



# County of Santa Cruz

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Probation Department

**JUVENILE JUSTICE CRIME PREVENTION ACT  
& YOUTHFUL OFFENDER BLOCK GRANT  
(JJCPA-YOBG)**

**FY 2024-2025  
CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PLAN**

# **JUVENILE JUSTICE CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PLAN**

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# JUVENILE JUSTICE CRIME PREVENTION ACT & YOUTHFUL OFFENDER BLOCK GRANT (JJCPA-YOBG)

## FY 2024-2025 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PLAN

### Part I. Service Needs, Priorities & Strategy

#### A. Assessment of Existing Services

*An assessment of existing law enforcement, probation, education, mental health, health, social services, drug and alcohol, and youth services resources that specifically target at-risk juveniles, youth on probation, and their families.*

The juvenile division of the probation department provides supervision services for young people who have encountered the juvenile justice system. Santa Cruz County has a wide array of services across the continuum with the primary focus centered on prevention, diversion, and intervention. The combination of these services has allowed young people and their families the ability to receive supportive services that are culturally responsive, increasing youth and family engagement, and creating opportunities for success.

Over the years Santa Cruz County Probation has shifted our approach to not solely focus on traditional supervision but most importantly focus on prevention and diversion efforts with an “upstream” approach to prevent a young person from being formally introduced into the juvenile justice system. The pivot focusing on diversion efforts to support young people and their families has received support from several grants projects, primarily from the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). Through these grants, the department has managed to sustain many of the resources which have proven to be successful and impactful in serving our community.

Many of the various initiatives have been spearheaded by many of our community-based organizations in partnership with probation, social services, behavioral health, and law enforcement. Leading the charge have been key CBO partners such as Community Action Board of Santa Cruz (CAB), Encompass Family Services, Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Services, Inc. (PVPSA), Conflict Resolution Center (CRC), and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE). In partnership with these organizations, they are actively involved in implementing and managing a focus which supports the diversion efforts for young people and their families. Most importantly, their delivery of services are tailored to connections and engagement with young people and their families.

One notable BSCC grant funded project was the creation of the Luna y Sol program which exemplifies the focus on connecting critical services to young people and families. This initiative helped establish a “Hub” focused on providing services to justice and non-justice involved youth and their families. The Hub is a one-stop location which is centrally located at the center of Watsonville. The Hub operates as a drop-in center from 3pm to 7pm, five days a week. When someone walks into the Hub they are welcomed in and supported by a staff member to assist youth and families in identifying needed services, utilizing assessment tools to assess their greatest need. Paths of support include academic support, job readiness, economic opportunities, civic engagement, and family strengthening. Parent

groups, such as Cara y Corazon in conjunction with Joven Noble for youth, provided enhanced support to strengthen family bonds.

The Hub is just one example of a place where a multitude of resources are offered. There are many other providers in the community who offer a tremendous number of resources and services including a dynamic array of assessments, ranging from risk and needs, substance use, trauma, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) to therapeutic intervention assessments. Additional resources include Parent Teen Mediation (PTM), Victim Offender Dialogue Program (VODP), Victim Awareness Education (VAE), Broad-based Apprehension, Suppression and Treatment (BASTA), County Office of Education (COE) Diversion, Alcance - employment services, WRAP/Fuerte, Aztecas, Caminos Diversion Program (WPD) and the Luna Evening Center. These are just some of the resources for young people and their families that promote family engagement and provide equitable opportunities that support well-being. All services can be provided in both English and Spanish.

In addition to the partners mentioned above we continue to have a strong partnership with local law enforcement agencies and our primary law enforcement partners continue to be the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, the City of Watsonville Police Department, and the City of Santa Cruz Police Department. The work being done in the county would not be possible without the support of the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office who also continues to be a partner on diversion services, and the Superior Court. Together, the staff that deliver the services and support young people and families in our county create a System of Care (SOC) that collectively is making a positive impact on the lives of so many in Santa Cruz County.

Approach used to facilitate collaboration amongst the organizations listed above and support the integration of services.

The Santa Cruz County Probation Department works closely with the partners listed in the previous section and there are many other partners who contribute to the well-being of the young people and their families in Santa Cruz County. Those partners include Barrios Unidos, United Way of Santa Cruz County, Food What, and Community Bridges. In addition to the many partners, there are also a wide array of initiatives underway in the county to support young people and their families. To increase our overall efficiency and offer the most resources possible, our county continues to look at ways to consolidate efforts.

