

Santa Cruz County Probation Department

Juvenile
Hall
Annual
Report

2024

Our MISSION is to contribute to community well-being through positive engagement, connection to services, and support for those impacted by crime.

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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 temporary secure place for youths between the ages of 12 and 25 under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court and deemed a public safety concern.

Detention Utilization

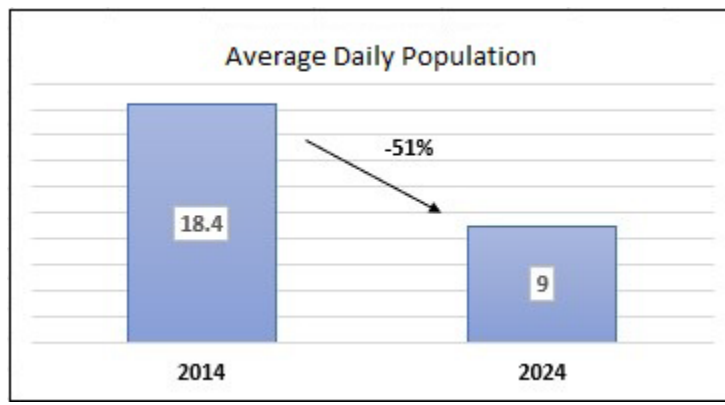
Our facility prioritizes providing detained youth with optimal conditions, ensuring a safe, secure, and trauma-informed environment where both physical and behavioral health needs are diligently addressed. We deliver supportive interventions, educational programs, and rehabilitative services with a commitment to equity and cultural sensitivity. We facilitate connections with families and support networks through both in-person and virtual visits. Our Alternative to Detention program offers a constructive alternative for youth, ensuring they fulfill their court obligations and avoid reoffending while awaiting their court hearings.

Santa Cruz County Probation boasts a distinguished legacy as one of the inaugural national model sites for the Annie E. Casey Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) in 1999. Since then, we have seamlessly integrated the core values, principles, and practices of JDAI into our operations and policies. Over nearly a quarter-century, our commitment to advancing our work with youth, their families, and the community has remained steadfast. We strive to establish a sustainable model of juvenile justice that not only safely diverts youth from the justice system but also fosters community capacity, recognizing the boundless potential of our youth. Our goal is to provide safe and nurturing pathways for youth into adulthood, ensuring they have every opportunity to thrive.

Core Principles:

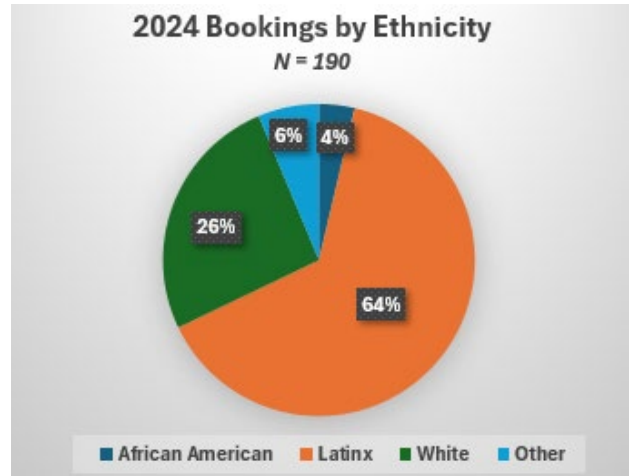
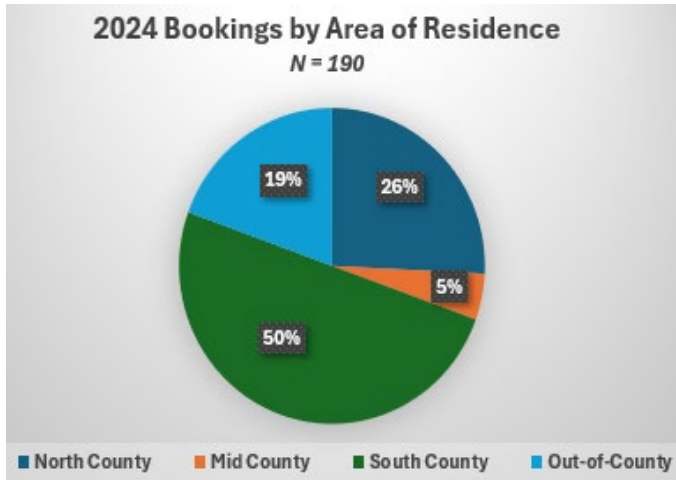
- Detain only youth pending court who pose public safety or flight risk.
- All youth brought to Juvenile Hall are evaluated with an objective Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) detention screening tool.
- RAI links with a continuum of alternatives to detention (ATD), without impacting public safety. ATD program supports, successfully and safely keep youth in their community.
- Address racial and ethnic disparities of those who are confined, and address inequities and needs of special populations
- Family-focused interventions create equitable opportunities for positive youth development.

