrals initiated by outside parties or the young people themselves. Services provided include regular wellness check-ins, one-on-one therapy sessions, crisis intervention and response, gathering collateral information for partners, and care coordination/case management.

Table 17. Additional Mental Health Services

Provider	Description
Family Spring Psychology	Culturally responsive anger management and substance abuse treatment using CBT. 12-week anger management sessions and 4-12+ week substance abuse treatment.
Kolea Counseling	Individual psychotherapy. Approximately 200 sessions across [redacted] clients in 2025.
Milk & Honey Consulting	Gender-responsive CBT and life coaching via 12-week trauma-informed curriculum integrating mindfulness. 2 participants completed Cohort #1 in 2025.
Occupational Therapy Training Program (OTTP)	Occupational therapy at JJC and Camp Sweeney, building self-regulation, decision-making, and vocational skills.

Grant Fund Allocation:
ACBHCS and mental health community-based partners will continue to build on existing relationships, daily check-ins, MDTs, weekly unit meetings, and ensure continuity of care for reentry mental health services and family engagement. Grant funds support collaboration with licensed mental health clinicians ensuring collaborative care, individualized care, crisis management, behavioral support, and therapies expanded into group and family therapy.

The re-designed Guidance Clinic model (implemented November 2024) has continued to operate with increased staffing (19 full-time positions). Crisis intervention now spans seven days a week. New clinicians trained in Trauma-Focused CBT continue to enhance therapeutic support for high-acuity SYTF young people. Care coordination has improved with initial assessments and reentry plans meeting CalAIM mandates. The Guidance Clinic served 17 young people and responded to 141 referrals in 2025, demonstrating active and responsive clinical engagement. Kolea Counseling provided approximately 200 individual therapy sessions across [redacted] SYTF clients, reflecting intensive, consistent therapeutic support throughout the year.

Sex Offender Treatment Program

Juvenile sex offender treatment services are provided by Psychological Assessment Inc., Norbert Ralph DBA Center for Prosocial Development, and the HOPE Program following the California Sex Offender Management Board (CASOMB) Collaborative Model. Services include intake assessments, risk evaluations, individual and group therapy, case management, and collaboration with probation officers through monthly meetings.

Grant Fund Allocation:
Grant funds continue to support sex offender treatment services that are culturally sensitive, accommodate special needs, and include victim reunification planning where appropriate.

Trauma-Informed and Focused Care

Trauma-informed care is embedded throughout all programming at Firm Roots Academy. Key components include:

- **Bay Area Community Health**: Vision care services supporting the well-being of young people.
- **DSAL**: Physical Fitness programming (3,640 hours/year) promoting physical wellness and self-regulation (approximately 3,244 total participations reported in 2025; Firm Roots Academy–specific unduplicated count pending).
- **Milk & Honey Consulting**: Gender-responsive CBT with trauma-focused psychoeducation.

- **RJOY Credible Messengers**: Provide daily trauma-informed mentoring, de-escalation, and restorative practices within the facility milieu.

Grant Fund Allocation:
Grant funds continue to support behavioral and trauma-informed programming including Milk & Honey Consulting, Positive Communication Practices (five 10-week Youth Life Coaching cohorts annually), DSAL recreational programming, and expanded post-release educational support services.

Milk & Honey Consulting completed its first gender-responsive cohort for Firm Roots Academy in 2025 with [redacted] participants successfully completing all sessions. DSAL continued to provide approximately 3,640 hours of recreational programming annually. ART was fully implemented by trained Firm Roots Academy staff following the completion of master trainer certification, adding a new evidence-based intervention addressing aggression and prosocial development.

Healthy Adolescent Development

(Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(B) and (d)(8))

The County continues to strategically utilize grant funds to enhance youth-centered programming and services that foster healthy adolescent development for young people in Firm Roots Academy. These programs embody positive youth development principles and include education, vocational training, career readiness, recreation, and creative expression.

Education and Vocational Highlights (2025)

- **GROW** facilitated employment of [redacted] who exited Firm Roots Academy and provided continued mentorship to [redacted] post-incarceration.
- **ACOE:** Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE): The Secondary Education Program supported strong post-secondary engagement through partnerships with UC Berkeley, Peralta Colleges, CSU Project Rebound, College of Alameda, and industry training programs. Youth received individualized case management to support enrollment, financial aid, and academic success, reinforced by ongoing collaboration with partners and probation. Participants achieved strong outcomes, including college unit completion, Honor Roll recognition, certifications, continued college enrollment, and employment. Despite prior educational disruptions, many maintained GPAs of 3.5 or higher and progressed toward transfer or four-year university admission.
- **Peralta Community College-Laney College**: Delivered face-to-face instruction (English, African-American Studies, basketball, counseling), academic counseling, and student services. All high school graduates in custody enrolled in at least one college course. Cumulative outcomes include [redacted] transfer to UC Berkeley, [redacted] to Cal State East Bay, and [redacted] HBCU transfers. In addition, Incarceration to College/UC Berkeley achieved [redacted] cross-enrollments, 16 tutoring recipients, and [redacted] college acceptances.
- **MC3 Construction Course**: 120-hour standardized curriculum preparing young people for registered apprenticeships.
- **Raising Leaders/Hayward Adult School**: 14 young people served, 3,089 hours of paid work at $20/hour, $89,581 total investment.

Staff Survey Findings (December 2025)

Twelve staff members completed surveys in December 2025 rating their level of agreement with statements across key domains on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Staff reported highest agreement on items related to treatment and model understanding, including agreement that young people are treated fairly and respectfully (Q12: 4.83), understanding of the goals of the SB 823 model (Q1: 4.64), knowledge of practices and approaches (Q2: 4.50), confidence managing safety incidents (Q10: 4.42), and agreement that daily operations support a safe environment (Q8: 4.33). Staff also described the value of expanding the experiences of young people beyond the facility:

> *"We're also doing outings in the community now, to teach them that this world that you're living in isn't the only thing in this world. Now they're looking at different realms and talking to different people who have careers and healthy hobbies. So having them to see that is kind of very refreshing." — Staff Focus Group Participant*

Table 18. Staff Survey Results, December 2025 (N=12)

Domain	Statement	Mean	N	Range
Understanding	Q1: I understand the goals of SB 823	4.64	[redacted]	3-5
Understanding	Q2: I feel knowledgeable about practices used at Firm Roots Academy	4.50	12	4-5
Training	Q3: I have received adequate training about SB 823	3.67	12	2-5
Training	Q4: I have opportunities for ongoing professional development	3.83	12	2-5
Communication	Q5: Communication between probation, education, and providers is effective	3.42	12	1-5
Communication	Q6: Collaboration among staff at different levels is strong	3.83	12	3-5
Communication	Q7: I understand the roles of other agencies	4.00	[redacted]	2-5
Operations	Q8: Daily operations run smoothly and support safety	4.33	12	3-5
Operations	Q9: Staffing levels are adequate for safety and youth needs	3.67	12	1-5
Operations	Q10: I feel confident managing safety incidents	4.42	12	3-5
Youth Experience	Q11: Programs meet the needs of the youth we serve	3.25	12	2-4
Youth Experience	Q12: Youth are treated fairly and respectfully	4.83	12	4-5

Partner Survey Findings (January 2026)

Sixteen community-based partners completed surveys in January 2026 with statements across key domains on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The highest-rated item was that programs reflect trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate practices (Q13: 4.25). Partners also rated positively that ACPD provides adequate support (Q4: 3.75) and that organizational roles are clear (Q2: 3.69). Partners emphasized the value of collaboration in supporting young people:

> *"The collaboration makes a big difference. I always liken it to when you're raising children and you have two parents, and you can go to one parent to get something different." — Partner Focus Group/Interview Participant*

Table 19. Partner Survey Results, January 2026 (N=16)

Domain	Statement	Mean	N	Range
Understanding	Q1: I understand the goals of SB 823	3.50	16	1-5
Understanding	Q2: My organization's role and responsibilities are clear	3.69	16	2-5
Capacity	Q3: Our organization has staffing/resources to meet youth needs	3.50	16	2-5
Capacity	Q4: We receive adequate support from ACPD	3.75	16	2-5
Communication	Q5: Communication with ACPD is consistent and effective	3.56	16	2-5
Communication	Q6: Coordination among partner agencies supports smooth delivery	3.06	16	1-5
Communication	Q7: Referral and handoff processes work well	3.38	16	2-4
Data	Q8: Expectations for data sharing are clear and manageable	3.38	16	2-5
Data	Q9: I have the information I need to report accurately	3.38	16	2-5
Data	Q10: I understand the roles of other agencies	3.25	16	2-5
Program Quality	Q11: Youth receive the right mix of services	3.00	16	1-5
Program Quality	Q12: Collaboration among partners improves outcomes	3.56	16	1-5
Program Quality	Q13: Programs reflect trauma-informed, culturally responsive approaches	4.25	16	3-5

Family Engagement

(Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(C) and (d)(8))

Alameda County recognizes that family involvement is essential to young people's rehabilitation and successful reentry. Firm Roots Academy actively promotes family engagement through regular visitation (both in-person and virtual), inclusion in multidisciplinary team meetings, and collaborative case planning.

