

**Santa Cruz County Probation Department**

Juvenile  
Hall  
Annual  
Report

2019

Our **VISION** is a safe and thriving community with justice for all.

Our **MISSION** is to promote public safety, reduce recidivism and support victims and all those impacted by crime in partnership with our community. We provide balanced supervision, accountability and opportunities for positive change through results driven practices.

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**Introduction:**

Juvenile Hall was established pursuant to Article 14, Section 850 of the State Welfare and Institutions Code, which requires the Board of Supervisors to provide and maintain a suitable place for the detention of youth who pose a public safety risk. Juvenile Hall provides temporary, secure custody of youth between the ages of 12 and 18 who are referred by Law Enforcement Agencies, the Probation Department, and Juvenile Court. The facility provides detained youth with the best possible conditions of confinement: a safe and secure environment, trauma informed, where physical and mental health needs are met in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety.

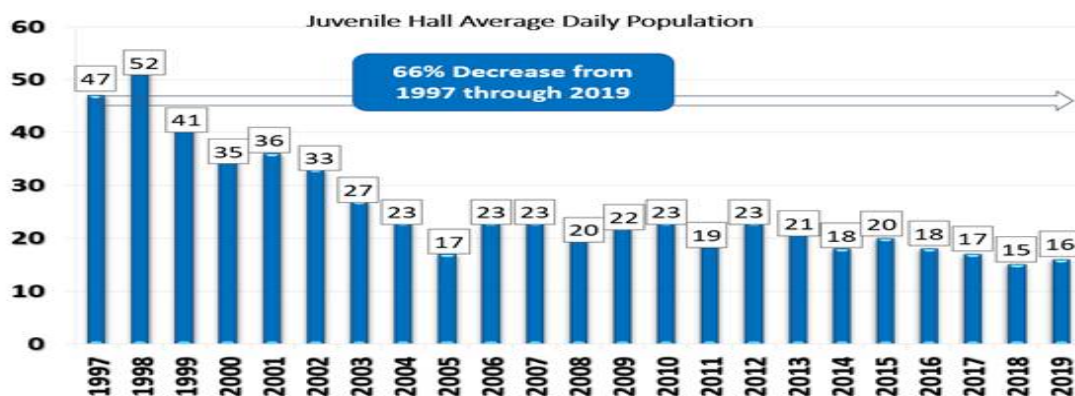
Santa Cruz County has worked continuously to reform its youth justice system and the use of detention for over 22 years. Santa Cruz County was an early adopter of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) in 1997. As a model site for detention reform, Santa Cruz played an instrumental role in supporting other jurisdictions in adopting strategies it helped innovate. There are now well over 300 counties and 38 states involved in the initiative, many of which have spent time at a model site visit in Santa Cruz County to learn about its core strategies.

**Detention Utilization**

Santa Cruz County, in its role as a model site in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) has been a pioneer in developing and promoting alternatives to incarceration. The department’s goal is to detain only youth pending court who pose a public safety or flight risk. All youth brought to Juvenile Hall are evaluated with an objective detention screening tool linked with least restrictive community alternatives, and an array of detention alternatives that apply necessary supports that successfully and safely keep youth at home and in school without disruption, at a fraction of the cost of detention. Using proven, family-focused interventions that create opportunities for positive youth development, the Probation Department has developed a continuum of alternatives to detention, without impacting public safety.

Capacity of the Juvenile Hall is 42; and the average population for 2019 was 16. The continued decrease is attributed to historically low juvenile crime and arrest rates, an increase in the use of alternative to detention programs, diversion efforts and strong community partnerships. These decreases are consistent with state-wide trends. The chart below shows the monthly population of the Juvenile Hall since 1997.