The capacity of the Juvenile Hall is 40. In 2024, there were 190 intakes, and the average daily population (ADP) was 9; as compared to an ADP of 18.4 in 2014.



Bookings

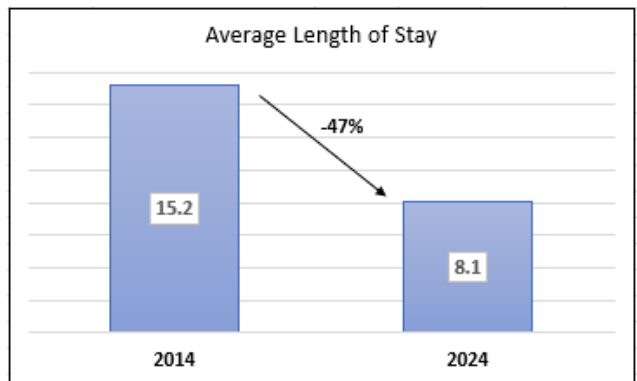
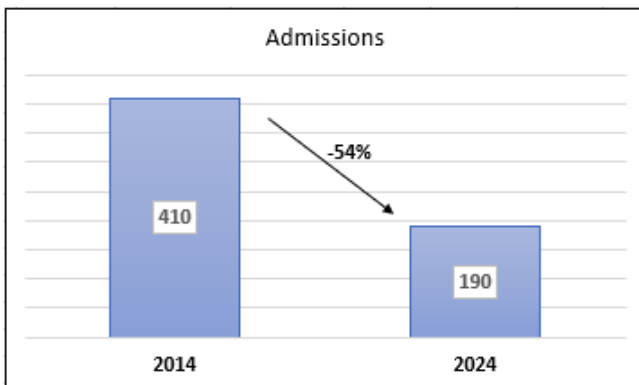
The charts below illustrate the bookings to Juvenile Hall by race and ethnic demographics, and area of residence. Latinx youth made up 64% of intakes to Juvenile Hall and comprised 55% of the youth population. 50% of the youth booked into the facility reside in South County.



Probation continues to hold a strong prevention lens, engaging with community partners to provide programming and services to address racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system to include a focus on the geographical areas of need.

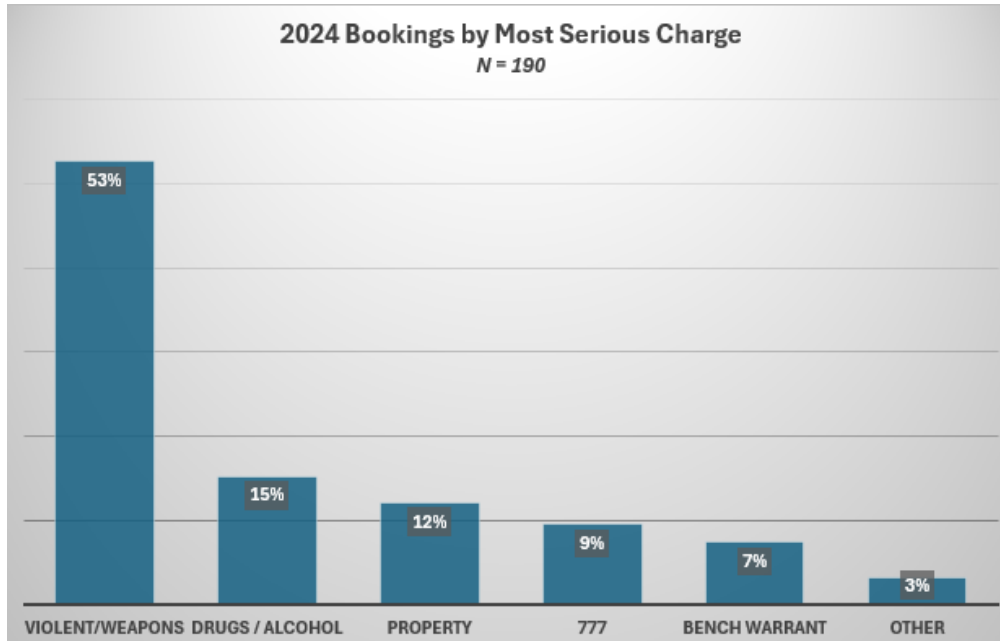
- Alternative to Detention Program (ATD)
- Luna Y Sol Familia Center
- Teen / Parent Mediation – Conflict Resolution Program (CRC)
- Victim Offender Dialogue Program – (CRC)
- Title II Stable Transition After Reentry (STAR) Grant – (Encompass, CRC & Positive Discipline)
- Parent Project – Community Bridges
- Azteca’s Soccer – South County
- Victim Awareness Education – (CRC)
- Employment Skill Building (CAB)