Family Survey and Interview Findings (December 2025)

Three families participated in surveys and interviews in December 2025. Given the small sample size, findings are not generalizable; however, interviews revealed consistent themes across all three families that are further supported by the survey data.

Across interviews, three themes emerged unanimously: limited communication about their child's day-to-day progress and programming, lack of preparation for reentry and transition, and feeling welcomed and respected by staff during visits and meetings.

On communication, all three families described relying on their child, rather than program staff, as their primary source of information about programming, school progress, and upcoming events. Survey results reflect this gap: families rated feeling informed about their child's goals and progress (Q1: 2.33) and opportunities to share input about their child's care (Q6: 2.00) among the lowest items. In their own words:

> *"We really just find out things straight from him. Unless there's a family night and somebody calls us about it. But other than that, any updates on what's happening with his school or the programs he's in, we don't get to hear about…Maybe getting a report a quarter, like what he's doing and how he's doing, email to the parents, because that way we can support him on our end, because we don't know when things start and finish." — Family Interview Participants*

On reentry and transition planning, families uniformly expressed feeling underprepared for their child's return home and uncertain about what post-release supports would be available. This theme is reflected in the lowest-rated survey item: feeling prepared to support their child at reentry (Q12: 2.00). As one family shared:

> *"That's something that I'm not really prepared for yet. What to expect coming home? What programs will he be continued on? Because once they're out of that program, there's really not much for them. If I knew about all of the resources that are offered, I'd probably feel more prepared. Right now, I feel like I'm depending on my own capacity, and I'm not quite sure if that's going to be adequate." — Family Interview Participants*

Despite these concerns, all three families described feeling respected and welcomed by staff. Survey results support this: staff communication respectfulness (Q4: 4.67) and feeling welcomed in meetings (Q7: 4.67) were the highest-rated items across all domains.

A concern echoed across families, and reiterated by young people, staff, and partners, was the emphasis on college pathways over trades and vocational options. In their own words: *"They need to start recognizing that not every kid is cut out to be going to college. When you first get in there, they're throwing college courses. And the kid's kind of going, I don't want to do that. What you're doing is you're frustrating the kid."*

Table 20. Family Survey Results, December 2025 (N=3)

Domain	Statement	Mean	N	Range
Communication	Q1: I feel informed about my child's goals and progress	2.33	3	1-4
Communication	Q2: I understand what programs my child is in	3.00	3	2-4
Communication	Q3: Staff communicate with me regularly	2.67	3	1-5
Communication	Q4: Staff communicate with me respectfully	4.67	3	4-5
Communication	Q5: I know who to contact with questions	3.00	3	2-5
Engagement	Q6: I have opportunities to share input about my child's care	2.00	3	1-3
Engagement	Q7: I feel welcomed and included in meetings/activities	4.67	3	4-5
Engagement	Q8: Staff listen to and value my family's perspectives	4.00	3	3-5
Engagement	Q9: Firm Roots Academy supports my family's needs (transportation, etc.)	2.67	3	2-3
Future	Q10: I have seen my child grow or make positive changes	3.67	3	2-5
Future	Q11: My child is getting skills/support to succeed after release	3.67	3	3-4
Future	Q12: I feel prepared to support my child when they come home	2.00	3	1-3
Future	Q13: I feel hopeful about my child's future	3.33	3	2-4

Family therapy services are available through Guidance Clinic staff and clinicians on site, who conduct initial family consultations at intake and maintain regular contact with families.

Bi-weekly Family Check-ins were implemented to strengthen family engagement and improve communication regarding youth progress. Through this initiative, the assigned Deputy Probation Officer and Unit Supervisor conduct regular bi-weekly outreach to families to provide updates on programming participation, Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP) progress, and transition planning. These check-ins are intended to increase family awareness, strengthen collaboration, and ensure families remain informed and engaged in their young person's development and reentry planning.

Young people's families have been invited to join their youth in off-site pro-social activities. Most recently families participated in celebrating their young person's graduating from the Blue Water Sailing Program.

Family Engagement Strategies for 2026

- Increase open house events to highlight the accomplishments of young people in vocational, wellness, and enrichment programs.
- Provide consistent communication with youth and families on family visitation, clarifying that family contact time is not used as a behavioral consequence.
- Expand services and supports available to families to empower sustained involvement.
- Increase efforts to identify and nurture positive, permanent adult connections for young people when immediate family is unavailable.

Reentry Planning and Linkage

(Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(D) and (d)(8))

To improve the success of young people reentering their communities, Alameda County prioritizes a comprehensive Developmental Phase System to provide young people with a clear path while tin the Firm Roots Academy and preparing for transitions to Less Restrictive Programs (LRP) or Reentry to the community. The emphasis extends beyond safe and secure confinement to fostering vocational, life, and psychosocial maturity skills, as well as establishing positive connections and opportunities that contribute to long-term success post-release.

Phased Approach to Less Restrictive Programs (LRP) and Community Reentry

Firm Roots Academy utilizes a structured four-phase Developmental Phase System designed to guide young people through progressive stages of rehabilitation, accountability, and personal growth. The phase system provides a clear framework for skill development, behavioral change, and preparation for successful community reintegration. Each phase builds upon the previous stage through evidence-based programming, cognitive behavioral interventions, and individualized goals aligned with the young person's Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP). Advancement through the phases is contingent upon demonstrated behavioral improvement, consistent program participation, and completion of required Core and Plus programming sessions.

Core Programming consists of required interventions identified by the court or the assigned Deputy Probation Officer and typically includes evidence-based programs and therapeutic services aligned with the young person's assessed risks and needs. Plus Programming includes additional pro-social, educational, recreational, and vocational activities that support personal development, skill building, and positive engagement.

- **Phase 1 – Orientation**: This initial phase focuses on acclimating young people to the program structure, expectations, and therapeutic environment. During this period, young people complete risk and needs assessments, develop their Individual Rehabilitation Plan with their assigned Deputy Probation Officer, and begin introductory cognitive behavioral journaling and evidence-based programming.
- **Phase 2 – Genesis:** The Genesis phase emphasizes self-awareness and introspection. Young people participate in structured programming and cognitive behavioral interventions designed to help them understand their behaviors, identify personal triggers, and begin developing healthier decision-making and emotional regulation skills.
- **Phase 3 – Formation:** During this phase, young people deepen their engagement in evidence-based programming while strengthening pro-social relationships with family

members, mentors, and support networks. Young people demonstrate consistent positive behavior, complete required programming milestones, and begin taking on greater responsibility and leadership within the program.

- **Phase 4 – Breakthrough:** The final phase prepares young people for transition and reentry. Young people engage in restorative justice activities, leadership development, and community engagement opportunities. Successful completion of this phase demonstrates readiness for increased independence and potential step-down opportunities into less restrictive environments, such as Camp Sweeney or community LRPs.

As youth progress through the phases, they are provided increasing opportunities for leadership, pro-social engagement, and preparation for community reintegration. This structured progression supports a measurable pathway toward rehabilitation and long-term success.

Reentry Case Management and Support Services

Reentry efforts are a complex, individualized process aimed at helping young people reintegrate into the community through comprehensive support. The process includes wraparound services, including behavioral health, education, workforce development, and social interventions. Probation and ACBH continue to develop and implement various CalAIM initiatives that support reentry coordination and planning, including the development of formal 90-day pre-release plans and warm handoffs to various community-based programs and supports.