**A Significant Reduction in the Juvenile Hall Population...**



The following table provides the average daily attendance, annual childcare days, and admissions. Childcare days are the total number of days the youth was in Juvenile Hall during the reporting period. Since 2012 admissions to Juvenile Hall have dropped by 52%. The average daily population has decreased 28% and childcare days has decreased 30%.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Average Daily Attendance	22.5	20.6	18.4	20.1	17.9	16.8	15.1	16.2
Annual Child Care Days	8,814	7,982	7,134	7,802	6,932	6,447	5,783	6,179
Admissions	562	456	410	463	371	318	289	268

Average daily attendance and childcare days have not decreased at the same rate of admissions. The composition of youth in detention has changed as the population has dropped in numbers. The population reduction is due to a combination of factors, including legislative and funding changes that emphasize local control, as well as declining juvenile crime. Youth are being detained for longer periods of time due to changes in legislation and the impact of the use of transfer hearings. The detention population has also been impacted by the shift in the last decade of the reduction in the population of youth housed in the California Department of Youth Justice (DJJ). SB81, also known as the Youth Justice Realignment bill, created block grants to local jurisdictions to provide county probation systems the ability to improve their capacity through expansion of community-based alternatives to handle higher risk youth offenders, as well as supervise youth who come out of DJJ. Santa Cruz County is a leading county in reducing reliance on out of home placement, while increasing the use of community-based programs and services. Community based strategies serve as alternatives to placement by providing structure and support to youth and families while youth remain at home, which impacts the reduction of youth awaiting placement (or returning from failing placement) in Juvenile Hall.

### **Conditions of Confinement**

Conditions are established using research and evidence-based programs, which are key to the well-being of a jurisdiction’s juvenile system and the safety and security of youth in detention. The department’s implementation of the JDAI 8 core strategies, have led to safely reducing unnecessary detention through community-based alternatives and by maintaining, monitoring and improving our conditions of confinement. The wide variety of competency building programs are in alignment with the department’s mission and values, resulting in behavior change. Services are racially and culturally responsive to our population. Latino youth made up 66% of the intakes to Juvenile Hall, while comprising 54% of the youth population. Probation continues to engage with its’ community partners to address disparities in detention for youth of color.

The variety of enrichment programs are in alignment with the department’s mission and values and work towards behavioral change. We are committed to evidence-based probation practices to ensure public safety through a decrease in recidivism, reduction in victimization, and maximizing successful completion of probation terms. A key strategy is the use of risk and needs assessments to help staff and our partners focus on needs or criminogenic drivers of criminal behavior. Staff work with youth to assess their strengths and needs, supporting development of individual reentry goals, which assist in reducing recidivism and increasing public safety. Staffs’ role and the focus of the programs and services is to motivate youth and teach behavioral modification skills through cognitive behavioral interventions.

### **Staffing, Security and Safety**

Staffing for the Juvenile Hall is challenging, due to staff being out, hiring delays, 24/7 coverage and The Board of State and Community Correction Standards (BSCC) Title 15 mandates. BSCC's Title 15 dictates the minimum staffing numbers, also the gender and training of staff on duty. We are committed to providing and maintaining outstanding conditions of confinement. Accomplishing these standards requires a staffing level that not only meets the mandated staff/youth ratio for safety and security; but also allows program, unit duties, and the ability to meet the individual programming needs of the youth detained.

The staff at Juvenile Hall maintain a safe, humane and clean facility. The over fifty-year-old facility reflects the toll of time and continual use. The Department, along with support from General Services, struggles with recurring and costly maintenance repairs. There have been some improvements over the years; however, the facility is in need of necessary renovations and upgrades. Through our aggressive ability to secure state grants, funding has been secured to assist improving the facility. Thanks to the award of Round One and Two SB81 grant funds from the Board of State and Community corrections (BSCC) significant renovation to the facility and improved programming opportunities for youth in detention, will be possible.

### **SB81 Grant Funding for Multipurpose Recreation Facility**

Construction of the SB-81 Grant Funded Multipurpose Recreation Facility is awaiting final bid documents, state agreements and approvals with anticipated construction starting in the spring of 2021 and completion by the beginning of 2022. The enclosed gymnasium will enhance access to physical activity for the youth in Juvenile Hall.

### **SB81 Round 2 Grant Funding for Seed to Table Program**

The 9.5 million dollars of SB 81 Round 2 grant funding we were awarded in late 2015 will provide significant renovation to the facility and expansion of programming space to accommodate a highly structured horticulture and culinary program for youth in detention. Facility renovations will include upgrades to: seismic; fire and life safety; electrical; mechanical; security- cameras, lighting, doors, locks, fencing, the Institutional Supervisor control area, and sally port entrance. The project plan also includes major renovations and upgrades to the outdated kitchen, food storage, and dining areas; along with a new outdoor garden with greenhouse and teaching space. The most significant program addition will be the creation and support of a garden, horticulture, and culinary vocational programs and rehabilitation support with a new Seed to Table program. We hope to begin construction in later 2021 and be completed by the end of 2022.