Since 2014, admissions to Juvenile Hall have decreased by 54% and the average length of stay has decreased by 47%.



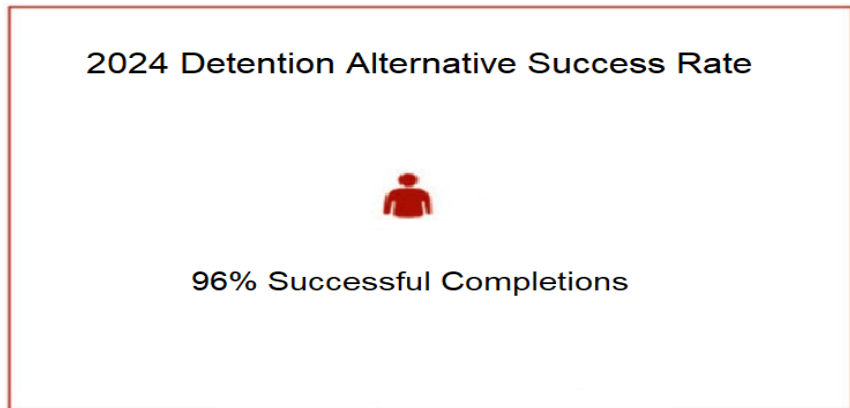
Although detention admissions have decreased, the youths currently held tend to face serious felony violence charges, leading to longer stays. This discrepancy means that the reduction in admissions

does not align with the decrease in length of stay. Additional factors contributing to longer stays include legislative changes, transfer cases, companion cases involving adult co-participants (which often prolong the process), the impact of SB 823 Realignment requiring youth formally committed at state level to be committed locally at a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF), as well as the lengthy process of securing a placement in a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) for detained youths. See the chart below:



Detention Alternatives Outcome Data

In-lieu of detention, the Alternative to Detention program emphasis is to ensure youth make their court appearance and do not reoffend while remaining in the community pending their court hearing. The following chart illustrates the use of alternatives to detention upon contact with the juvenile system. In 2024, 96% of all youth that were placed in an alternative to detention program made their next court appearance and did not recidivate pending court.



The Department remains committed to employing the least restrictive interventions whenever feasible, opting for alternatives to detention as appropriate. Significant changes over the past year include an

81% rise in diversion and informal contracts and a 6% increase in the number of youths enrolled in the Home Supervision program compared to the previous year.

| Referrals | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | % Change |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----------|
| Diversion and Informal Contracts | 151 | 131 | 88 | 68 | 61 | 72 | 130 | 81% |
| Home Supervision | 58 | 76 | 59 | 73 | 76 | 85 | 90 | 6% |
| Electronic Monitoring | 115 | 114 | 73 | 117 | 101 | 116 | 104 | -10% |

The Stable Transition After Reentry (STAR) Program, a Title II state funded grant, provides individualized services to youth and families to support youth transitioning back to the community from Juvenile Hall, Short-Term Therapeutic Residential Treatment Program (STRTP), Ranch or SYTF. The goal is to decrease the chance of a young person returning to Juvenile Hall or further involvement with the Juvenile Justice System. Probation partnered with Encompass, Positive Discipline Community Resources, and Conflict Resolution Center on this diversion program. We remain steadfast in our efforts with our collaborative partners and probation staff to collectively engage youth and increase support for a successful transition from custody back to their community.