- Reentry Case Manager and Team: A culturally responsive Reentry Case Manager was hired in 2024 to ensure coordinated care across service providers.
- Aftercare System Navigation Support: Contract added in 2025 for aftercare navigation including barrier removal services in employment, housing, transportation, and basic goods.
- Early Reentry Planning: Planning begins at disposition, incorporating young people and families in decision-making.
- Continuity of Care: Warm handoffs (not passive referrals) to community providers. Prescribed medications refilled before release with at least 30 days of medication when clinically indicated.
- Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY) services through ACBH Full Service Partnership.
- [redacted] successfully stepped down to less restrictive placements in 2025.

Expanding Reentry Educational, Vocational, and Employment Support

- High school continuation: ACOE and ACPD ensure young people are enrolled in aligned school programs with warm handoffs, transportation, and supplies.
- College continuation: ACPD coordinates with Laney College (Restoring Our Communities/ROC) and other providers. In 2025, Incarceration to College achieved 11 college acceptances for Firm Roots young people. Additionally, ROC maintains court presence to provide real-time updates on transcripts, graduation eligibility, and educational progress to judges and defense counsel—an informal court advocacy function that supports judicial consideration of educational milestones in rehabilitation assessments.
- Employment and financial stability: Subsidized employment programs, paid internships, and stipends. Raising Leaders invested $89,581 in youth wages (14 young people, 3,089 hours) in 2025.
- Vital documents preparation: Social Security cards, birth certificates, California IDs/Driver's Licenses, voter registration, and SSI applications initiated in custody.
- GROW continued mentorship: [redacted] received continued mentorship/resources/services post-incarceration; [redacted] were employed after exiting Firm Roots Academy and completed 12 reentry GROW packets (covering Reentry Readiness, Relapse Prevention, and Restorative Justice).

Transition Center

The JJC Transition Center connects released young people and their families to critical resources including housing (Section 8), public assistance (SNAP, Medi-Cal), and employment services. Daily huddles and collaboration with education and public health partners support high-need young people.

Evidence-Based, Promising, Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Services

(Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(E) and (d)(8))

Alameda County is committed to implementing evidence-based and promising practices aligned with criminal justice principles of risk, need, and responsivity. Key evidence-based and trauma-informed programs currently in use at Firm Roots Academy include:

- Aggression Replacement Training (ART) — implemented by trained staff in 2025
- CHOICES life skills curriculum
- Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI) and Interactive Journaling
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) for high-need young people
- Gender-responsive CBT (Milk & Honey, using Voices curriculum)
- Journaling Curriculum
- Motivational interviewing techniques embedded in case management processes
- Restorative justice practices (through RJOY Credible Messengers and GROW)
- Trauma-Focused CBT (through Guidance Clinic clinicians)
- YLS/CMI 2.0 validated risk/needs assessment
- Seeking Safety (Family Springs)

Non-Governmental or Community-Based Providers

(Welf. & Inst. Code §1995(d)(3)(F) and (d)(8))

Alameda County has built a strong network of community-based providers which it continues to leverage to meet the specific needs of young people. These partnerships leverage the expertise, cultural relatability, and flexibility of community-based organizations to complement County-led efforts.

Community-based providers have continued to expand and strengthen services. Notable developments in 2025 include: Liberty Vision Ministry began a new religious services contract effective January 1, 2026 (replacing/supplementing Genesis). GROW's notable outcomes include [redacted] who formed an accountability pact and formally denounced gang associations, with both stepping down to Camp Sweeney while maintaining the commitment despite peer pressure. The writing towards authorship anthology project is preparing for stakeholder review. Kolea Counseling's set-to-be contract status has been advancing to provide stable, ongoing individual therapy services

Please Refer to Table 16. Firm Roots Academy Service Providers and Partners (2025-2026)

PART 5: FACILITY PLAN

Secure Track Housing, Treatment Needs, and Facility Improvements

The Subcommittee's long-term vision continues to include closing or repurposing the current juvenile hall and creating smaller, more developmentally appropriate, homelike models. While this transformation requires action beyond the Subcommittee's authority, it remains committed to advocating for it and helping identify the leadership needed to drive it forward.

Immediate Plan

Continue using the dedicated unit at the JJC for Firm Roots Academy, while making ongoing improvements to create a more therapeutic and home-like environment. Improvements include culturally relevant décor, Wi-Fi access, personal touches in each room, and de-escalation spaces.

Intermediate Plan

ACPD continues to assess the feasibility of using Camp Sweeney as a step-down facility, ensuring young people only stay in secure facilities when necessary. Plans are underway to secure the Camp Sweeney facility with a perimeter fence to enhance programming options.

Camp Sweeney Enhancements:

As Firm Roots Academy young people step down from a secure facility (Unit 1) to Camp Sweeney, they are provided with a state-of-the-art gym, one-on-one literacy tutoring, small

group instruction, a full-service library, and workforce development programs such as Multi-Core Craft Curriculum (MC3) and Google Technology certifications, all designed to prepare young people for successful transitions.

- ACPD continues to assess whether Firm Roots Academy young people living and programming spaces need to be separated from the existing camp population and estimating the costs of necessary modifications.
- The Alameda County Probation Department continues to evaluate Camp Sweeney's role as an effective bridge for reintegration, with adjustments aimed at reducing disruptions and building youth confidence in the step-down process. Probation staff are actively involved in shaping these transitions to support young people in adapting to less restrictive settings.

Long-Term Vision

Alameda County aims to move toward smaller, homelike juvenile justice housing models that support development, healing, and connection, partnering with impacted young people, advocates, and community members.

Additional Safety Measures and Protections

Table 21a. Incidents and Use of Force (2025)

Month	# of Unique Incidents	# of Unique Youth Involved	# of Incidents Involving 2+ Youth	# of Serious Incidents	# of Use of Force Incidents	# of UoF Incidents Involving OC Spray
January 2025	1	[redacted]	0	1	0	0
February 2025	4	[redacted]	2	1	3	0
March 2025	10	[redacted]	1	7	3	1
April 2025	4	[redacted]	0	3	1	0
May 2025	2	[redacted]	0	1	1	0
June 2025	5	[redacted]	0	2	3	1
July 2025	7	[redacted]	2	1	6	1
August 2025	6	[redacted]	3	0	6	0
September 2025	3	[redacted]	2	0	3	0
October 2025	14	[redacted]	6	7	7	3
November 2025	5	[redacted]	1	3	2	0
December 2025	5	[redacted]	0	4	1	0
Total	**66**	**19**	**17**	**30**	**36**	**6**

OC Spray Usage (FRA): In the 2022 SB823 Annual Plan (Initial Plan), the Alameda County SB823 Subcommittee took action and voted to discontinue the use of OC spray within the SB823 program (Firm Roots Academy).

Table 21b. Incident Type (2025)

Incident Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Accessing Unauthorized Website										1	1		**2**
Aggression toward Staff			1									1	**2**
Aggression/Threats toward Staff							1			2			**3**
Assault on Staff							1						**1**
Assault on Youth		1	1			1			1	2			**6**
Being in an Unauthorized Area											1		**1**

Contraband	1		2						2		1		**6**
Destroying County Property				1								2	**3**
Fight		1	1			1	2	3		3	1		**12**
Inappropriate Behavior										2			**2**
Injury - Youth		2	3	2		1	1						**9**
Near/Verbal Altercation						1		2		1		1	**5**
Non-Compliance			1	1	1	1	2	1		1	1	1	**10**
Out of Control/Disruptive Behavior			1		1					1			**3**
Suicidal Ideation/Threat										1			**1**
Grand Total	**1**	**4**	**10**	**4**	**2**	**5**	**7**	**6**	**3**	**14**	**5**	**5**	**66**

Grievances (2025)

Twenty (20) grievances were filed by youth from [redacted] people in 2025. Peak months were February and July (4 each), with zero grievances filed in January and March. The grievance process remains consistent with Title 15 §1361, and forms are reviewed by Facilities management and addressed in a timely manner.