### **Title II Grant Funding**

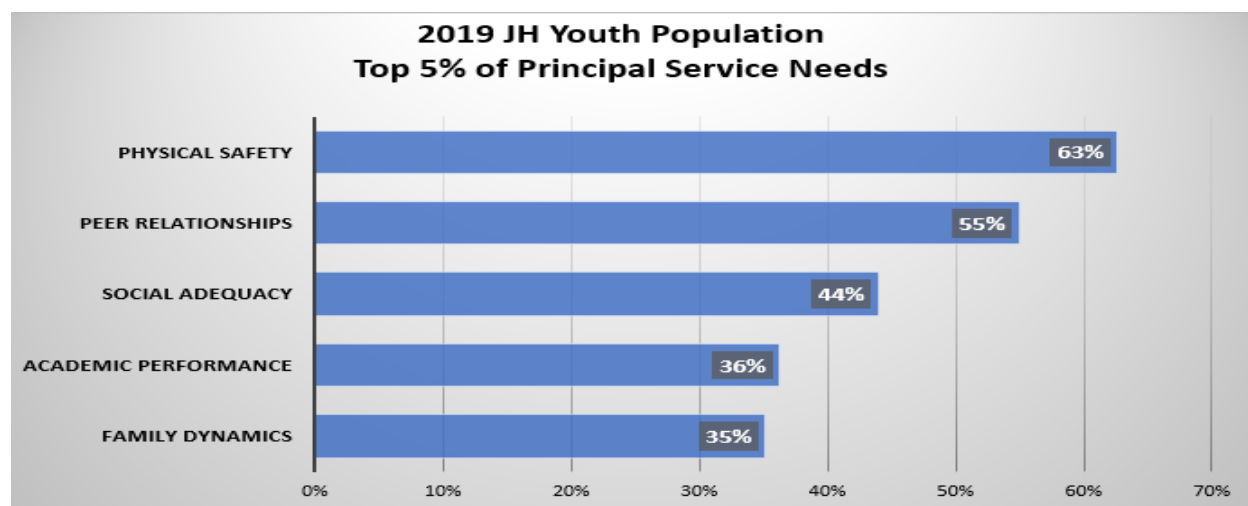
At the end of 2019 we were awarded BSCC Title II grant funding for our Stable Transitions After Reentry (STAR). The STAR program will support reentry and early intervention services for youth in dosage increments to match level of need. Encompass Reentry specialist will provide in-custody case planning along with linkages to community-based services for family and parenting services will be offered. Partners include Encompass, Conflict Resolution Center, and Positive Discipline Community Resources.

### **Impact of New Bills & Changes to BSCC Title 15 Mandates Effective January 1, 2020**

In the fall of 2019, we collaborated with our justice system partners to ensure compliance with the implementation of Senate Bill 439, which went into effect January 1, 2020. SB 439 establishes 12 years as the minimum age for which the juvenile court has jurisdiction and may adjudge a person a ward of the court, except for probable cause of a few specific serious law

violations. Historically our department has worked with our partner agencies when a youth under the age of 12 has come to the attention of law enforcement because his or her conduct constitutes an alleged offense; and have been able to respond with services and support outside of detention.

There were a considerable number of revisions to the Board of State and Community Corrections Title 15 Minimum Standards for Juvenile Detention Facilities which went into effect January 1, 2019. The areas of focus were: Trauma Related; Gender Identity/Gender Responsivity; Transgender and Intersex Youth; Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate/Relevant; Prevention of Sexual Assault; Use of Force/Chemical Agents; and Transition and Reentry Planning. Policy and Procedures have been updated to incorporate Title 15 revisions. Thanks to the progressive work of our department and partnership with Annie E. Casey, no drastic measures to programming or services were necessary to continue to meet the needs of the youth population we serve. In the fall of 2019, our BSCC representative inspected our facility- reading our policies and talking with youth and staff. We passed our BSCC Title 15 bi-annual inspection and received very positive feedback from our inspector.