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

As a result of this legislative directive, Santa Cruz County completed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) designed to ensure that all public programs for young people in Santa Cruz County will provide services in an integrated, comprehensive, culturally responsive,

trauma-informed, evidence-based/best practice manner, regardless of how young people enter the system. The MOU identified five primary partners: Santa Cruz County Probation Department, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (HSA), Santa Cruz County Human Services Department (HSD), San Andreas Regional Center (SARC), and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE). There are also two Advisory Members: Santa Cruz Superior Court and First 5 Santa Cruz County. This MOU was signed by the respective Department Heads in April of 2021.

The AB 2083 Interagency Leadership Team (ILT) continues to meet monthly to further the work identified in the MOU and have already seen several system improvements including the creation of a universal Release of Information (ROI) to be used between county agencies, created a process to allow CBH to share the information from the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment tool with FCS and Probation, and introduced the principles of the Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) to probation staff. Some other good examples of collaborative efforts being used across the system include, diversion efforts centered on equity and decreased reliance on incarceration, Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM), and the Stable Transitions After Reentry (STAR) grant project which has received grant funding for another two years.

In 2024, a primary focus for the ILT team will be collaborating on phase two of California's implementation of Family-Based Aftercare delivery of High-Fidelity Wraparound Services as outlined in the All-County Letter 21-116. The ILT team's monthly meetings further allow for on-going collaboration, planning and communication about the implementation and delivery of services to our young people and families. All these efforts rely on a "team approach" to identify and implement strategies to best serve young people.

## **B. Identifying and Prioritizing Focus Areas**

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

The population of Santa Cruz County is 280,980 with a juvenile population of 24,913 and most of these residents reside in three distinct areas of the county. These three areas are: North County, Mid County and South County. Probation caseloads, which consist of CAPS (Connecting and Promoting Success) and non-CAPS caseloads are represented as follows: South County 57%, Mid County 4%, North County 25%, and out-of-county 14%. As noted in the aforementioned data, most of the young people on probation reside in South County and most reside in the City of Watsonville, which is a community of 52,457 people. To provide context, South County is an underserved area of the county with many living in poverty and lacking equitable access to resources.

The current population of South County is represented as follows: 83% Latino, 13% white, 2% African American and 2% other /unknown. Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) is the largest school district in the county and several of the youth we serve come from their district. The County Office of Education also plays a significant role in working with young people who may be at risk as they provide several alternative school options throughout the county including South County. The data indicates that Latino youth in Santa Cruz County are 3 times more likely than White youth to be committed to Juvenile Hall. In 2023, Latino youth represented 72% of all bookings into juvenile hall and of those bookings, 54% were from Watsonville. Arrest data also indicates that a higher percentage of arrests involved Latino youth and 33% of all arrests in 2023 are youth from Watsonville.

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

The juvenile division’s concerted focus on being culturally responsive and ongoing reform efforts to reduce disparities and system engagement for youth of color aligns with the department’s Race Equity Initiative (REI) that was launched in 2021. Our REI prompts internal assessment of our supervision practices and highlights areas that can be improved upon to contribute to reducing disparate responses or outcomes for people of color. Additionally, the REI has resulted in the department’s shift to a “Coaching Model” with our supervision practices that launched in 2023. By improving our engagement with those we supervise and leveraging the Coaching Model, we will work to remove barriers, ensure we are providing equitable opportunities for successful outcomes and decreasing technical violations. The ultimate goal in our coaching model is to develop a strong connection with youth and families in which instead of youth running away from probation, they will be collaborating with probation to receive the support necessary to address their needs.