Table 22a. Grievances — Firm Roots Academy (2025)

Month	# of Grievances	# of Unique Youth Filing Grievances
January 2025	0	0
February 2025	4	[redacted]
March 2025	0	0
April 2025	1	[redacted]
May 2025	2	[redacted]
June 2025	2	[redacted]
July 2025	4	[redacted]
August 2025	1	[redacted]
September 2025	2	[redacted]
October 2025	2	[redacted]
November 2025	2	[redacted]
December 2025	0	0
Total	**20**	[redacted]

Table 22b. Grievances by Reason — Firm Roots Academy (2025)

Reason	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Complaints Against Staff		4		1	2	2	4	1	2	1	2		**19**
Program Participation Services		1					2	1	1	2			**7**
Complaint Against Youth							1	1					**2**
Clothing/Hygiene									1				**1**
Concern for Staff Youth							1						**1**
Food													
Bullying/Conflicts/Gang													
Telephone/Mail/Visiting													
Disciplinary													
Classification Decisions													
Health Care/Medical/Dental/Mental													
Other													

Note: Youth may select more than one reason on a single grievance form. The sum of reasons per month may exceed the total number of grievances for that period.

PART 6: RETAINING TARGET POPULATION IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Alameda County has successfully retained its target population within the juvenile justice system. Since the inception of SB 823 implementation in 2021, [redacted] has been transferred to adult court (in 2022, see table 4). In 2025, zero young people were transferred to adult court despite [redacted] pending transfer motions.

Key strategies for retaining young people in the juvenile justice system include:

- **Comprehensive Support Services**: Alameda County provides services that promote healthy adolescent development, including mental health care, education, vocational training, and family engagement. These services support young people in the juvenile system and reduce the need for transfers to adult court.
- **Data Collection and Reporting**: The county commits to publishing timely data related to SB 823 implementation. This includes monitoring the number of young people eligible for Secure Youth Treatment Facilities, tracking progress on rehabilitation plans, and sharing aggregate data with stakeholders and the public.
- **Evidence-Based and Promising Practices**: The county uses evidence-based and promising practices, aligned with criminal justice's eight evidence-based principles, to improve outcomes for young people. This approach reduces reliance on transfers to the adult system by ensuring dispositions are in the least restrictive, most appropriate environment. Firm Roots Academy's programming model is grounded in risk-need-responsivity principles, with individualized rehabilitation plans and regular MDT reviews.
- **Family Engagement**: Recognizing the importance of family in rehabilitation, the county promotes and strengthens familial connections. This approach supports youth success outside of the system and reduces the likelihood of escalation to adult court.
- **Restorative Justice Principles**: The county is committed to restorative justice, centering the needs of victims while providing support and structure to the young person as they seek to make amends. This approach is crucial for keeping young people in the juvenile system and maintaining public safety.

Individualized step-down programs support Firm Roots Academy young people as they transition from secure facilities to less restrictive environments. These programs include:

- **Camp Wilmont Sweeney**: An unsecured facility serving young people aged 15 to 25, offering both in-facility and community-based programs. Young people can participate in community employment and earn weekend home passes.
- **Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs)**: Available since July 1, 2021, these programs provide individualized therapeutic services for youth aged 14 to 18. Placements are considered on a case-by-case basis.

PART 7: REGIONAL EFFORTS

There are currently no formal regional agreements or arrangements in place for the block grant. However, within the Alameda County justice system, young people may be transferred or placed in other counties when appropriate placements are identified that better serve their needs.

PART 8: DATA

(Welf. & Inst. Code (d)(8))

Data Collection

The ACPD Research & Evaluation Unit has tracked data on young people served by the block grant since 2021. This includes demographics, case details, and service utilization. Since October 2020, ACPD has utilized the Enterprise Supervision case management system (Tyler Technologies) for data collection. This cloud-based system integrates with the Alameda County Superior Court to provide up-to-date information on court dates, convictions, arrests, and warrants.

For the 2026 plan update, the data collection process was significantly expanded compared to prior years. For the first time, comprehensive primary data collection was conducted across all four stakeholder groups (young people, families, staff, and partners) through both quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups/interviews. Partner data submissions were also solicited for the first time, yielding aggregate program data from six community-based service providers. This multi-method approach provides a more complete picture of program operations and impact, and establishes a foundation for continued data-driven improvement. Moving forward, Alameda County plans to continue monitoring outdoor access hours, program participation and completion rates, family engagement metrics, and use of force incidents.

Data was collected through the following multiple methods:

- **ACPD Automated Data System**: Target population data, offense types, program enrollment, transfer/closure data, and YLS/CMI scores for all Firm Roots Academy young people.
- **Family Surveys and Interviews (December 2025, n=3)**: Perceptions of communication, visitation, and involvement.
- **Focus Groups (December 2025 - January 2026)**: Four youth focus groups, three family interviews, one staff focus group, one partner listening session, and one supplemental partner interview.
- **Incidents and Grievances Tracking**: Monthly tracking of all incidents, use of force, and youth grievances**.**
- **Partner Data Submissions**: Aggregate 2025 data from GROW, ACBH Guidance Clinic, Incarceration to College, Raising Leaders, Kolea Counseling, DSAL, and Milk & Honey.
- **Partner Surveys (January 2026, n=16)**: Collaboration quality, service delivery, and improvement areas.
- **Quarterly SB 823 Data Reports (Q1-Q4 2025)**: Compiled by ACPD and provided to the planning team for analysis.

- **Staff Surveys (December 2025, n=12)**: Assessments of program operations, training, and youth-staff relationships.
- **Youth Surveys (December 2025, n=16)**: Experience ratings across 15 items spanning 6 domains (Learning, Staff, Environment, Connections, Skills, Readiness), program satisfaction ratings across 13 services, and open-ended responses.

Outcome Measures

ACPD tracks and reports on key indicators and outcome measures including:

- Number of Firm Roots Academy young people served in SYTF, and young people adjudicated for 707(b) offenses
- Demographics: age at first referral and current age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level
- Offense and offense histories (violent, property, personal, misdemeanor, infractions, status)
- Re-offenses and violations
- Referral and disposition numbers
- Length of stay
- Program enrollment, duration, and violations during enrollment
- Step-downs, discharges, and transfers to adult court
- YLS/CMI 2.0 risk/needs domain scores
- Mental health assessment results
- Service provider contact hours, types of services, and youth progress notes

PART 9: OTHER UPDATES

SB 823 Strategic Direction: 2026 Focus Areas

At the February 19 Subcommittee meeting, informed by comprehensive primary data collection (youth, family, staff, and partner surveys and focus groups) and quarterly population data, the Subcommittee reviewed four focus areas and one overarching principle to guide the 2026-2027 plan implementation.

Overarching Principle: Intentional and Responsive Decision-Making

All four focus areas are guided by an overarching commitment to intentional and responsive decision-making:

- Recognizing and responding to diverse needs and lived experiences
- Designing practices that reduce barriers and increase access
- Ensuring consistency, transparency, and fairness across settings
- Valuing family and community knowledge as expertise

Focus Area 1: Relationship-Based Practices

Building on strong foundations

Relationships are a primary driver of youth engagement and stability at Firm Roots Academy. Youth focus groups consistently highlighted the importance of staff who show genuine care and serve as positive role models. Trust, consistency, and emotional safety support regulation and progress of young people. Relationship-centered approaches currently guide much of the work, as reflected in the credible messenger model (GROW, RJOY) and the therapeutic milieu framework.

> *"He come here for kids. He like a father figure. Some kids never had someone to run though, for sure." — Youth Focus Group Participant*

Opportunities for support:

- Greater alignment of relationship-based practices across settings, ensuring consistency between shifts, units, and providers.
- Shared language and tools to support consistency systemwide, addressing some concerns from young people about inconsistent rule enforcement.
- Continued investment in credible messengers and mentoring relationships that young people identified as most impactful.

Focus Area 2: Transitions and Continuity of Care

Supporting young people through moments of change

Transitions are high-impact points for youth well-being. In 2025, [redacted] were successfully stepped down to less restrictive placements, and stakeholder feedback highlighted both the promise and challenges of the transition process. Staff and partners noted confusion around step-down criteria, and young people and families raised concerns about insufficient transition planning for release.

