

**VENTURA COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY
PREVENTION COMMISSION (“JJDPC”)**

**DECEMBER 2019 INSPECTION REPORT OF VENTURA COUNTY’S PROBATION
AGENCY JUVENILE FACILITIES COMPLEX**

Inspection Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2019

Last Ventura County JJDPC Inspection Date: December 4, 2018

Facility Address: 4333 Vineyard Avenue, Oxnard, CA 93036, (805) 981-5527

Ventura County Probation Association (“VCPA”) Chief Deputy Juvenile Services:
Tim Dowler

Division Manager: Michelle Steinberger

Names of Management/Staff Interviewed: Supervising Deputy Probation Officer Mike L’Ecuyer, Corrections Services Officer III Rebecca Jimenez

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge: Judge Tari Cody

JJDPC Inspection Team Commissioners: Erin Antrim, Diana Casey, Daisalyn Chan, Cheryl A. De Bari, Esq., Kate English (Chair), Bernard Korenstein, Jennifer Lopardo, Joseph Ortiz, Gina Petrus, Ph.D., Valerie Salazar. For the purposes of this report, “The Commission.”

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF INSPECTION

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission (“JJDPC”) is authorized through the provisions of section 226 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code, et. seq. The responsibilities of this Commission are broadly defined in sections 229 and 233, and the standards set forth by the California Board of State and Community Corrections. The general purpose of the Commission is to “inquire into the administration of the juvenile court law in the county” (section 229) and “coordinate on a countywide basis the work of those community agencies engaged in activities designed to prevent delinquency” (section 233).

The Ventura County JJDPC conducted its annual inspection of the Ventura County Juvenile Facilities Complex (“Juvenile Facility”) for 2019 on December 3, 2019, in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 229 and Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations, “Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities.” The JJDPC concludes that the residents seem to be well supervised in a safe and secure

environment. The JJDPC feels that, based on this inspection, the Ventura County Juvenile Facility meets Title 15 standards for a safe juvenile facility.

II. COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The JJDPC makes the following Commendations and Recommendations:

Commendations

1. The facility appeared clean, orderly, and in good repair.
2. Staff appeared to be professional and dedicated to the youth.
3. VCPA staff was accommodating both before and during the Commission's inspection and answered all asked questions and concerns and presented all requested documentation.
4. All records presented to the Commission were detailed and thorough.
5. Noted some beneficial programs are offered to the youth.
6. Staff interviewed reported a high level of support from supervisors.
7. The facility received a full two-year accreditation for health care.
8. VCPA has focused on growing its youth library.
9. There is a new de-escalation room with a variety of materials/objects for sensory input and self-regulation. Staff is currently being trained on how to use the room.

Recommendations

1. The Commission recommends making available online college access. JJDPC is aware that VCPA & VCOE have been actively pursuing secondary education as well as a goal of a college career center. Currently the Commission is not aware of any on-site or online college courses being offered to these youth. The Commission interviewed youth who had completed high school and expressed that unlike youth attending Providence School, they experienced a lot of unproductive down time. Youth we spoke with indicated an interest in taking college courses. JJDPC suggests further and detailed exploration of collaboration with the Ventura County Community College District, California State Community College District and/or Ventura County Office of Education to create this access.
2. The Commission recommends gender-based programming be reinstated and recognizes that VCPA has placed two public RFPs to attempt to meet this need and is currently working on a contract with a community based organization. The Commission encourages VCPA to continue to pursue this type of programming.

III. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS FROM TOUR OF FACILITIES

1. The facility is clean and well maintained (indoors and outdoors).
2. Youth are appropriately dressed and groomed.
3. There are a variety of spaces available for indoor and outdoor recreation, including gyms, a soccer field, and an equestrian therapy field.
4. The facility includes areas for dog training/boarding, library, construction classroom, silk screening, and a garden.
5. There is a large workspace for implementation of Paxton Patterson construction education. That workspace is used for dog house construction that complements canine therapy, the Pawsitive Steps Program (see below), and training/boarding programs.
6. Staff were observed actively interacting with the youth.

