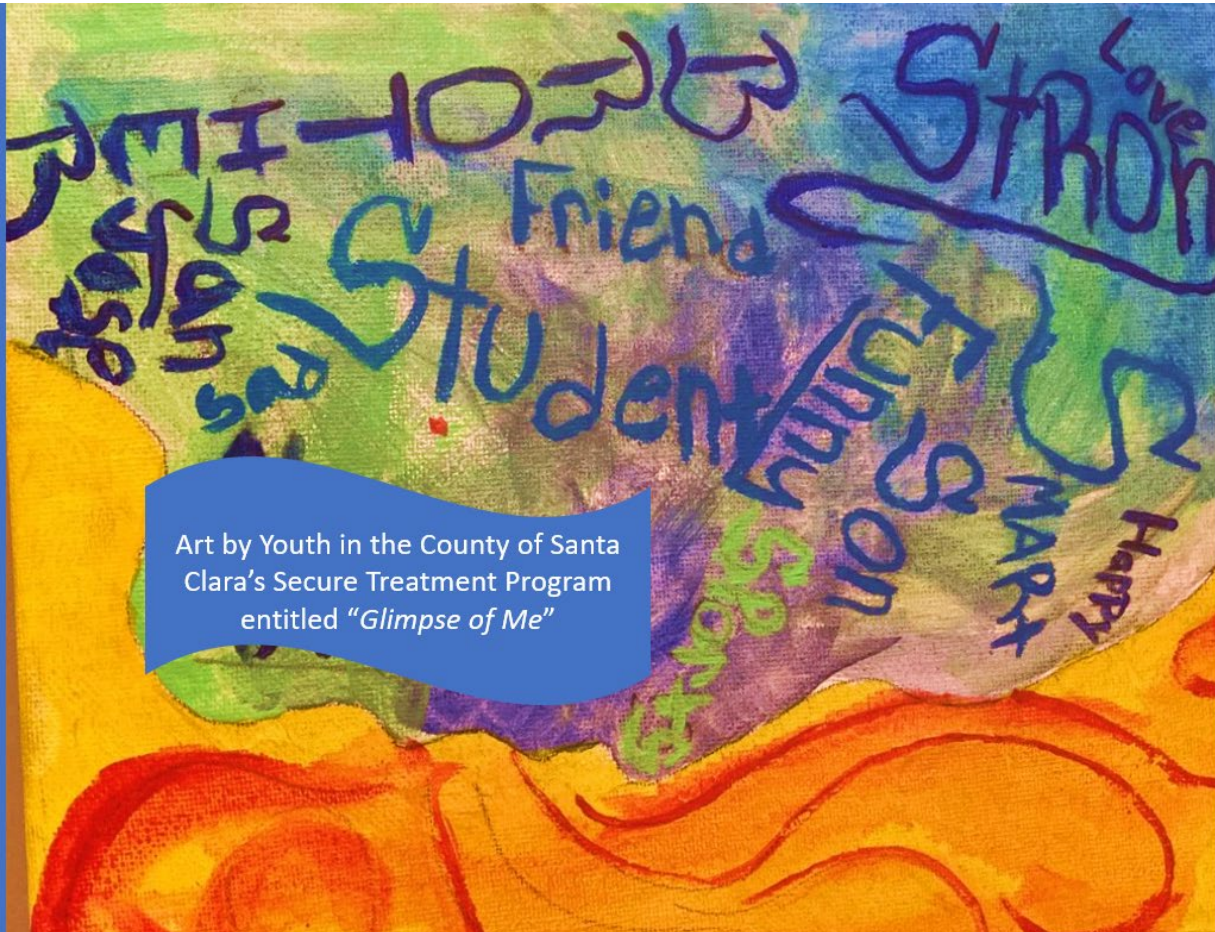


California Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant 2022 County Plan Summary Report



Art by Youth in the County of Santa Clara's Secure Treatment Program entitled "*Glimpse of Me*"