> *"There doesn't seem to be a kind of step-down type of plan that young people are pursuing. They all feel like, 'If I get into a good college, maybe the judge will let me out.' It's not clear to us or the youth—what are the milestones that allow for a person to begin moving towards less and less restrictive places?" — Partner Focus Group/Interview Participant*

Opportunities for support:

- Strengthening coordination at entry, movement between units/programs, and discharge.
- Supporting continuity across placements and providers, including warm handoffs through CalAIM initiatives.
- Clarifying step-down criteria and communicating them consistently to staff, young people, families, and the Court.

Focus Area 3: Communication and Shared Understanding

Creating clarity and predictability

Clear, consistent communication strengthens trust across youth, families, staff, and partners. Young people described frustration when rules were applied differently depending on who was working. Families wanted more proactive updates about their child's progress, rather than learning things only at court or through their child. Staff noted a need for shared understanding around the time-off matrix and program expectations.

> *"The program is still being put together. It's not totally completely registered. The roles and the expectation of the staff in the unit, it changes. And so, it hasn't been totally defined as to what the role actually is, because yesterday was one thing, today, because we have our pamphlet now, it changes the way that we operate." — Staff Focus Group*

Opportunities for support:

- Enhancing clarity around roles, expectations, and next steps for young people, families, and staff.

- Improving information flow across partners, young people, and families, including leveraging the Teach N Go platform for real-time updates.
- Standardizing rule enforcement and behavioral expectations across shifts and staff.
- Establishing regular partner communication structures to improve service coordination.

Focus Area 4: Family Engagement and Partnership

Deepening family voice and collaboration

Families are essential partners in youth success. While the December 2025 family data collection reflected a small sample (n=3), the themes were consistent and significant: families appreciate the program's mental health focus and the welcoming environment during visits, but want more regular communication about their child's progress, broader educational pathway options beyond college, and confidence that family contact will not be affected by disciplinary responses. As one family member described:

> *"Just them keeping up to date with us, like a monthly check-in throughout his stay, would help us be a little more prepared for when they got out, because we would know what he's been going through and how they've been handling it." — Family Interview Participants*

Opportunities for support:

- Expanding family engagement beyond visitation, including participation in case planning, programming, and milestone celebrations.
- Creating multiple pathways for family input, including regular open house events and accessible feedback channels.
- Reinforce policies that support family contact and keep this separate from any disciplinary responses to ensure family connection is protected.
- Increasing family participation in future data collection efforts to ensure more representative input.
- Identifying and nurturing permanent adult connections for young people when immediate family is unavailable.

JJDPC & Youth Advisory Council: Programmatic Advisory

The department plans to expand youth voice and involvement and leverage credible messengers with lived experience to engage and ensure all programming and services adequately meet the long-term multi-faceted needs of young people during their critical developmental years. Community perspectives and engagement will be sought to ensure cohesiveness, collective impact, and shared accountability toward SMART objectives.

Program Evaluation & Advisory Process

In consultation with ACPD leadership and the Youth Advisory Council, the JJDPC will review and advise on programming needs, recommend evaluation processes to ensure program effectiveness, and expand ACPD's community reach by integrating diverse perspectives.

Capacity Building

In the past year, staffing, programming, training, and overall capacity have continued to be built in support of Firm Roots Academy. Staffing has seen positive developments, with administrative positions filled and a new program within the Office of Education established to coordinate and support post-secondary educational programming.

Recognizing turnover and staffing challenges among county behavioral health/mental health and probation, new staff and leadership have been hired to strengthen service delivery. Efforts are ongoing to improve fidelity to evidence-based practices and ensure continuity of care for young people.

Education and vocational services continue to be prioritized and have significantly expanded, partly in response to young people’s perspectives and needs. Key stakeholder interviews and evidence suggest that facilities are continuously being improved, with major additions like the career lab and outdoor recreation area, though physical limitations and delays temper progress.

PART 10: EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

Prior-year expenditures-Summary of outcomes/Impacts: (Welf. & Inst. Code § 1995(d)(9))

Note that certain services overlapped with different expenditure categories and are reflected in each.

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditure	Expenditures Consistent with the Plan
A. Mental Health Programs and Services	$135,085	Yes
Describe why the expenditures were or were not consistent with the plan	These expenditures were consistent with the plan in that the Alameda County Behavioral Health Department expanded specific mental health services including individualized care, crises management and behavioral support to provide continuity of care at the Facilities. Additional mental health service providers were brough on to provide culturally responsive and gender-specific mental health services.	
Describe how the expenditures improved outcomes	These mental health programs and services provide trauma-informed and gender-responsive care to young people through licensed clinicians, promoting overall well-being for youth while addressing the underlying needs and cognitions related to their behaviors. These services also establish a strong foundation for the continuation of care as youth progress through their mental health journey. In addition, the programs offer immediate crisis intervention for young people experiencing acute mental health needs and support a more holistic approach to addressing their day-to-day needs, reducing youth behavioral issues arising from crisis and lowering the incidents of crisis interventions. This approach integrates facility staff into the process and strengthens communication among service providers, ensuring coordinated and effective support for these young people. The Guidance Clinic served 17 young people and responded to 141 referrals in 2025, demonstrating active and responsive clinical engagement. Kolea Counseling provided approximately 200 individual therapy sessions across [redacted] SYTF clients, reflecting intensive, consistent therapeutic support throughout the year.	

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditure	Expenditures Consistent with the Plan
B. Sex Offender Treatment	$0	N/A
Describe why the expenditures were or were not consistent with the plan	These service providers continue to be available to provide psychosexual evaluations using validated assessment tools, ensuring individualized treatment plans tailored to each youth's unique needs, when required. Per the 2024 report, such services included, monthly case collaborations between the Deputy Probation Officer, service providers, and sex offender treatment providers to assess continued risk, evaluate services across the spectrum to determine appropriateness for specific youth, and incorporate accountability.	
Describe how the expenditures improved outcomes	This service was not required in 2025.	

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditure	Expenditures Consistent with the Plan
C. Trauma-Informed and Focused Care	$775,847.00	Yes
Describe why the expenditures were or were not consistent with the plan	Trauma-informed and focused care was intended to bring an additional layer of support and well-being to the wholistic model of care for young people in the FRA. These services build upon the established mental health component of the FRA and incorporate skills, some of which include pro-social decision making, building authentic relationships, gender-responsive expression, conflict resolution, recreation, and community connection.	
Describe how the expenditures improved outcomes	Expenditures continue to support various providers in the areas of health, recreation, metal health, counseling, and restorative practices. Milk & Honey Consulting completed its first gender-responsive cohort for FRA in 2025 with [redacted] participants successfully completing all sessions. DSAL continued to provide approximately 3,640 hours of recreational programming annually. ART was fully implemented by trained FRA staff following the completion of master trainer certification, adding a new evidence-based intervention addressing aggression and prosocial development.	

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditure	Expenditures Consistent with the Plan
D. Healthy Adolescent Development	$875,847	Yes
Describe why the expenditures were or were not consistent with the plan	The expenditures focused on two areas: 1) Education, including creating dedicated educational spaces and upgrading facilities to include technology access (e.g., secure platforms for coursework), overcoming current physical constraints like limited classrooms, and expanding post-secondary education opportunities, and 2) Enhancing youth-centered programming and services that foster healthy adolescent development.	
Describe how the expenditures improved outcomes	Three high school youth were dual-enrolled in both high school and college classes, 17 high-school graduates were enrolled into a two-year college. [redacted] graduates were enrolled in 4-year universities, [redacted] of which were stepped-down to a university campus. Additional classrooms and learning spaces were opened for youth to access to facilities continued learning. Additional program, as specified in Part 3 above, were initiated or expanded (e.g., Blue Water Saining, Youth Advisory Council, Career Technical Education, and the incentive programs) to provide youth with multiple outlets to be creative, support their multidimensional development, and take a more holistic approach at preparing these youth for successful reentry. Fourteen young people served, 3,089 hours of paid work at $20/hour, totaling $89,581. In addition, these young people were able to get critical documents such as birth certificates and social security cards, and were able to set up bank accounts to receive these funds.	