IV. 2019 GENERAL INFORMATION

Facility Capacity: 420

Number of Suicides: 0

Number of Attempted Suicides: 0

Number of Deaths from Other Causes: 0

Population

2019 Total Admissions/Bookings: 1108 (Number includes all youth bookings whether resulting in release or detention. Includes duplicated youth)

Maximum Census: 96 (July)

Minimum: 55 (January)

Population on December 3, 2019 Inspection Date:

Detention: Males: 32 Females: 7

Commitment: Males: 27 Females: 7

Communication

Communication is made available in language the youth can understand and materials are available in Spanish. Other language interpreting is available through a call-in translation service.

V. FACILITIES

The Juvenile Facility includes housing, outdoor recreation areas for both detention and commitment programs, a multipurpose gymnasium/technology training center, a visiting center, medical offices and examination rooms, an intake/community classrooms, confinement/booking area, program and facility administration offices, kitchen, and laundry services. The Ventura County Juvenile Courthouse is located adjacent.

Interior of Buildings

In 2019, the following modifications/ improvements were made:

1. New Carpet installed in the following areas:
 - a. Program Administration
 - b. CSO III and DPO offices in Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa
 - c. Muster Briefing
2. Repainted areas:
 - a. Balcom 1, 2, and 3
 - b. Muster Briefing
 - c. Booking
 - d. Central Control
3. Window tint added to windows above accordion doors in:
 - a. Matilija
 - b. Sycamore
4. Three additional Bosch (BVMS) viewing stations added to Program Admin SDPO offices
5. Booking phone added to the booking area
6. Baby changing tables added to the Men's and Women's lobby restrooms

Grounds

1. In 2019, the following modifications/improvements were made:
 - a. Detention recreation yard rodent elimination,
 - b. Rubber mulch added to the parcouse
2. Rubber mulch added to the commitment recreation yard planters;
3. Dead tree removal and tree trimming.

VI. STAFFING

Total Staff:	2019: 142	Number of sworn staff:	101
	2018: 140	Number of sworn staff:	110

The total numbers include support staff, kitchen, and laundry staff. They do not include Behavioral Health, Medical, or Providence School staff.

Staff Development

No new staff or special training programs were instituted during the 2019 inspection year. Staff are trained on trauma informed approaches and LGBTQ+ cultural sensitivity.

Staff Feedback

Interviewed staff verbally reported a high level of support from supervisors. Some concerns included:

1. Scheduling and attending training classes is an issue due to current staffing levels.
2. Staff could benefit from additional mental health and trauma training.
3. Additional debriefings after incidents could be beneficial and provide additional support. It would also be helpful to have input by appropriate staff not impacted by the incident.

VII. PROGRAMS

Cognitive behavior therapy programming is provided by VCPA staff and community-based organizations. These programs include gang intervention, problem solving/social skills, tolerance building, parenting classes, tutoring, anger management, substance abuse counseling, chess, music, exercise, yoga, and dance. A gender specific program for females was in place during the year but had been discontinued at the time of inspection.

VIII. MEDICAL SERVICES

The California Forensic Medical Group provides medical services under contract with the County. All youth receive an annual physical.

Each time the youth are booked in they are seen by Medical Services within 48 hours or sooner if needed. Youth fill out a kite/sick call request for any medical complaints during confinement.

Vision

All youth receive an annual physical with Medical Services, including a Snelling chart visual screening. All youth who are detained for one year or longer receive an Optometry exam.

Dental

Dental services are provided twice per month by Well Path.

Accreditation

The Accreditation Report to the Corrections and Detentions Health Care Committee for the Ventura County Juvenile Detention Facility dated July 20, 2018 was reviewed in detail. The Report was performed by a survey team consisting of: John Loofbourow, MD (Lead, Medical), Kathleen Braman, RN, MN, CCRN (Admin), and Terri Franklin, LCSW (Mental Health). The recommendations that pertained to written charts have been addressed by the facility utilizing a new computer system for documentation. All Essential and Important Standards were met, and the facility received a full two-year accreditation. Focus for next year will be the latest implementation of Title 15 standards and follow up on any recommendations made in the 2020 accreditation.

IX. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Mental health services are provided by The Ventura County Behavioral Health Department. The Clinic Administrator is Laura Nagle.