**Physical and Mental Health Services**

Medical services are provided to all youth through the Health Services Agency. On-site staffing consists of 54 hours per week of Registered Nursing services and 6 hours per week of Nurse Practitioner services. The Mental Health Division of the Health Services Agency provides 56 hours of mental health counseling services each week and 2.5 hours each week of psychiatric services. Mental Health services include crisis intervention, individual counseling, and assessment services for all youth of Juvenile Hall. During 2019, of the youth booked, there was an average of: 15 youth each month with an open mental health case; 3.6 youth who were receiving psychotropic medication and being seen by the psychiatrist in Juvenile Hall; and 15 youth who had drug and alcohol issues. Mental Health staff also offer a substance use disorder curriculum for youth and provide substance use disorder assessments when necessary. The facility partners with Dientes, a bilingual/bi-cultural community dental group to offer affordable, high-quality dental care to detained youth. Detained youth are seen by a dentist for a dental assessment and cleaning; and for the completion of necessary dental work.

**Education Opportunities**

The school program, Hartman High, at Juvenile Hall is operated by the County Office of

Education and provides one full time lead teacher (who also holds a special education credential), one instructional aide, and one guidance technician. Hartman School operates year-round and the instructors adhere to a standards-based curriculum. Last year six detained youth graduated high school. A majority of our youth are significantly behind educationally; and there was an average of 5 youth each month who had an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Juvenile Hall entered an agreement with a vendor (Edovo) to bring secure tablet technology to support the educational achievements of detained youth- towards their high school diploma or college credit earning courses. Access to the tablets was made available to the youth towards the end of 2019 and now available to all youth in the facility.