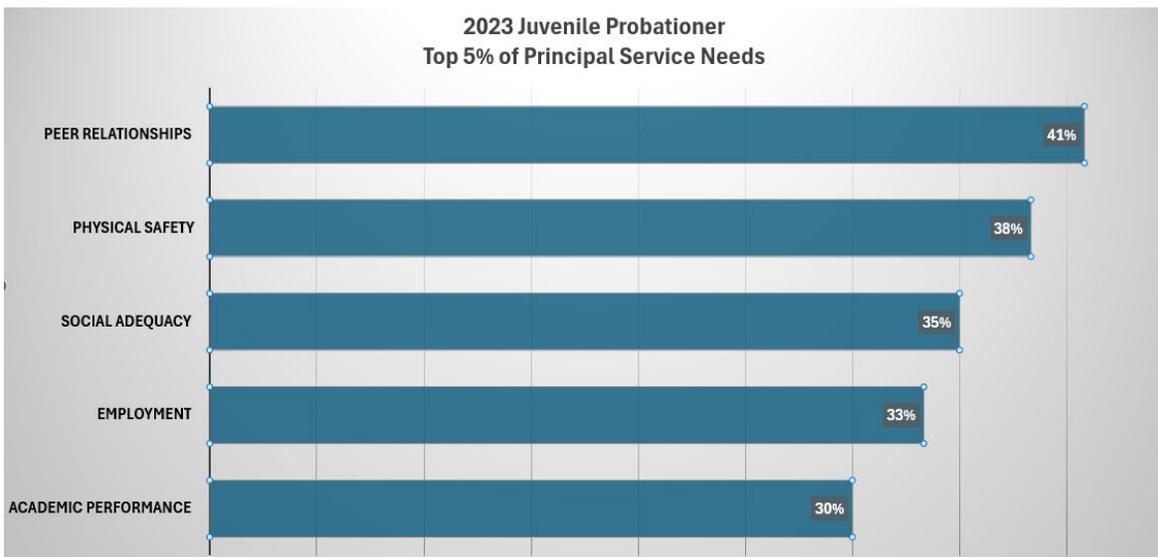
### **C. Juvenile Justice Action Strategy**

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

Since 1999, the Juvenile Division has led the way in reducing juvenile detention, serving as a model site for the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s (AECF) Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). This initiative aims to eliminate unnecessary detention, enhance data-driven decision-making, streamline court processing, establish risk-based detention criteria, expand community-based alternatives, improve confinement conditions, address disproportionate minority contact, and cater to the needs of special populations. Our division has hosted delegations from across the nation and globe to learn from our successful practices. In 2019, we were honored with the National JDAI Distinguished System Leadership Award.

Going forward, the Probation Department remains dedicated to upholding JDAI’s core strategies and advancing reform efforts. The department’s current strategy is moving “upstream” to have a more significant impact in diverting youth away from entering the juvenile justice system. An example of this has been through the continued efforts on diversion. In 2023, the department had an increase of 22% Latinx diversion. The focus is important as Latinx youth continue to be disproportionately represented in our justice system.

Focusing on diversion strategies, when possible, Santa Cruz County utilizes different assessment tools to inform case management decisions. These tools include the DRAI (Detention Risk Assessment Instrument) and the JAIS (Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System). The DRAI is a tool to make objective admissions to detention. The DRAI ensures that detention is used appropriately and that unnecessary or inappropriate uses of detention do not occur. The DRAI measures two forms of public safety risk: the risk to reoffend prior to the court hearing and the risk of failure to appear at a court hearing. The DRAI is linked to detention alternatives such as home supervision, electronic monitoring to include GPS tracking. The JAIS is a supervision model that builds rapport between a young person and a worker while bringing valuable information to the surface. At the heart of JAIS is a one-on-one conversation that focuses on who the young person is, particularly their underlying motivations for behavior.



Once a determination is made that a young person may not be eligible for diversion, there is the possibility they may be eligible for Informal Probation. If the young person is deemed ineligible for that option, then the matter is referred to the District Attorney’s Office to review for filing a petition. If a petition is filed, there are several options the court can consider including Court – Informal Probation, Deferred Entry of Judgement, six months without Wardship, and Wardship. If a youth is unable to complete the court ordered term of Probation, the next steps in the graduated continuum of care could include placement in an Intensive Foster Care Program, Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP), a commitment to a Ranch Camp, and finally a commitment to a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) pursuant to SB 823.

The Santa Cruz County Probation Department actively engages in the development and execution of the Santa Cruz County System of Care (SOC), adhering to the following core principles: prioritizing family preservation to keep children within their homes whenever feasible; fostering interagency collaboration and coordinated service provision to ensure a unified, purpose-driven system of care for children with serious emotional disturbances and their families; emphasizing the least restrictive setting by placing youth in their natural environments whenever feasible; integrating family involvement and participation throughout assessment, evaluation, and treatment processes; and promoting cultural competence in service delivery to ensure relevance and effectiveness across diverse cultural contexts.

Santa Cruz County Probation's juvenile programs and services are meticulously crafted with the core principles of SOC (System of Care) as their foundational pillars. Embracing a balanced and restorative justice approach, these initiatives recognize three pivotal stakeholders: the victim, the community, and the youth. Their objectives revolve around fostering accountability, competency building, and ensuring public safety.