Youth participate in individual, group, family therapy and case management services. Based on information provided by the Supervising Deputy Probation Officer. There are 8 clinicians assigned to the juvenile facility (including the Clinic Administrator) and 1 psychiatrist (2 days per week).

Youth may request behavioral health services.

Special Services Reviewed

Various programs are available. Services discussed during the Inspection included:

1. Moral Reconciliation Therapy (“MRT”): MRT is a systematic, cognitive-behavioral approach that treats a wide range of issues including substance abuse, domestic violence, trauma, parenting, job skills, and other issues. The programs are implemented in groups utilizing workbooks directly targeting specific issues. MRT seeks to decrease recidivism among both juvenile and adult criminal offenders by increasing moral reasoning.
2. Insights Court Program: In order to meet the needs of juvenile offenders with sustained mental health diagnoses who do not respond well to traditional rehabilitation programs and, therefore, repeatedly cycle through custodial facilities or group homes. Additionally, these youth often display significant substance abuse issues. The Insights Court Team is multi-disciplinary and provides intensive case management services. It has representatives of The Ventura County Superior Court, Ventura County Probation Department, District Attorney’s Office, Public Defender’s Office, Ventura County Behavioural Health, and The Ventura County Office of Education. Eligibility requirements include, but are not limited to, youth who have a significant mental health diagnoses resulting in impaired functioning, law enforcement contact, and/or delinquent conduct. By focusing on the special needs of this target population, Insights Court team members collaboratively develop individualized case plans and establish support systems in the community to prevent out-of-home placements and hospitalizations.
3. Pawsitive Steps: The Pawsitive Steps program offers last-chance Ventura County shelter dogs and at-risk youth an opportunity to work together toward mutual rehabilitation. The program is designed to save shelter dogs and change the lives of at-risk youth.

Sex Offender Treatment

Treatment for sex offenders is provided by a contracted agency, Anew Therapeutic Services, Inc., Director: Leesi Herman. The onsite therapist is Jordan Good. The organization’s website states:

The focus of our work at Anew Therapeutic Services, Inc., is determining and understanding risk and protective factors for the perpetration of sexual violence by our clients. If we can understand why our clients have committed offenses, what factors put them at risk for recidivating, and what elements of their lives and character may help to prevent them from offending again, we can help to stop them from creating more victims.

Substance Abuse Treatment

Ventura County Alcohol and Drug Program (“ADP”) is available 1 time per week in a group format and 1 time per week individual.

X. EDUCATION

Educational programming includes Providence School, an accredited school program administered by the Ventura County Office of Education. Youth currently do not have access to online college courses.

XI. MEALS AND NUTRITION

Meals are provided three times a day, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. At least two meals a day include hot entrees and side dishes. New to Title 15 in January 2019, a snack is given to all youth two to four hours after the dinner meal service. Like the two snacks provided daily during mid-morning and mid- afternoon, all snacks consist of whole grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

Civilian staff prepare and cook meals in accordance with Title 15 for Juveniles and the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program (Healthy Kids Act 2012) nutritional requirements. A five-week cycle menu is followed to help meet budget requirements and consistency. As of this year, qualified youth are transporting meal carts to and from the housing units, giving them a chance to be a responsible part of the food service operation.

The meals are pre-portioned by trained food service staff onto insulated trays and promptly transported to the housing units. Modified medically prescribed diets are approved by a dietician and procedures are in place to make sure that youth receive the correct modified meal. Many meals are made from scratch with most breads, rice and pasta being whole grain. Fresh fruit and vegetables are given daily in addition to a wide variety of kid friendly entrées. Most recipes and processed items are made to be low in fat, sugars, and sodium. No trans fats or fried food are served.

Food and supplies are bought from approved County vendors, received and rotated by trained staff. Daily meetings with all food service staff keep everyone up to date on medical diets, changes in requirements, and creates a more efficient operation. Training

for food safety, customer service, workplace safety, and teamwork are held regularly, in addition to the required County training.

XII. BOOKING ORIENTATION

An orientation video is shown to all incoming youth into booking, including returning youth. Per Title 15 changes, New Youth Rights are given to all youth, as is a Parents' Handbook. The orientation process is available in multiple languages.