Dual Status

Santa Cruz County Human Services Department’s Division of Family and Children’s Services (“FCS”), the Probation Department, and the Juvenile Division of the Superior Court uses a team approach to maintain a young person/family centered focus and cement practices that offer equitable responses to dually-involve youth and families being served across two systems. The Dual Status MOU aligns with the principles of Continuum of Care Reform; and maintains the values and philosophy of each agency while improving the coordination of services for the overall benefit of youth and families. The following are highlights for our Dual Status protocol:

- Fewer crossover youth entering our Juvenile Hall and juvenile justice system.
- Paradigm shifts have reduced overreliance on use of detention and formal sanctions.
- Partners examined how data elements, such as case coordination, programming, placement types, recidivism, and successful transitions have impacted intermediate and long-term outcomes for dually involved youth and families in our county.
- Both agencies continue to examine opportunities to increase family engagement efforts, gaps in services and opportunities for quality improvement standards.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

Youth are screened for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). Multidisciplinary teams from our partner systems assess and provide supportive services to CSEC youth in our community. Probation remains a critical member of our tri-county model and local response team. Probation, FCS, and several key county and community organizations utilize a victim-centered and harm-reduction approach for all youth who are identified with any level of risk for commercial sexual exploitation. CSEC coordinators lead training, convenings, and coaching for county and community staff, which has resulted in a culture shift to respond to youth based on their social emotional responses rather than punitive court reactions.

Hybrid Access

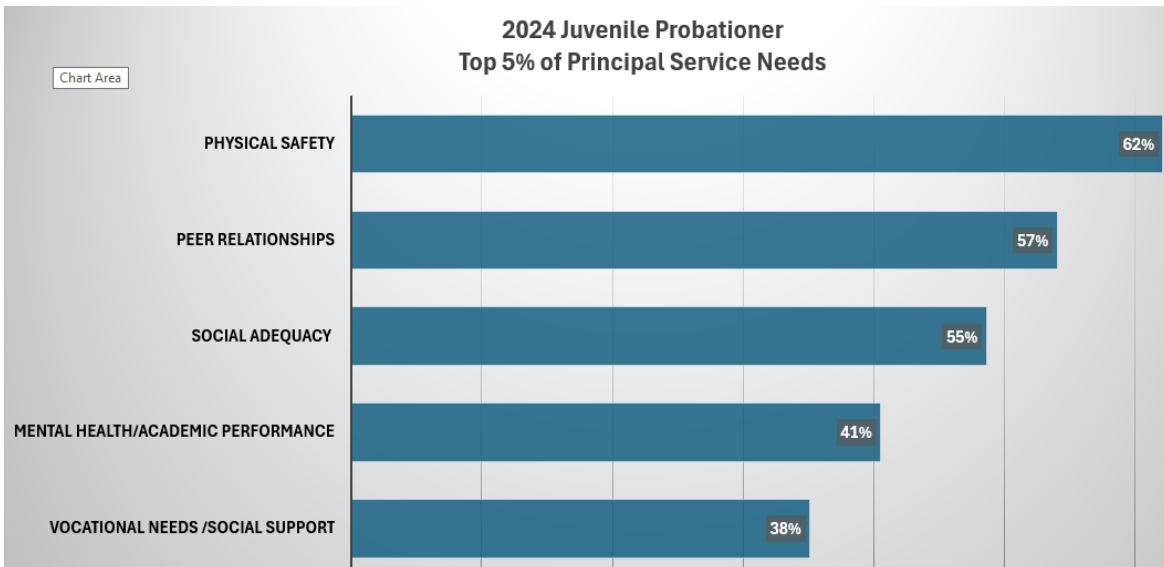
Virtual platforms are a staple in the facility, for youth to foster connectedness and support successful reentry to the community. Equitable access for detained youth to meet through virtual platforms with family, attorneys, counselors, support persons, and for participation in programs. Remote access is available to all youth and visitors, when health or safety necessitates or is preferred by the visitor; and increases access for youth to programs and support.