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditure	Expenditures Consistent with the Plan
E. Family Engagement	$24,972	Yes
Describe why the expenditures were or were not consistent with the plan	As specified in the 2024 plan, family engagement is a key component to successful reentry of youth to the community. Ongoing family involvement, connection, and support are prioritized. This includes expanded virtual visits, tablet voice calls, in-person family engagement nights, and family engagement activities which promote continued connection between young people and the families or supportive individuals they have identified.	
Describe how the expenditures improved outcomes	There were 52 family engagement nights where families and youth were able to bond over a meal with both structured activities and free time in a private space allowing for extended bonding time. There were 7 special events (e.g., graduations, art night, shows, etc.) in which families were invited to the facilities to enjoy activities with their young people and to support their accomplishments. Bi-weekly Family Check-ins were implemented to strengthen family engagement and improve communication regarding youth progress. FRA staff provide updates to families on programming and young people's progress. In addition, families are brough in as part of the Individual Rehabilitation Plan process in preparing a plan for young people to return their communities. During this reporting year, survey results showed high levels of satisfaction among families and youth regarding family engagement activities, communication, and feeling welcomed and included. In addition, the department has expended $85,000 addition dollars for young people's tablets which assist them in accessing written communication with families and provides video conferencing and voice calls with their families.	

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditure	Expenditures Consistent with the Plan
F. Reentry Planning and Linkage	$430,893	Yes
Describe why the expenditures were or were not consistent with the plan	Reentry planning is a critical part of the FRA model. The emphasis extends beyond safe and secure confinement to fostering vocational, life, and psychosocial maturity skills, as well as establishing positive connections and opportunities that contribute to long-term success post-release. Effective coordination across providers and in the community is key to promoting the successful return on young people to their communities.	
Describe how the expenditures improved outcomes	Probation continues to employ a full-time reentry services coordinator to evaluate, procure, and partner with various providers in establishing reentry services. Probation and ACBH continue to develop and implement various CalAIM initiatives that support reentry coordination and planning, including the development of formal 90-day pre-release plans and warm handoffs to various community-based programs and supports. [redacted] stepped down last year, including one to a institution for high-learning. In addition, the Safe Passages program has assisted [redacted] in stepping down to the community and provided wrap around support for them and their families. In addition, [redacted] continued employment in the community after stepping down.	

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditure	Expenditures Consistent with the Plan
G. Evidence-Based, Promising, Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Services	$612,000	Yes
Describe why the expenditures were or were not consistent with the plan	Alameda County is committed to implementing evidence-based and promising practices aligned with criminal justice principles of risk, need, and responsivity. Key evidence-based and trauma-informed programs address young people's risks and produce better outcomes. The expenditures were consistent with the plan as funds were used to implement evidence-based programming, including the Choices curriculum, Aggression Replacement Training (ART), and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) Interactive Journals for youth housed FRA.	
Describe how the expenditures improved outcomes	These expenditures improved outcomes by increasing access to structured cognitive-behavioral programming designed to address thinking errors, anger management, and pro-social skill development. As a result of implementing these services, the young people in the FRA experienced a noticeable decrease in behavioral incidents and an overall stabilization of the unit's culture. Youth engagement in structured programming increased, contributing to a safer and more therapeutic environment for both youth and staff.	
Expenditure Category	**Total Expenditure**	**Expenditures Consistent with the Plan**
H. Nongovernmental or Community-Based Providers	$1,663,756.00	Yes
Describe why the expenditures were or were not consistent with the plan	Alameda County has built a strong network of community-based providers over the years, which it continues to leverage to meet specific youth needs, including reentry support, educational, vocational, employment, mental health and other services or supports as needed. These partnerships leverage the expertise, cultural relatability, and flexibility of CBOs to complement County-led efforts.	
Describe how the expenditures improved outcomes	Reference Table 15. The Firm Roots Academy added five additional services providers to provide programming.	

Appendix A: Firm Roots Academy Daily Schedule – Calendar Week of 3/22/2026

AM Shift	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00 – 7:30	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change
7:30 – 8:00	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning
8:00 – 8:30	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:30 – 10:00	Staff Led Programming: Goal Setting	Large Muscle Exercise: DSAL	DSAL/Gym/In person B-Ball Class	DSAL (Gym or Blacktop)	Large Muscle Exercise: DSAL	Large Muscle Exercise: DSAL	Right of Passage: Group Circle
10:00 – 10:30	Staff Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break
10:30 – 12:00	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	High School / College	High School / College /	High School / College	High School / College	High School / College	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30 – 1:00	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break
1:00 – 2:30	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	High School / College /CTWI 1-3 p	High School / College/ CTWI 1-3 p	High School / College/Last Mile 1-5 p	High School / College/Last Mile 1-5p	High School / College Last Mile 1-5 p	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong
2:30	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change

Firm Roots Academy Daily Schedule – Calendar Week of 3/22/2026

PM Shift	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3:00 – 3:30	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change
3:30 – 3:35	Community Check-In	Community Check-In	Community Check-In	Community Check-In	Community Check-In	Community Check-In	Community Check-In
3:35 – 4:35	Life Skills Workshop	MC3 Program / Family Springs Individual Sessions / ART	Journaling / OTTP Therapy (Alina)	Airballing / Journaling / OTTP Therapy (Alina)	Journaling / Music Program (Bi-Weekly)	GROW Program Individual Sessions /	Stress Management Workshop
4:35 – 5:35	Large Muscle Exercise	Large Muscle Exercise	Large Muscle Exercise	Large Muscle Exercise	Large Muscle Exercise	Large Muscle Exercise	Large Muscle Exercise
5:35 – 6:00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
6:00 – 6:30	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break
6:30 – 7:30	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong/ ART	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong
7:30 – 8:30	Showers	Showers	Showers	Showers	Showers	Showers	Showers
9:00 – 9:30	Incentive Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Incentive Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Incentive Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Incentive Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Incentive Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Incentive Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong	Incentive Recreation: Free Phones, Gold Room, Ping Pong
9:30 – 10:00	Group Secure / Staff Break	Group Secure / Staff Break	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change
10:00 – 11:00	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management

Appendix B: ACOE Post-Secondary Program Schedule

Spring 2026

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-10	**College Lab**	**College Lab**	**College Lab**	**College Lab**	**College Lab**
10:30-12:00	**College Lab**	**Culinary** **Professor: Streeter**	**Culinary** **Professor: Streeter**	**College Lab**	**College Lab**
1:00-2:30	**College Lab**	**College Lab**	**College Lab**	**College Lab**	**College Lab**
		Other Programming: **Golf:** **Gym:**	**Other Programming:** **Air Balling:** **Gym:**	**Other Programming:** **Golf:** **Gym:** **Therapy:**	
2:00-5:00	**UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies** **Professor: Robinson** **Location: Camp Library**				**CTWI (MC3):** **Instructor:** **Students:**

Appendix C: Camp Sweeney Programming Schedule

Weekly Program and Activity Calendar Week of: 03/08/2026 – AM Shift

AM Shift	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00 – 7:30	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change
7:30 – 8:00	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning	Community Check-In/Room Cleaning
8:00 – 8:30	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:30 – 10:00	Open Recreation	Library Open / Butler Academy School	Library Open / Butler Academy School	Library Open / Butler Academy School	Library Open / Butler Academy School	Library Open / Butler Academy School	Open Recreation
10:00 – 10:30	Staff Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break / School Break	Staff Break
10:30 – 1:00	Large Muscle Exercise / Raising Leaders / Open Recreation	High School / College / Culinary Program	High School / College / Golf Program / Culinary Program / Raising Leaders	High School / College / OTTP Services (12:30p-1:30p) / Culinary Program / Raising Leaders	High School / College / Golf Program / Raising Leaders	High School / College	Large Muscle Exercise / Open Recreation / Visiting
1:00 – 1:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:30	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break
2:00	Open Recreation	Large Muscle Program / Open Recreation	Open Recreation / Large Muscle Program	Culinary Program / Airballin / Large Muscle Program	Large Muscle Program / Open Recreation	CTWI (2:00p-3:00p)	Open Recreation
2:30	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change

Weekly Program and Activity Calendar Week of: 03/08/2026 – PM Shift

PM Shift	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3:00 – 3:30	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change	Shift Change
3:30 – 4:30	Open Recreation / Large Muscle Exercise	G.R.O.W	Open Recreation / R.O.P	Large Muscle Exercise / RJOY	Open Recreation / Success Team Meeting / Dope Era Studio / Sailing Program	Open Recreation / CTWI	Open Recreation / Religious Services
5:00 – 5:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
5:30 – 6:00	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break	Staff Break
6:00 – 7:30	Open Recreation / Raising Leaders	Open Recreation / Incentive Store / Raising Leaders	Open Recreation / Emotional Intelligence / Raising Leaders	Open Recreation / Raising Leaders / Visiting	Open Recreation / Raising Leaders / Dope Era Studio	Open Recreation / Large Muscle Exercise / Raising Leaders	Open Recreation / Raising Leaders
7:30 – 8:30	Showers	Showers	Showers	Showers	Showers	Showers	Showers
9:00 – 9:30	Open Recreation	Open Recreation	Open Recreation	Open Recreation	Open Recreation	Open Recreation	Open Recreation
9:30 – 10:00	Group Secure / Staff Break	Group Secure / Staff Break	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change	Group Secure / Shift Change
10:00 – 11:00	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management	Staff Duties / Case Management

Appendix D: YLS/CMI Assessment Scores, 2022-2025

2025 quarterly YLS/CMI data has been incorporated into the main body of the plan (Table 13a and Table 13b). The 2022–2024 annual YLS/CMI tables from the 2025 approved plan are retained below for reference.