XIII. RULES AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

There were 161 grievances/appeals filed from January 1, 2019 - November 22, 2019. There were no changes to the grievance procedures in 2019.

XIV. TELEPHONE, CORRESPONDENCE, VISITATION PROCEDURE

No changes were made to these procedures in 2019. They remain as follows:

Phone Calls

All youth receive a booking phone call to their parent/guardian, attorney and employer upon entering the facility. The youth can contact their attorney upon request. Behavioral level phone calls are granted upon earning specific levels weekly. Excellence level earns 3 level calls, Achievement earns 2 level calls. All other behavioral levels do not earn calls. Phone calls for levels calls are only to be made to those on the youth's approved list. Youth can use the pay phone in the units (which is funded by family members etc.). These phone calls can be made after school and during free time.

Mail

Youth receive paper and designated envelopes in the unit. They are allowed two stamps every week to send to approved people. Approved people include parents, grandparents, extended family, friends (who are not part of a non-associate list, or are on probation, or at a placement facility). If they receive additional stamps from a family member, they are permitted to use those in addition to the two they are provided from the JF. Each letter is screened by the unit staff for inappropriate (gang names or emblems, drawings or discussions about drugs, violence, sex or similar topics)

information. If this information is found, the letter is returned to the youth to fix. If the letter is approved, it is signed on the back by the unit staff and forwarded to the graveyard WC. The graveyard WC reviews the sending and receiving parties on each piece of mail to make sure the mail is authorized, enters the info into the youths' journal and places the postage on the envelope. All the outgoing mail is given to clerical to send out. Clerical provides the graveyard WC with the incoming mail. The WC screens it to make sure that the sending party is permitted, records it in the youths' journal and then routes the mail to the appropriate units.

Kites: Youth are provided with medical, behavioral health and probation kites that can be accessed at any time in the unit. The kites can be turned in to staff at the desk or placed in a confidential box on each unit. The CSO III's and WC's pick up the kites from the unit and route to the appropriate party. The kites are then handled in a timely manner by the appropriate party.

Visiting

Regular Visiting: The youth are allowed to visit with their parents and/or grandparents / guardians on Wednesdays and Sundays per the facility visiting schedule.

Special Visits: If the youth earns Excellence behavioral level, they can earn a Special Visit for Saturday for family (Siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles etc.). The youth put in a kite to the WC requesting who they want to have visit and their DOB's on Saturdays for the following Saturday special visit. All Special Visit visitors must be cleared by probation prior to being accepted. Once they are accepted, the WC enters the visit into the visiting tab and all visitors who are authorized. The kite is then sent back to the unit notifying the youth of the time of the visit (either 10:45 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.). The youth then contacts their parent to notify them of the special visit date and time. As long as the youth maintains excellence level, the visit will be permitted.

Treatment Provider or outside CBO Visits: If an outside treatment provider or CBO would like to come and visit the youth, they are asked to send an email to the PRB-JF Watch Commanders Outlook group. The WC then reviews the visit and clears the visitor. A DOB may be required to complete the screening. Once the visit is approved, it is entered into the visiting tab and an email reply is sent to the treatment provider / CBO, the PRB JF Watch Commander group, the PRB JF Reception group and the PRB JF Special Functions group.

XV. PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF YOUTH

Youth appeared appropriately dressed and groomed. A female youth requested access to eyebrow tweezing.

Youth are now issued their own underwear upon booking. They receive multiple pairs upon arrival that belong to them. Upon release, they will either be thrown away, or the youth has the option to take with them.


XVI CONCLUSION

The JJDPC concludes that the Juvenile Facility residents are well-supervised in a safe and secure environment. The JJDPC concludes that, based on this inspection, the Ventura County Juvenile Facility meets Title 15 standards for a safe juvenile facility.

This report will be sent to the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court, The California Board of State and Community Corrections, The Ventura County Chief Director/ Chief Probation Officer and The Ventura County Chief Deputy Juvenile Services. The report will also be made available online at the JJDPC website.

The JJDPC Plans to return again for next annual inspection in December 2020

Approved by The Ventura County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission on June 17th, 2020 at 12:43pm.



Date: 06/17/2020

Kate English, JJDPC Chairperson