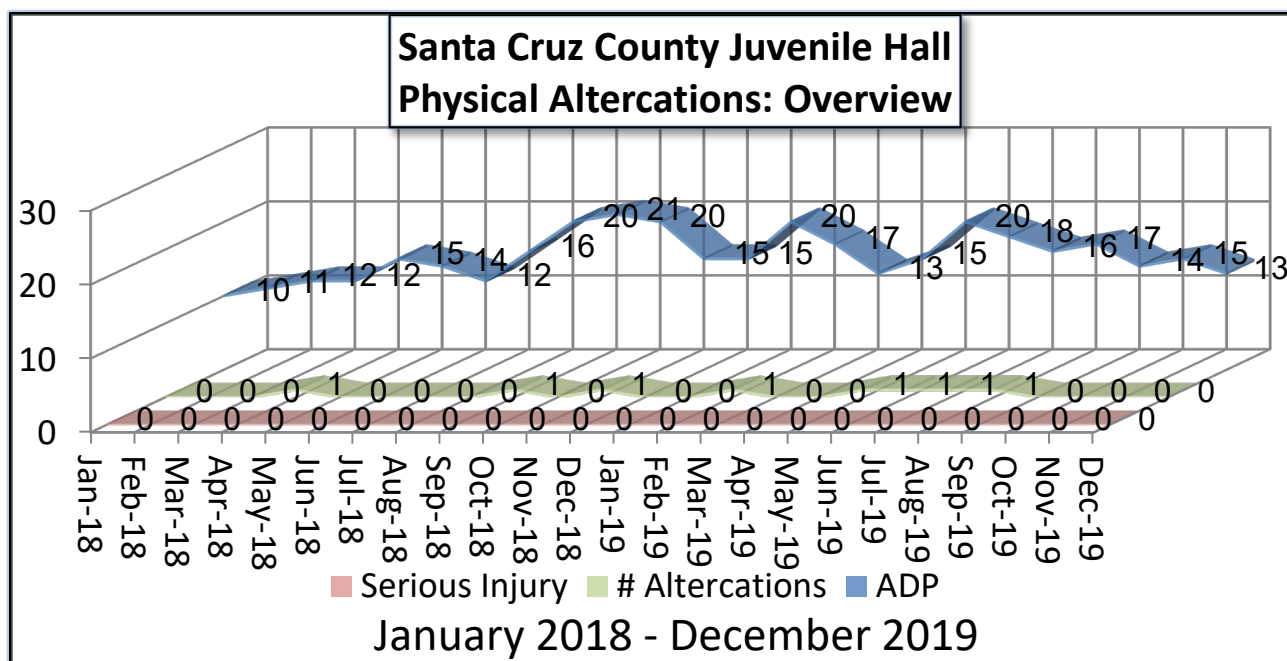
### **Positive Youth Development**

Programs and services offered at the facility promote child well-being by investing in the development and use of rigorously evaluated programs that help youth reach critical milestones on the path to adulthood. Evidence Based Programs are taught by trained probation and mental health staff. Many of the programs offered use cognitive restructuring curriculum. Evidence Based Programs use current, objective, balanced, and responsible research, and best available data to guide policy and practice decisions to achieve improved outcomes. Staff work with youth and our partners to assess their individual needs and provide services toward reentry goals, which assist in reducing recidivism and increasing public safety.

Juvenile Hall has two units which run independently. Upon admission, staff make housing and programming assignments in accordance with written classification policies. Youth are assigned to a housing unit taking into consideration the youth's developmental status, sophistication, social skills, behavioral history, age, size, intensity of their alleged offense, personality, background and other factors that might influence his or her adjustment in the facility. Operational practices reinforce our commitment to respect the dignity of all youth, including transgender and gender non-conforming youth, to create a safe environment for all youth, and ensure that all youth have equal access to all available services, care and treatment. All youth are screened for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC); and multidisciplinary teams from our partner agencies are assessing and providing supportive services to CSEC youth in our community.

We strive to maintain a safe and secure facility that conforms to best practices in our programming and efforts. Our facility does not use chemical restraints/OC Spray. Staff work with youth to assess their strengths and needs, supporting development of individual reentry goals, which assist in reducing recidivism and increasing public safety. Due to the strong conditions of confinement, the facility has significantly low physical altercations and almost no injuries to staff or youth. Our facility has traditionally had a low use of force and continues to reduce the use of room confinement. During 2019 there were only 5 physical altercations and no serious injury to youth or staff. There were no escapes or suicide attempts.





The Juvenile Hall is dependent upon juvenile justice funds for the ability to continue to provide excellent conditions of confinement. In order to provide a rich curriculum of services and programs and meet the individual needs of the complex youth in our facility, we are reliant upon the effectiveness of our numerous volunteers. Weekly meetings are provided by Alcoholic Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and various faith-based groups. Paid contractors also provide weekly writing workshops and gang intervention. Barrios Unidos provides culturally responsive individual and group counseling. Friday Night Live offers a structured life skills curriculum, teaching youth to make healthy life choices, specifically regarding the use of drugs and alcohol. The UnChained Program brings in training with shelter dogs and a humane education curriculum. Through the Unchained class, teens build self-worth, learn empathy and respect for themselves and others.

This past year we were pleased to continue programs and volunteers which had been added the year prior- such as a fitness trainer during PE class, Mind Body Awareness, and the FLOW program. The goal of FLOW is to add value to youth in our community through an atmosphere of belonging, mentorship and the power of play. Some of our volunteers bring lived experience and mentoring, as having been involved with the criminal justice system (and detained in our facility) as youth. We were also fortunate to continue to bring to the youth live theater performances thanks to Shakespeare-to-Go and local live chamber music concerts, thanks to Rebecca Jackson and other world-renowned musicians from Music in May.

The Department values a strong collaboration between juvenile justice and social service professionals to support youth who are reentering their community after confinement. Providing and maintaining a healthy and safe environment where teenagers can grow emotionally and intellectually is the mission of the Juvenile Hall. Our staff to youth ratios supports the facilitation of programs and services to empower adolescent's insight into their own thought processes, feelings, personal choices, and behavior patterns, and learn how to achieve positive, personally fulfilling life goals.

Santa Cruz County Probation has a deep commitment to reform efforts that have been designed to reduce unnecessary detention and address the overrepresentation of youth of color, primarily Latinos. The decline in juvenile detention has helped the county establish effective alternatives to detention, while preserving public safety. Looking ahead to 2020 and beyond, the Probation Department is analyzing data to better understand historical trends regarding the past and current use of juvenile detention. More importantly, and consistent with the longstanding commitment to continuous improvements, we are digging deeper into how the detention facility is currently being used and what it would take to further reduce the use of detention. We are identifying opportunity areas to make further reductions through policy, practices, or programs and look forward to continuing reform.