Staffing, Security and Safety

The Juvenile Hall operates two independent units. Housing of youth is based on classification, risk level, individual needs, and safety of the youth and other youth within the facility. The classification system is an ongoing process throughout a commitment, and youth may be housed in either unit of the facility. A direct supervision model supports the classification system, and services targeted to address individual needs of the youth, allowing for constant review of an individual’s safety, progress, and housing needs. Operational practices reinforce our commitment to respect the dignity of all youths, including transgender and gender non-conforming young persons, to create a safe environment for all and ensure everyone has equal access to all available services, care, and treatment.

Our facility is dedicated to fostering robust relationships, demonstrating compassion, and fostering collaboration among our team members, resulting in optimal conditions of confinement. We are one of only a few counties in California that do not use chemical restraints/OC Spray; and have a considerably low use of force and restraints when compared to others. The facility has significantly few physical altercations and almost no injuries to staff or youth. During 2024 there were only 3 physical altercations, with no serious injury to youth in our care or staff. This significantly low level of incidents and injuries is a stark contrast to what other juvenile detention facilities experience.

Hiring and staffing for the Juvenile Hall is challenging. The Board of State and Community Correction Standards (BSCC) Title 15 mandates imposes minimum staffing numbers, gender of, and training of staff on duty which resulted in an increase reliance on Extra Help staff to ensure 24/7 coverage. Staffing level requires not only meeting the mandated staff/youth ratio for safety and security; but also allows program, unit duties, and the ability to meet the individual service needs of youth who are detained.



Family and Natural Supports Engagement

Research has shown that youth who remain within their communities have lower recidivism rates and are more prepared for successful re-entry. Age-appropriate treatment while engaging families in the treatment process significantly enhances rehabilitation by promoting familial and pro-social community ties, which are crucial in reducing re-offending and supporting long-term success. Santa Cruz County aligns with this philosophy by providing family and natural supports engagement opportunities and collaborative treatment planning for each youth. CASA advocates continue with and are provided to support system impacted youth and meet one-on-one with youth while detained. CASA advocates remain actively engaged in supporting system-impacted youth, providing consistent one-on-one mentorship and advocacy, both in the community and during their time in detention.

Positive Youth Development Through Evidence Based and Culturally Responsive Programming

The array of program opportunities combined with an individualized engagement approach supports positive development for youth and humane conditions of confinement. Our professional youth supervision staff are trained in trauma-informed care and bring dedication and compassion to meet the needs of the youth in their care. Partnering with local providers to meet both immediate and transitional needs, the facility offers a comprehensive array of services for youth. These services are designed to support rehabilitation, personal growth, and successful reintegration into the community. To ensure the delivery of these services is effective, staff within the facility are trained in several evidence-based practices. These methods focus on helping youth change harmful behaviors, develop positive coping skills, and engage in pro-social behaviors.

The use of appropriate sanctions and incentives is integral to holding youth accountable while promoting positive behavior changes and critical thinking skills. By using a combination of rewards and consequences, staff can motivate youths to make improvements and stay on track with their rehabilitation goals. The range of services and structured programming ensures youth receive the support they need to address the underlying causes of their behavior while also preparing them for a successful transition back into society.

During 2024, contracted services continued to provide weekly writing workshops through The Beat Within and Barrios Unidos provided culturally responsive group counseling. Yoga was taught weekly to all youth during PE class and a variety of music classes (including guitar lessons) were provided during the school day. Hope Church's FLOW program offered youth a place to belong, mentorship, and the positive power of play. We were also fortunate to continue to bring local live chamber music concerts and education to the facility, thanks to Rebecca Jackson and other world-renowned musicians from Music in May. The Canine Teaching Compassion Program brought in shelter dogs to provide animal training and humane education curriculum. Santa Cruz Community Credit Union began an 8-week Financial Literacy program. Walnut Avenue Family Center provides a dating abuse prevention program to raise awareness, education, and provide skills and resources to our youth. Health Service partners provide a "Living in Balance" curriculum which brings education and awareness regarding drug use to the youth.