The Juvenile Division is dedicated to safeguarding public safety by diminishing repeat offenses through the enhancement of life skills and competencies among the youth and families under our care. We achieve this through a range of services that prioritize authentic engagement and collaboration with the families and youth we support. Probation remains steadfast in forging effective partnerships with community-based organizations and essential stakeholders. This enables us to deliver comprehensive and culturally sensitive supervision and services that are essential for bolstering community safety, and are relied upon by the court, juvenile justice partners, and the broader community. A primary focus of the division is to reduce the disproportionate representation of Latino youth within the justice system.

The Juvenile Division utilizes the Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) because it understands the importance and value of early youth and family engagement efforts. The ICPM is a model and framework for the shared values, core components, and standards of practice expected for those serving California's children, youth, and families. It sets Child and Family Teaming (CFT) as the primary vehicle for a team-based process to meet objectives of reducing recidivism, reducing victimization, increased life skills and family engagement.

## ICPM Guiding Practice Principles

ICPM Values	ICPM Phases	ICPM Guiding Practice Principles
<p><b>Family-driven and Youth Guided:</b> Youth and family voices is solicited and respected.</p> <p><b>Community-Based:</b> Services are provided in the community.</p> <p><b>Culturally &amp; linguistically competent:</b> Services are provided in the family's primary language. While valuing traditions, values, and heritage as sources of strength.</p>	Engagement, Assessment, and Team Preparation	<p><b>Family voice and choice-</b> Each family member's voice is important.</p>
	Initial Service Planning	<p><b>Team-based-</b> Team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family.</p>
	Monitoring and Adapting	<p><b>Natural supports-</b> Friends, neighbors, coworkers, church members, and others identified by family.</p>
	Transition	<p><b>Collaboration and integration-</b>Team shares responsibility in all aspects of plan development.</p> <p><b>Community-based-</b> Services and support are accessible and available in the family's community.</p> <p><b>Culturally respectful:</b> Plan supports achievement of goals for change that integrates the youth and family's culture.</p> <p><b>Individualized-</b> Plan is built on strengths, needs, and interest of the family members.</p> <p><b>Strength-based-</b> Team will use family's skills, knowledge and build upon the initial Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment.</p> <p><b>Persistence-</b> The team never gives up on youth or families. When met with resistance, the team will revisit the plan to identify any revisions.</p> <p><b>Outcome-based-</b> Team tracks goals and progress in plan and adjust as needed.</p>

### D. Comprehensive Plan Revisions

*Describe how your Plan has been updated for this year.*

In July 2021, California Assembly Bill 153 (AB 153) authorized both federal Title IV-E and State Block Grant (SBG) expenditures for prevention services. The legislative intention is to create a full continuum of prevention services in each County and Tribe, which AB 153 terms "Family First Prevention Services (FFPS)." California's FFPS Program 1) builds on the Federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), which establishes a new option for States and Tribes to claim Title IV-E entitlement funds for evidence-based prevention and trauma-informed services for candidates at imminent risk for entry into foster care, and 2) includes additional state funding to provide greater flexibility and expand the continuum of prevention services beyond the federal FFPSA requirements. In 2022, the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department (HSD) Family and Children's Services (FCS), and Probation Department Leadership opted into planning for FFPS.

The Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP) is a countywide blueprint for building and enhancing a system of prevention programs, practices, and policies over the next five years. The CPP is an unprecedented opportunity to move collectively "upstream," focusing resources and efforts on children, youth, and families before they are involved with Child Welfare, Juvenile Probation, or other systems, and to greatly reduce negative outcomes for children, youth, and families through effective primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

The CPP will be submitted in fulfillment of the State Block Grant funding requirement. Some elements of the CPP may be implemented with funding from Santa Cruz County's allocation of FFPS funds, while other elements of the CPP may be implemented by leveraging other funding streams and initiatives that align with Santa Cruz County's CPP goals. Adjustments to the CPP may be made in communication with CDSS.

The AB 2083 System of Care workgroup, also known as the Interagency Leadership Team (ILT) will provide decision-making authority for the CPP. ILT membership is based on State Statute. Current members by role are listed below.

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

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

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

Child, Youth, and Family Well-being Cabinet Meetings have been held monthly, on the third Thursday of each month, unless other arrangements are made. Most importantly, all meetings have been held at a community location to facilitate relationship building and in-person discussion. Meetings will be held online when health or other factors prohibit in-person meetings. The planning Team may cancel or reschedule meetings if needed in support of plan development. The ILT (AB 2083 / System of Care Workgroup) will meet monthly, on second Fridays, at least every other month. The meeting schedule initially

developed through June 2023, was extended to reflect the extended timeline to submit the CPP to CDSS.