Table 24. 2022 - YLS/CMI Assessment Scores (N=46)

YLS/CMI Domain	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Average	Mode Level
Offenses/Dispositions	0	17	4	3	3.2	High
Family/Parenting	0	7	11	6	3.5	Moderate
Education/Employment	0	12	6	6	3.0	High
Peer Relations	0	18	6	0	3.5	High
Substance Abuse	0	8	13	3	1.8	Moderate
Leisure/Recreation	0	21	1	2	2.2	High
Personality/Behavior	0	7	17	0	3.6	Moderate
Attitudes/Orientation	0	8	14	2	3.0	Moderate
Overall Score	0	15	7	2	23.9	High

**Averages taken out of 46 youth as one reassessment was not included.*

Table 25. 2023 - YLS/CMI Assessment Scores (N=37)

YLS/CMI Domain	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Average	Mode Level
Offenses/Dispositions	0	29	4	5	3.2	High
Family/Parenting	0	15	13	10	3.6	High
Education/Employment	0	20	10	8	3.1	High
Peer Relations	0	28	9	1	3.5	High
Substance Abuse	0	14	18	6	1.8	Moderate
Leisure/Recreation	0	33	1	4	2.2	High
Personality/Behavior	0	15	21	2	3.6	Moderate
Attitudes/Orientation	0	17	19	2	3.2	Moderate
Overall Score	4	18	13	3	24.3	High

**Averages taken out of 37 youth as one reassessment was not included.*

Table 26. 2024 - YLS/CMI Assessment Scores (N=46)

YLS/CMI Domain	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Average	Mode Level
Offenses/Dispositions	0	35	5	7	3.2	High
Family/Parenting	0	18	18	11	3.7	High/Mod
Education/Employment	0	24	15	8	3.2	High
Peer Relations	0	34	12	1	3.5	High
Substance Abuse	0	19	21	7	2.0	Moderate
Leisure/Recreation	0	41	2	4	2.2	High
Personality/Behavior	0	17	28	2	3.6	Moderate
Attitudes/Orientation	0	22	23	2	3.3	Moderate
Overall Score	5	21	18	3	24.5	High

**Averages taken out of 46 youth as one reassessment was not included.*

Appendix E: 2025 Data Collection Instruments

Survey Instruments

The following survey instruments were administered to four stakeholder groups as part of the 2025-2026 annual plan data collection process.

Youth Survey Instrument (December 2025, N=16)

This survey was administered to 16 Firm Roots Academy young people in December 2025. Young people rated each statement on a 5-point agreement scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). Items related to satisfaction with programs and services were rated on a 5-point agreement scale as well (1=Very Dissatisfied to 5=Very Satisfied), with the option to indicate N/A if the young person had not participated in that program or service.

Domain: Learning

Q1. Firm Roots helps me understand myself.

Q2. I get to try new things and learn new skills.

Domain: Staff

Q3. Firm Roots staff (assigned probation/unit staff) support me when I need help.

Q4. I can talk to Firm Roots staff if I have a problem.

Q5. Community staff (medical, education, college) support me when I need help.

Q6. I can talk to community staff if I have a problem.

Domain: Environment

Q7. The rules here are clear to me.

Q8. I feel safe where I stay and spend time.

Domain: Connections

Q9. I get along well with other youth.

Q10. My family supports me while I'm here.

Domain: Skills

Q11. I have improved how I communicate with others.

Q12. I can solve problems and manage conflict better.

Domain: Readiness

Q13. I learned skills to get a job or continue school.

Q14. I feel ready to return to my community.

Q15. I feel confident and hopeful about my future.

Domain: Open-Ended

Q16. What is your favorite part of Firm Roots? [Open-ended response]

Q17. What are the biggest problems you have had in Firm Roots? [Open-ended response]

Domain: Satisfaction with Programs and Services

Q18. How satisfied are you with...Facilities

Q19. How satisfied are you with...Mental Health & Wellness

Q20. How satisfied are you with...Academic Program

Q21. How satisfied are you with...Aggression Replacement Training (ART)

Q22. How satisfied are you with...CHOICES

Q23. How satisfied are you with...Interactive Journaling

Q25. How satisfied are you with...Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) Program / Construction Trades & Workforce Innovation (CTWI)
Q26. How satisfied are you with...Credible Messengers
Q27. How satisfied are you with...Rites of Passage (ROP)
Q28. How satisfied are you with...Deputy Sheriff's Activities League (DSAL)
Q29. How satisfied are you with...Arts & Music
Q30. How satisfied are you with...Family Dinner Nights

Domain: Open-Ended (continued)

Q31. Which program or activity is the most helpful for you? [Open-ended response]
Q32. What other programs or services would you like to have? [Open-ended response]
Q33. Do you have any other suggestions to improve Firm Roots in the future? [Open-ended response]

Family Survey Instrument (December 2025, N=3)

This survey was administered to 3 families representing 5 individuals of Firm Roots Academy youth in December 2025. Families rated each statement on a 5-point agreement scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree).

Domain: Information and Communication

Q1. I feel informed about my child's goals and progress with Firm Roots.
Q2. I understand what programs or services my child is participating in.
Q3. Staff communicate with me regularly.
Q4. Staff communicate with me respectfully.
Q5. I know who to contact when I have questions about my child's care.

Domain: Engagement and Inclusion

Q6. I have opportunities to share my input about my child's care and services.
Q7. I feel welcomed and included in meetings or activities for families.
Q8. Staff listen to and value my family's perspectives.
Q9. Firm Roots supports my family's needs (such as transportation, scheduling, language translation).

Domain: Hopes for the Future

Q10. I have seen my child grow or make positive changes while in the program.
Q11. I believe my child is getting the skills and support they need to succeed after release.
Q12. I feel prepared to support my child when they come home.
Q13. I feel hopeful about my child's future after leaving Firm Roots Academy.

Domain: Open-Ended

Q14. What has been most helpful for your family while your child has been at Firm Roots Academy? [Open-ended response]
Q15. What has been hardest about staying involved or connected? [Open-ended response]
Q16. What would make it easier for families to be more engaged in the future? [Open-ended response]

Staff Survey Instrument (December 2025, N=12)

This survey was administered to 12 ACPD staff in December 2025. Staff rated each statement on a 5-point agreement scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree).

Domain: Understanding and Alignment

Q1. I understand the goals of the SB 823 Realignment Model in Alameda County.

Q2. I feel knowledgeable about practices and approaches used at Firm Roots Academy (restorative justice, trauma-informed care, etc.).

Domain: Training and Support

Q3. I have received adequate information and training about SB 823 and Firm Roots Academy.

Q4. I have opportunities for ongoing professional development on youth justice and rehabilitative practices.

Domain: Communication and Collaboration

Q5. Communication between probation, education, and service providers is effective.

Q6. Collaboration among staff at different levels (line staff, supervisors, management) is strong.

Q7. I understand the roles of other agencies (ACOE, ACBH, DSAL, RJOY, etc.) involved in youth care.

Domain: Facility Operations and Safety

Q8. The daily operations at Firm Roots run smoothly and support a safe environment.