Physical and Behavioral Health Services

Medical and behavioral health services are provided to all youth through the Health Services Agency. On-site staffing consists of daily Registered Nursing services from 8a-8:30p and 6 hours per week of Physician services. The facility partners with Dientes, who provide high-quality dental care to those detained. Youth are seen by a dentist for an assessment, cleaning, and the completion of necessary dental work. Most of the youth's medical needs are addressed within the facility. There were 28

instances where it was necessary to transport youth out of the facility to access specialized medical services, such as optometry, x-rays, consultations with specialists, or the emergency room.

The Children's Behavioral Health Division provides daily mental health coverage and 2.5 hours each week of psychiatric services. Behavioral Health services include crisis intervention and assessment, behavioral health assessment, individual therapy, rehab counseling services, case management, advocacy, referrals, and linkage services for consenting youth in Juvenile Hall. Children's Behavioral Health staff provides referrals and linkage for substance use disorders treatment when necessary. Children's Behavioral Health staff provide safety planning in preparation for transitions out of the facility and court support for youth when needed, as resources allow.

Of the youth booked during 2024 there was a monthly average of:

- 12 youth with an open behavioral health case.
- 5 youth receiving psychotropic medication and being seen by the psychiatrist.
- 5 youth who reported drug and alcohol issues.

Probation and Health Services continue to collaborate to enhance the medical and behavioral health services in the facility. The proactive approach enhanced staffing, workflow, updating medical equipment, need for electronic medical records, best practices in the field, and evidence-based practices with the goal to improve the healthcare system that serves our justice involved youth. The enhanced partnership supported the ability for Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) to be provided for those detained youth in need.

Educational Opportunities

The educational program of the Robert A. Hartman School in Juvenile Hall, operated by the County Office of Education, is reviewed annually by an outside representative, and meets the California Educational Code Requirements. We have a collaborative goal to enhance educational and vocational services for detained youth. Culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches are applied when providing education. Secure tablet technology supports educational achievements in and outside of the classroom, towards high school diploma, college credit earning courses, and behavior modification courses. Curriculum is available in a variety of subjects, languages, and levels.

One of the two teachers is a certified special education instructor, who completes IEP assessments, along with serving students on 504's and IEP's. In 2024 there was a monthly average of:

- 5 students with an IEP
- .5 student with a 504 plan

Students are provided with a rigorous, quality educational program that responds to the different learning styles and abilities of students and prepares them for high school graduation, career entry, and/or post-secondary education. Dual enrollment in junior college is a focus for students, when appropriate. Hartman School operates year-round and holds graduations for youth, their families, and support persons when students complete their high school credits. COE staff facilitate re-enrollment in school and transition youth to student services upon release back to community or placement.

Probation collaborated with the County Office of Education and Cabrillo College to apply for and were awarded The Rising Scholars grant. In 2024 we hired a program coordinator to support justice impacted youth and their attendance at Cabrillo College. The program coordinator meets weekly in person with detained youth to support their participation with college enrollment.

Probation also collaborated this past year with the County Office of Education and Santa Cruz Public Library to renovate a third classroom at the facility to create an on-site library and soft learning space. Santa Cruz Public Library provides a librarian and library service to youth at the facility twice a month.

Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF)

The California Senate Bill (SB) 823 was signed into law on September 30, 2020, effectively eliminating the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) custodial facilities and transferring the responsibility of care, custody, and supervision from the State to local jurisdictions. The department opened a local Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) in December 2024 and there is currently one youth committed to the program. The Santa Cruz County SYTF is specifically designed to serve youth who have received a disposition order by the Juvenile Court, indicating the need for such a structured setting. Eligible youth are between the ages of 14 and 25 and have been adjudicated as wards of the juvenile court based on an offense described in subdivision (b) of Section 707 of the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC).

SYTF provides a safe and secure environment that aligns with the requirements of Senate Bills (SB) 823 and 92, offering youth an opportunity for rehabilitation with the goal of supporting their successful transition back to the community. The facility's rehabilitative treatment and programming focus on principles of trauma-informed, culturally responsive care, aiming to address the individual needs of each youth in areas such as personal development, therapeutic treatment, education, career readiness, and life skills enhancement.