Prepared by the
Office of Youth and
Community Restoration



MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR KATHERINE LUCERO

This is the Office of Youth and Community Restoration's (OYCR) first annual Summary Report of the county plans as anticipated by Senate Bill 823 (Chapter 337, Statutes of 2020). These plans document a critical step in California's approach to caring for youth who have committed law violations. Since July 1, 2021, all youth are now cared for in their own communities rather than sent to a State Youth Facility - Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The plans demonstrate the substantial work counties have undertaken in developing their approach to caring for youth— what programming they need, what facilities they will live in, and how counties will use data and outcomes to measure the success of their approach.

However, this is only the first stage of work by counties as they take on the task of raising and healing these young people, all of whom will reenter our community. I know that counties are committed to this work, and OYCR is committed to supporting them. My team and I have read all the plans and addendums; we have also met with probation teams from all 58 counties, youth advocates from around the state, behavioral health experts, educational advocates, prosecutors, defense counsel, judges, and many others. We have toured many facilities where we have been able to speak to youth who are in the Secure Youth Treatment Facilities (SYTF). We seek to understand how to help support counties in welcoming home all justice-involved youth, offering developmentally supportive rehabilitative programming, and providing all youth what they need to rejoin our communities and continue their healing and growth journey towards a productive adulthood.

OYCR views these plans from an iterative process that will build, expand, and deepen from year to year, ultimately creating the documentation of evidence based, trauma informed, gender respectful and culturally aware programs necessary to provide the healing interventions that will make a positive difference in the lives of our youth. I want to thank all the juvenile justice partners that have made themselves available to advise me and my team on how to support our youth and those caring for our youth. Only with committed partners and the collective determination to make a difference for families and youth can OYCR achieve its mission.

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VISION OF CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 823 (SB 823)

SB 823 (2020) created the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) within the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS), marking a statewide commitment to recognizing youth who commit offenses as needing wrap around support, services, and treatment to thrive. OYCR’s mission is to promote trauma responsive, culturally informed, developmentally appropriate services for court-involved youth to support their successful transition into adulthood. OYCR is mandated, among other responsibilities, to identify and disseminate best practices to inform healing and restorative youth practices and to provide technical assistance to counties in their care of youth.

California’s approach to caring for youth who commit criminal offenses has been undergoing a decades-long transformation. For the last two decades, the State has progressively reduced the number of youths in state youth prisons and increasingly returned those youth to be cared for in their communities. [SB 823](#) completed this transformation by closing the state’s Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) as of June 30, 2023, and ceasing most intake to DJJ as of July 1, 2021. This change was premised on developments in the understanding of adolescent brain development^{1,2} and on the demonstrated fact that youth who commit offenses are better cared for close to home, in their own communities, where they can remain connected to their families and networks and prepare for reentry.^{3,4,5}

SB 823 also developed the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) to support counties in caring for youth who would otherwise have been eligible for DJJ. The JJRBG provides an allocation to each county based on a funding formula outlined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 1991, with a minimum of \$250,000 per county.⁶ To be eligible for the funding, each county was required to create a subcommittee of the multiagency juvenile coordinating council, chaired by the chief probation officer and including representatives from the district attorney’s office, the public defender’s office, the department of social services, the department of mental health, the county office of education or a school district, and the court, and no fewer than three community members with experience providing community-based youth services, youth justice advocates, and/or people with lived experience in the juvenile justice system.

¹ Giedd JN, Blumenthal J, Jeffries NO, et al. (2009). Brain development during childhood and adolescence: a longitudinal MRI study. *Nature Neuroscience*. 2:861–863.