Q9. Staffing levels are adequate to maintain safety and meet youth needs.

Q10. I feel confident in managing safety incidents, crises, or challenging situations.

Domain: Youth Experience and Program Quality

Q11. I feel that our programs meet the needs of the youth we serve.

Q12. Youth are treated fairly and respectfully within our facilities and programs.

Domain: Open-Ended

Q13. What is working well in the current model of care and supervision at Firm Roots? [Open-ended response]

Q14. What difficulties or challenges have affected your ability to meet youth needs? [Open-ended response]

Q15. What would help you feel more supported or effective in your role? [Open-ended response]

Partner Survey Instrument (January 2026, N=16)

This survey was administered to 16 community-based organization partners in January 2026. Partners rated each statement on a 5-point agreement scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree).

Domain: Understanding and Alignment

Q1. I understand the goals and intended outcomes of the SB 823 Realignment model.

Q2. My organization's role and responsibilities within the SB 823 partnership are clear.

Domain: Capacity and Support

Q3. Our organization has the staffing, resources, and capacity to meet the needs of youth at Firm Roots Academy.

Q4. We receive adequate support from ACPD to carry out our role effectively.

Domain: Communication and Collaboration

Q5. Communication with ACPD staff is consistent, timely, and effective.

Q6. Coordination among partner agencies (ACOE, DSAL, RJOY, ACBH, etc.) supports smooth service delivery.

Q7. Referral and handoff processes between partners work well.

Domain: Data and Reporting

Q8. Expectations for data sharing and reporting are clear and manageable.

Q9. I have the information I need from ACPD to report accurately and on time.

Q10. I understand the roles of other agencies (ACOE, ACBH, DSAL, RJOY, etc.) involved in youth care.

Domain: Program Quality and Youth Outcomes

Q11. Youth are receiving the right mix of services (education, mental health, skill building, etc.) to support their success.

Q12. Collaboration among partners helps improve outcomes for youth and families.

Q13. Programs across providers reflect trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate practices.

Domain: Open-Ended

Q14. What's working well in your collaboration with ACPD and other partners? [Open-ended response]

Q15. What challenges or barriers have you experienced in implementing your program or services? [Open-ended response]

Q16. What improvements would strengthen coordination or lead to better youth outcomes? [Open-ended response]

Focus Group and Interview Guides

The following interview and focus group guides were used during primary data collection in December 2025 and January 2026. Questions were designed to capture youth, family, staff, and partner perspectives across key areas of program implementation.

Youth Focus Group Guide (December 2025)

Four focus groups conducted with Firm Roots Academy young people (n=16 across Camp Sweeney and Juvenile Hall units).

Opening

Q1. Share one thing you like about Firm Roots.

Q2. If you could change one thing to make Firm Roots better for youth, what would it be?

Learning and Growth

Q3. What kinds of classes, programs, or activities have helped you the most?

Q4. Are you learning things that matter for your future? What kinds of things?

Q5. What would help you stay motivated to learn or to try new things?

Q6. What other classes, programs, or activities would be useful to you?

Environment and Space

Q7. What do you think about the space here—where you live, study, and hang out?

Q8. Do you feel safe here most of the time? What helps you feel safe or unsafe?

Q9. What helps make the environment feel positive? What could make it better?

Respect and Relationships

Q10. Do you feel respected and supported by staff? Why or why not?

Q11. How can staff and youth show more respect for each other?

Q12. How do youth treat each other? How could that be improved?

Family and Connection

Q13. How often do you talk or meet with family or friends?

Q14. What helps you stay connected to people you care about?

Q15. What could make it easier for families to stay involved?

Future Goals

Q16. Have you talked about your plans for when you leave here?

Q17. What kind of help do you think you'll need to do well when you go home or to the community?

Q18. What are your hopes for the future?

Recommendations

Q19. If you could tell leaders one thing to make Firm Roots better, what would it be?

Q20. What else could Firm Roots do to make your experience here more positive?

Family Interview Guide (December 2025)

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with families (5 individuals) of Firm Roots Academy young people.

Opening

Q1. Please share one thing you like about Firm Roots.

Q2. If you could change one thing to make Firm Roots better for young people, what would it be?

Information and Communication

Q3. How do you usually find out what's happening with your child?

Q4. What makes communication easy, or hard, with staff?

Q5. What would help communication between staff and families feel more respectful or consistent?

Engagement and Inclusion

Q6. Do you feel included in decision-making about your child's care? When decisions are made, do you feel like your input is heard?

Q7. How do staff treat families? What recommendations would you have? How well do staff understand or respect your family's culture, language, or traditions?

Q8. If you could change one thing to make family engagement better, what would it be?

Support and Access

Q9. What kinds of support or help have been most helpful to your family while your child has been at Firm Roots?

Q10. Are there things that make it harder for you or your family to get involved (timing, trust, past experiences)?

Q11. What would make families feel more respected or included in Firm Roots' programs or meetings?

Hopes for the Future

Q12. What kinds of things do you think your child has learned here that will help them when they come home? Have you noticed any changes?

Q13. How prepared do you feel as a parent or caregiver for your child's return? What would help you feel more ready?

Recommendations

Q14. If you could tell leaders one thing to make Firm Roots better, what would it be?

Q15. What message would you want to share with staff or partners who help families like yours?

Q16. What else could Firm Roots do to make your child's and your experience more positive?

Staff Focus Group Guide (December 2025)

One focus group was conducted with ACPD staff working at Firm Roots Academy (n=11).

Opening

Q1. Share one word that describes your experience working with Firm Roots this year.

Understanding and Alignment

Q2. How well do you feel you understand the goals and purpose of the SB 823 Realignment Model?

Q3. What parts of the plan or model are clearest to you? What parts are still confusing?

Q4. How well do you feel your role connects to long-term youth development and reentry goals?

Training and Support

Q5. What training has been most helpful? What training or support is still missing?

Q6. Do you feel you have the staffing and resources you need to work effectively? Why or why not?

Q7. What would help you feel more supported or better prepared in your role?

Communication and Collaboration

Q8. How effective is communication between ACPD and education, mental health, and community-based partners?

Q9. What helps collaboration go well? What creates challenges?

Q10. How does communication flow between line staff, supervisors, and management? What could improve?

Q11. How well do MDTs support coordination and planning for youth?

Facility Operations and Safety

Q12. How would you describe the overall safety and environment at Firm Roots Academy?

Q13. Do you feel adequately trained and supported during safety incidents or crises?

Q14. What is working well in daily operations?

Q15. What operational challenges make your job harder or affect youth wellbeing?

Youth Experience and Program Quality

Q16. From your perspective, what programs or services are having the strongest impact on youth?

Q17. Where do you see gaps? What programming do youth need but don't have enough of?

Q18. What helps youth succeed here? What gets in the way?

Recommendations

Q19. If you could recommend ONE change to strengthen the model of care at Firm Roots Academy, what would it be?

Partner Focus Group/Interview Guide (January 2026)

One focus group and one individual interview were conducted with community-based organization partners and service providers (n=11).

Opening

Q1. Please share your name and your organization's connection to SB 823 and Firm Roots Academy.

Q2. What's one word to describe your collaboration this past year?

Partnership and Coordination

Q3. What is working well in how partners coordinate services?

Q4. Where do communication or referrals break down?

Q5. How clear are roles between ACPD, ACOE, ACBH, and CBO partners?

Q6. How has coordination changed or improved since last year?

Capacity and Support

Q7. What resources or staff capacity challenges affect your work?

Q8. What support from ACPD would make your role easier or more effective?

Q9. How could partners better sequence services or coordinate schedules?

Q10. What additional training, tools, or shared practices would help?

Program Impact and Youth Needs

Q11. Do you feel youth are getting the services they need when they need them?

Q12. Where do you see service gaps or unmet needs?

Q13. How well do services align with trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches?

Q14. What improvements would help youth progress or meet their goals?

Recommendations

Q15. If you could recommend ONE thing to strengthen SB 823 collaboration, what would it be?

Appendix F: SB 823 Quarterly Data Reports (Q1-Q4 2025)

Complete quarterly data reports for all four quarters of 2025 are maintained by the ACPD Research & Evaluation Unit and are available upon request.