The planning team has been meeting weekly every other Tuesday of the month until the completion of the plan was submitted to the state for approval. In June 2023, the state approved the CPP plan. At this current time, the planning team continues to meet bi-weekly and has shifted its focus to the implementation of the CPP plan.

## **Part II. Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA)**

### **A. Information Sharing and Data**

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

The Juvenile Division of the Santa Cruz County Probation Department heavily depends on the AutoMon Caseload Explorer, a case management system, for various case management tasks. Regular staff training is essential to keep everyone up to date with system updates, and it also enables staff members to propose additional functionalities to enhance the system as required.

An overview from AutoMon is as follows: Caseload Explorer facilitates efficient tracking and management of Juvenile data while ensuring compliance with jurisdictional security and judicial requirements. It stores demographic and personal details such as gender, date of birth, address, and phone number, along with offense-related information including charge type, restrictions, and conditions. Additionally, Caseload Explorer monitors Active Referrals or Case files, as well as the assigned Supervisor and/or Caseworker. In instances where a youth is placed in a juvenile facility, Caseload Explorer simplifies intake management through a customizable intake/release process, allowing caseworkers to monitor appointments and release details, handle property, document behavioral patterns, and access event and disciplinary records with ease.

The information derived from our internal case management system serves multiple purposes in ensuring quality assurance. This includes analyzing recidivism rates, monitoring caseload demographics and size, and evaluating program effectiveness to gauge public safety performance. Ultimately, it falls upon the department to maintain reliable and precise data, enabling informed decision-making regarding resource allocation for programming aimed at maximizing the success of youth on probation.

In addition to utilizing Caseload Explorer, there are other independent databases established to capture program-specific information within the department. One such database, created by our Department Data Analyst, is the Evening Center Database. This database facilitates nightly data entry and enables real-time tracking of youth participating in our Evening Center program. Key data points recorded include name, zip code, date of birth, ethnicity, and the reason for referral. While all this information is vital for departmental monitoring, the reason for referral particularly informs trends within the department, fostering substantive discussions when compiling our annual division report and guiding resource allocation decisions. Reasons for referrals to the program encompass positive drug tests,

probation violations (non-compliance), school infractions, new offenses, Alternative to Detention (ATD) breaches, and self-referrals.

It's important to highlight that every four years, the Juvenile Division of the Santa Cruz County Probation Department issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) to organizations serving youth. These proposals aim to deliver culturally sensitive, evidence-based services in Juvenile Delinquency, Prevention, Intervention, and Youth, Family, and School Engagement, collectively contributing to the well-being of young individuals involved with the justice system. The decision regarding required service areas is directly informed by the data gathered by probation. Simultaneously, there is an increased expectation that any funded provider will independently track data and be prepared to report data monthly or quarterly to the Probation Department

## **B. Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils**

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

Yes, Santa Cruz County has consistently convened our JJCC annually to review and inform our local plan's service needs, priorities, strategies, and funding.

## **C. Funded Programs, Strategies and/or System Enhancements**

### **Luna Evening Center (LEC)**

Evidence Upon Which it is Based: The principles for which the center operates can be found in the California Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) for Children, Youth and Families. The five key components of this model are engagement, assessment, service planning/implementation, monitoring/adapting and transitions. The ten principles of the ICPM include: team-based, family voice and choice, natural supports, collaboration, and integration, community-based, culturally respectful, individualized, strengths-based, persistence and outcomes-based.

Description: The Luna Evening Center (LEC) is a partnership between Probation, community-based organizations, and county agencies. The services provided at the LEC incorporate a system of care model that includes family preservation and supportive services for young people and their families in a setting that is culturally and developmentally responsive to the needs of those who participate. The LEC operates Monday through Friday from 4:00p.m. to 8:00p.m. Snacks and dinner are provided each evening as part of the program. LEC staff provide transportation to the young people participating in the program by picking up each young person at their home. There is a weekly schedule of activities, services and vendors that will be available to participants throughout the week. Services at the LEC are aimed at addressing areas of need that are identified through assessments as well as other promising and evidence-based practices.

The program, which has been in existence for almost two decades, is designed to serve young people while at the same time allowing them to remain in the community. Providing a probation response in lieu of court hearings is achieved through supportive programming aimed at addressing critical thinking skills. The LEC provides a structured after-school

environment where young people can examine their thoughts and feelings that impact their decision-making. Staff at the LEC work with the participants to identify a variety of ways they could make better choices and minimize their contact with the juvenile justice system.