² Konrad, K., Firk, C., & Uhlhaas, P. J. (2013). Brain development during adolescence: neuroscientific insights into this developmental period. *Deutsches Arzteblatt International*, 110(25), 425–431. <https://doi.org/10.3238/arztebl.2013.0425>

³ Davis, A., Irvine, A, & Ziedenberg, J. (2014). *Close to Home: Strategies to Place Young People in Their Communities*. National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

⁴ Fabelo, T, Arrigona, N. , Thompson, M.D., Clemens, A., Marchbanks, M.P., (2015). *Closer to Home: An Analysis of the State and Local Impact of the Texas Juvenile Justice Reforms*. Council of State Governments Justice Center and The Public Policy Research Institute, Texas A&M University.

⁵ The Center for Children’s Law and Policy. (2018). *Implementation of New York’s Close to Home Initiative: A New Model for Youth Justice*.

⁶ The distribution methodology will be revisited by the Governor and the Legislature by January 10, 2024. Welfare & Institutions Code section 1991(a)(4)

To be eligible for the funding, each subcommittee had to develop a plan that included specific elements.⁷ Some of those elements are as follows:

- Demographic and offense information for youth who would have been eligible to be cared for at DJJ (specifically youth who were adjudicated to be a ward of the juvenile court based on an offense in section [707\(b\) of the Welfare & Institutions Code](#) or section [290.008 of the Penal Code](#)).⁸
- A description of how funds would be used to address the key needs of youth being cared for in the county:
 - Mental health needs, sex abuse treatment, behavioral needs, trauma-based needs
 - Healthy adolescent development
 - Family engagement
 - Reentry (including employment, housing, continuing education)
 - Evidence-based, promising, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive programs
 - Services or programs provided by community-based providers.
- A detailed facility plan, including improvements to accommodate long-term commitments.
- A description of how the plan will incentivize keeping youth in the juvenile system.
- A description of any regional agreements.
- A description of how data will be collected and outcome measures that will be used to measure or determine the results of the programs.



Counties were required to submit their initial plans by January 1, 2022. OYCR is required to “review the plan to ensure that the plan contains all the elements” and “may return the plan to the county for revision as necessary prior to final acceptance of the plan.”⁹ To continue to receive funding, the subcommittee must convene at least every third year, but at minimum must submit the most recent plan, regardless of changes, by May 1 of each year.¹⁰ OYCR is required to make the plans available on its website, along with a summary of the plans.¹¹

⁷ The complete listing of elements can be found at [Welfare & Institutions Code section 1995\(c\)](#).

⁸ For a definition of the “realignment target population,” see [Welfare and Institutions Code section 1990\(b\)](#).

⁹ [Welfare and Institutions Code section 1995\(g\)](#).

¹⁰ [Welfare and Institutions Code section 1995\(e\)](#).

¹¹ [Welfare and Institutions Code section 1995\(g\)](#).

JJRBG PLAN – OYCR REVIEW PROCESS

County plans were due on January 1, 2022, prior to the OYCR Director being appointed. As a result, in undertaking the plan review, OYCR recognized that counties were completing their plans without the benefit of any technical assistance. OYCR also acknowledged that this was the first submission in an annual process that would be iterative and would be enhanced both by OYCR's increased ability to support counties in their development of plans and by the counties' experience with caring for youth in the target population.

All counties submitted their plans timely. Upon receipt, OYCR reviewed each of the 58 county plans and identified questions and areas of potential revision. Following the review, in March 2022, OYCR Director Katherine Lucero and her staff met with representatives from each of the 58 county probation offices. Fifty-seven of the 58 meetings were conducted by zoom and one by phone, and all meetings included the chief probation officer and/or key staff. At these meetings, the OYCR team requested supplemental information from the county relating to the statutory requirements for each plan, sought additional information about each county, and gave each county an opportunity to ask questions and identify ways that OYCR could support them.



The virtual meetings were conducted in a spirit of collaboration and were an opportunity to begin the complex discussions around approaches to the care, housing, and rehabilitation of their youth in the deepest end of each county's continuum of care. Counties explained their varied approaches to this critical work, including the development of regional agreements, relationships with community members and organizations, and engagement with families and community members, including those who experienced the impact of offenses by the youth in question. After each meeting, OYCR staff summarized the requests for revisions and counties were asked to provide their revised plans within 30 days.