SB 823 Grant Funds

Realignment and serving youth locally are resulting in a Juvenile Hall population that is older and has a longer length of stay. Managing an increase in the length of stay is complicated by our antiquated facility and program capacity. To increase the safe program space in the facility, we sought and were awarded SB 823 grant funds. With grant funds, this past year we renovated two youth cells into soft rooms, where staff and counselors can meet one-on-one with youth.

Grant Funding: Title II

Santa Cruz Probation along with partners Encompass, Positive Discipline Community Resource, and Conflict Resolution Center have successfully been implementing reentry and whole family services in the community through the Stable Transitions After Reentry (STAR) Program, a 3-year BSCC Title II grant funded program since 2019. At the end of 2022 the Department was awarded Title II grant funding for a second round of the STAR Program. This second grant proposal reflects changes to the original strategy based on successes and lessons learned. Namely, increasing support earlier on to youth with higher risk factors; engaging families directly, prioritizing the needs of families with youth assessed with high-risk factors; and providing flexible hours and methods of engagement.

STAR provides individualized services to youth and families to support youth transitioning back to the community from Juvenile Hall, Short-Term Therapeutic Residential Treatment Program (STRTP), Ranch or returning from DJJ. The STAR program supports reentry and early intervention services for youth in dosage increments to match level of need. Encompass Reentry Specialist provides in-custody case planning along with linkages to community-based services for family and parenting services. The Reentry Specialists are bilingual, bicultural, local, and have extensive knowledge of our community needs, culture, and resources thus providing equitable access to those we serve.

During 2024, STAR provided reentry and early intervention services to:

- 55 youth and their families.
- support expedited releases from Juvenile Hall to sustain keeping the population low.
- help minimize exposure to detention.

Grant Funding: SB81 Round 1 Multipurpose Recreation Facility and Round 2 Seed to Table Program and Facility Renovations

The over fifty-year-old facility has had minimal improvements over the years. Through our ability to secure state grants, grant funding county match dollars has been secured to improve the facility.

The enclosed gymnasium will enhance access to physical activity for those detained in Juvenile Hall. The Round 2 funding will provide significant renovation to the facility and expansion of programming space to accommodate a horticulture and culinary program. Facility renovations 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 of a garden, horticulture, and culinary vocational programs and rehabilitation support with a new Seed to Table program.

The grants were transitioned to a Capital Project and are being led by Community Development and Infrastructure. The Board awarded the construction contract to Buhler Commercial, which is pending State approval as well as funding resolution required by the State. Construction is scheduled to begin in March 2025 and take over a year to complete.

CalAIM Initiative

CalAIM will provide awareness to detained youth and their families of Medi-Cal and their eligibility. Detained youth can be enrolled in Medi-Cal and begin to utilize their health benefits while detained and have facilitated ongoing and direct connections to enhanced care management in the community upon their release from detention.

The county is taking a collaborative approach with Probation, Health Services Agency, Human Services Department, Sheriff's, and local Community Based Organization to plan, implement, and operationalize CalAIM. It will provide an opportunity for screening, pre-release planning, linkages to enhanced care management and reimbursement for some of the medical and behavioral health services. CalAIM funding was awarded \$250,000 in Round 2 for screening and implementation and \$1.5 million in Round 3 for prerelease planning and implementation. The new CalAIM framework presents an opportunity for revenue depending on reimbursement.

Line of Sight for the Future of the Work

The Department values a strong collaboration between juvenile justice and community-based organizations and program providers to locally serve and support youth who are reentering their community after confinement. Probation is dedicated to creating a safer, more rehabilitative, and humane environment to facilitate individualized positive outcomes/measurable results.

The department has a deep commitment to reform efforts that have been designed to center equity, reduce unnecessary detention, and address the overrepresentation of youth of color, primarily Latinx, to create equitable opportunities for success.

The Juvenile Hall will focus on increasing successful transitions from detention to the community through Alternative to Detention, the STAR program, CalAIM and Rising Scholars. We will coordinate with service providers to ensure youth, and their families are connected to support and prosocial programs/opportunities. This approach will support collective impact work geared to increasing the success of community transitions from detention and upon completion of a commitment, specifically for Latinx youth and all youth we serve.