Over the past several years there has been a significant evolution in how the program serves young people in the County. The focus, especially during the pandemic, has been to assess the needs of young people and families and provide much needed emotional support, educational support and improve the overall well-being of young people and their families. These efforts are confirmed by looking at the program data for the past three years beginning in January of 2021 in which a total of 201 referrals were made to the LEC. A considerable number of referrals, almost 28%, were self-referrals from young people who had previously been in the program, followed by referrals to support probation responses and identified needs that support young people remaining in the community. These were followed by educational support, referrals from the court and the ATD program.

The high number of self-referrals speaks to the positive experience the young person had while attending previously and further demonstrates the need for this type of support and outreach. Another example of working with families as part of Evening Center programming is the weekly Cara Y Corazon family sessions that are facilitated by Santa Cruz County Children's Behavioral Health. In 2023, there were 35 adults and 166 young people who participated in the program.

In February of 2020, the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County (CAB) received grant funding to open a "one-stop" service center Luna Y Sol program that has allowed the LEC to expand service delivery to young people and families by increasing diversion efforts and by serving non-justice involved young people and families at the Hub as previously noted in the section above. Since the completion of the grant in 2023, Luna Y Sol program has been able to sustain their programming and continues to provide on-going services to our LEC youth.

In 2023, Probation collaborated with CAB and supported them in applying for a grant from the Office of Justice Delinquency and Prevention (OJJDP), Children Exposed to Violence (CEV), which they were awarded a grant this grant to further expand the HUB and partner with other Community Based Organization to support youth and family, by adding clinical support as an additional resource to the HUB. The goal is for the youth and families who have been exposed to violence will receive Wraparound case management support, mentorship for both system and non-system involved families. The family will be linked to a navigator who will assess the family for their need and ensure supportive linkage to services, while providing case management support.

### **Connecting and Promoting Success (CAPS)**

A notable change from previous years is the renaming and re-shaping of our juvenile supervision caseloads which was formally known as the Community Accountability Program.

Evidence Upon Which It is Based: This program uses principles from research shown to be most effective in the field of community supervision by utilizing the principles of risk, need, treatment and fidelity. Officers use evidence-based risk/needs assessment tools to

determine the level of risk for re-offending and to target resources to both higher risk and higher need offenders, and to match intensity of services and supervision to level of risk.

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

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

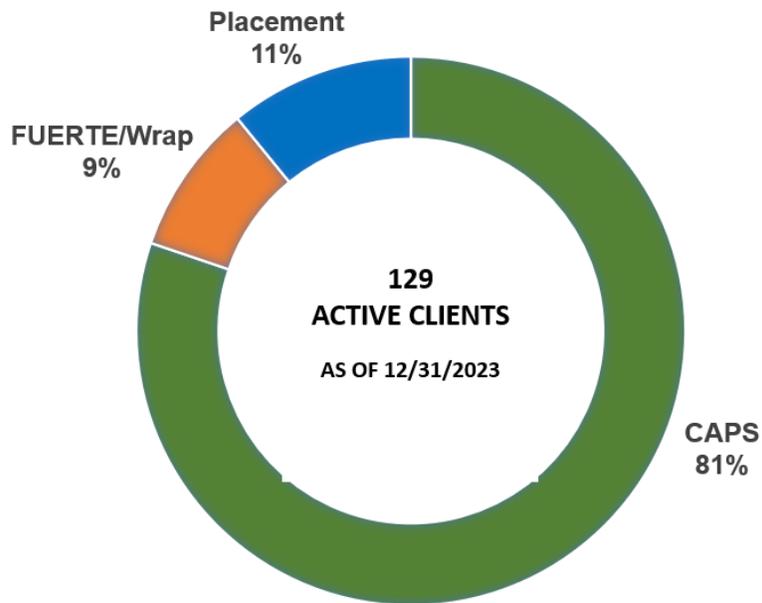
Probation staff assigned to supervising the CAPS caseloads work closely with our community-based partners utilizing a variety of assessment tools and making referrals to available resources in the community. In the past year there have been four separate grant projects Community Reclaiming Youth Justice (CRY-J), Stable Transition After Reentry (STAR) and Luna y Sol in the County which have greatly enhanced the number of resources and the number of staff who are working together with young people on probation and their families. Many of the services are focused on prevention and diversion and others provide counseling and mental health assistance, job readiness, educational and vocational support, and increasing wellbeing and wellness.

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

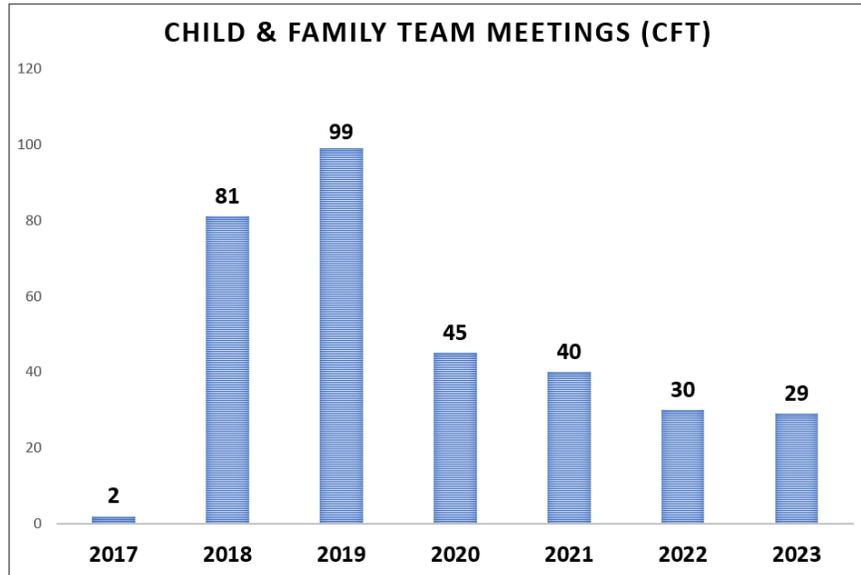
Additionally, the Data Blast tracks the number of youth who had their risk score increase, the number of risk scores which decreased and the number that stayed the same. In reviewing the February 2024 monthly data typically indicates around 33% of the youth risk scores stay the same or are stable and about 43% of the risk scores decrease which are indicative of noteworthy progress toward successful completion of probation. The report also captures the number of EPICS sessions completed during a given month. EPICS (Effective

Practices in Community Supervision) is a structured dialogue to help guide youth in a positive direction and provide effective responses to their needs. Field visits and virtual visits are conducted during each month and captured which demonstrate staff's on-going engagement with youth and families. This engagement assists in meeting clients where they are at and strengthening engagement.

At the end of December 2023, there were 129 young people on probation in Santa Cruz County and 104 were being supervised on CAPS caseloads. The remaining 25 young people of probation were assigned to either FUERTE/Wraparound (11) or to the Placement Unit (14).



To assist in the supervision and engagement with the young people on their caseloads the CAPS officers routinely hold Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM). In 2023, there were a total of 29 CFTM and most of those involved young people on CAPS caseloads. The CFTM allows for the young person to identify who they would like to be part of their CFTM which often addresses resources needed by the young person as part of their case plan. In addition to the young person and their family, the CFTM provides an opportunity for natural supports to attend and participate and often includes multiple community-based providers and other connected county agencies. The CFTM epitomizes a “teamwork” approach that is a best practice in juvenile justice and a staple of the CAPS caseloads.



### **Part III. Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG)**

(Welfare & Institutions Code Section 1961(a))

#### **A. Strategy for Non-707(b) Offenders**

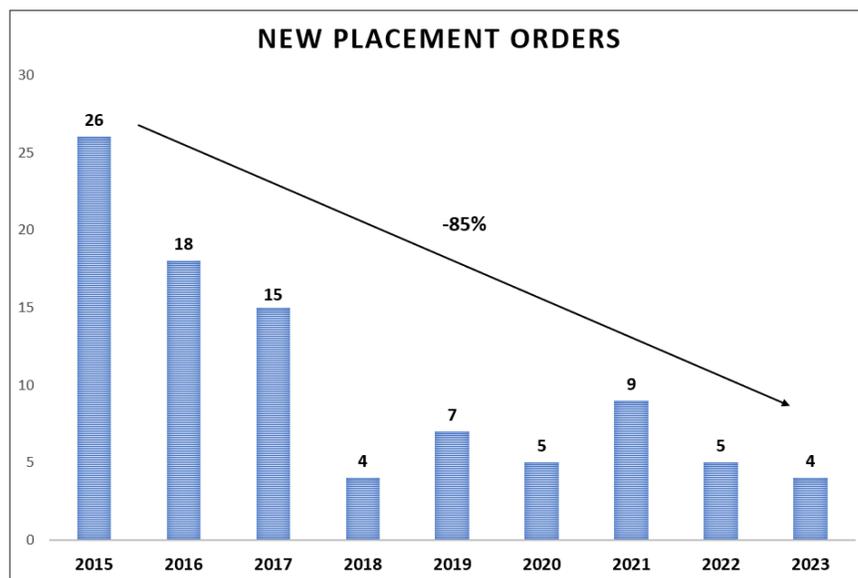
*Describe your county's overall strategy for dealing with non-707(b) youthful offenders who are not eligible for commitment to the Division of Juvenile Justice. Explain how this Plan relates to or supports that strategy.*

Assessments: When a young person encounters the juvenile justice system in Santa Cruz County our staff immediately provide assessments to determine what level of involvement is needed by probation, and subsequently the district attorney and court partners. If the matter is a non-mandatory referral to the district attorney's office and the young person meets the criteria for diversion services, probation intake staff will then make a referral to one of several diversion programs in the county. It is the hope that this type of informal handling of the matter will result in the young person not having further contact with the justice system. However, if it is determined the young person is not eligible for diversion services, then the matter is referred to the district attorney's office for review and potential filing of a petition for a law violation.

If the young person's matter eventually results in a sustained petition and the young person is placed on probation, it is at this time that probation staff meet with the young person and their family and complete an assessment with a validated risk and needs instrument. This assessment tool helps staff determine an appropriate level of supervision which is essential in providing services and not contributing to a youth's unwarranted advancement in the juvenile justice system. By supervising young people based on risk level and regularly reassessing risk levels, probation staff can focus on an increased level of supervision to young people assessed with moderate and high-level risk factors. Additionally, through treatment/intervention matching, probation staff can ensure the correct level of dosage and not "net-widen" by increasing engagement with young people assessed with lower risk factors. Through the use of evidence-based practices, risk-based supervision, utilization of the JAIS assessments and trauma informed case planning which focuses a youth's needs, the department is working to increase opportunities for youth to be successful on supervision and experience wellbeing.

**Out of Home Placements:** One of the county's strategies is to match and provide appropriate services to youth based on their level of need to provide them with the necessary skills needed to be successful in out of home placements. As required by AB 403, the 2017 Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Act has worked to eliminate congregate care in the form of traditional group homes and instead replace them with Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP). These programs were created to place a higher level of emphasis on mental health treatment while at the same time offering shorter lengths of stay in the programs. The anticipated length of an STRTP program is six to nine months while traditional group home placements frequently lasted more than a year. While the Probation department desires to use local STRTPs, unfortunately, there are no local STRTP programs in Santa Cruz County currently.

As a result of having limited options to place young people in a local STRTP program, we have had to utilize STRTP programs outside of Santa Cruz County. The division continues to be successful with maintaining efforts that started in 2015 to reduce the use of out-of-home placements and serve young people in their community. In 2023, there were (4) new placement orders.



The following programs were utilized during the course of the year: DN Associates, Fresno County; Courage to Change, Tulare County; Core Conditions, Fresno County; Greater New Beginnings, Alameda County; The average length of stay for youth in the STRTP programs in 2023 was 134 days.

YOBG funds are utilized to fund a portion of one probation officer who is responsible for providing supervision for young people who have been removed from their home which includes placement in either an STRTP, Ranch Camp or Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF). In 2023, there were six (6) young people committed to Ranch Camp programs. In the past, Ranch Camp programs were used as an alternative to committing a young person to the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and it is likely they will be used similarly as an alternative to the new Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) programs.

The Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) legislation has done a great deal to ensure young people are staying in STRTP programs for shorter periods of time while receiving a higher level of treatment. One of the other impacts from the CCR is the timelines that have been established when Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) are held. When a youth is ordered into an STRTP, probation staff work tirelessly to find appropriate placements in a timely manner, but they also begin planning on transitional services for the young people so that they have a stable home environment to return to when they complete their STRTP. This is done by participating in CFTM during the time the young person is in placement and by working with families to ensure they remain in contact with their child and are as ready as possible for their return. The use of YOBG funds provides opportunities for youth and families to engage in these services.

A significant addition during the past year to placement staff in planning transition services has been the assistance of re-entry navigators who are part of the Stable Transitions After Reentry (STAR) grant project. The navigators are introduced to the young people and the families at least 90 days prior to the anticipated completion date of the STRTP and begin to prepare for the young person's return. In addition to meeting with families, they also assist with school placement and vocational/employment needs of the young person.

Finally, as the department continues to look at ways of providing youth much needed services and keep youth in the community, the FUERTE/Wrap community-based program continues to be fully utilized. This program, which is the successful combination of the FUERTE grant initiative and the Wraparound program, provides youth the benefit of close supervision which includes a team approach while offering mental health treatment as provided by our community partners at Encompass Family Services. The Juvenile Division is focused on meeting children's medical, emotional/behavioral, developmental, and educational needs.