During the meetings with each county, OYCR ascertained whether counties would be able to gather and provide the requested information within the given timeframe. For instance, due to a wide range in counties' data collection and analysis systems and teams, not all counties were able to commit to providing the additional requested demographic data in their 2022 plans. In such cases, they were asked to provide that information in their 2023 plan, with technical assistance from OYCR. Similarly, for requests relating to policy issues that would need to go back to the subcommittee for further development – such as approaches to outcome analysis or retaining youth in the juvenile system – OYCR asked those counties to include the requested information in their 2023 plans.

The requests for revision primarily fell within the following categories:

EXPANDED DATA

Counties were asked to provide demographic data not only for the youth at DJJ but all youth who would have been eligible for DJJ due to the offenses that they committed. Additionally, counties were often asked for a breakdown of where such youth were placed if they were not sent to DJJ, such as a community placement, a ranch, or a camp. This data is critical to establishing a baseline for each county with respect to its use of secure commitments and understanding whether, going forward, a county is committing more youth to SYTF than to DJJ (also called “net widening”). OYCR is currently establishing processes to obtain necessary data from counties on a regular basis.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Some counties were asked to provide further information on plans to transform existing facilities into spaces suitable for caring for youth for durations exceeding one year. Some of this information was included in counties’ applications for the Youth Programs and Facilities Grant (YPMFG), submitted and disbursed in 2021. These facility improvements are challenging to undertake but critical given most secure county facilities were not designed for the long-term commitment of youth.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

Considering the demographic make-up of their youth, certain counties were asked to describe any culturally responsive programming they offered for the majority or significant minority populations, including Latinx, Black, and Native youth.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND REENTRY

Particularly where youth in the target population are being cared for in other counties due to a lack of capacity, additional information was requested relating to the more complex work of family engagement and reentry services for youth who are still further from home. Such services are critical to keeping youth connected with their communities and facilitating their reentry.

HOUSING APPROACH FOR SECURE TREATMENT

Some counties with Secure Treatment facilities were asked for additional information on how youth would be classified in those facilities considering age, gender, and other key factors, .

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Certain counties were asked to provide expanded information, if available, relating to the type of data they would collect and how they would measure outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and services being offered to youth in the target population.

SECURE YOUTH TREATMENT FACILITIES (SYTF): SUMMARY OF PLANS

Each plan required the county to provide information on the facilities it would use to care for youth in the target population, meaning youth who could previously have been sent to DJJ. While 33 counties are adapting existing facilities to serve as a SYTF, other counties, particularly counties that have had historically low referrals to DJJ, are entering into regional agreements. Additionally, some counties have indicated that they are not able to care for specific sub populations, such as youth who need specialized treatment because they have severe mental health needs or who need specialized treatment related to sex abuse offenses.

Figure 1: Secure Youth Treatment Facilities as of 7/7/22



HIGHLIGHTED AREA 1: REGIONAL AND CONSORTIUM AGREEMENTS

Due to the historically low number of DJJ commitments in smaller counties and the low anticipated need for services, many counties established regional agreements. As of the writing of the plans, Yuba, Colusa, and Sutter counties continue to operate under a Joint Powers Agreement; Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties are discussing a new regional agreement; and Santa Cruz and Sonoma counties have a Memorandum of Understanding for Santa Cruz County youth to be served in Sonoma County. Some counties with robust specialized programs, such as Sonoma, El Dorado, and Butte have capacity to serve youth from other counties but have not yet developed formal regional agreements.

At the time the plans were written, many counties that were willing to accept youth from neighboring counties had not yet determined how many youths they anticipated being able to serve. This leaves an open question as to their capacity to serve youth from neighboring counties.

In addition to specific regional agreements, 556 counties participate in the Probation Consortium Partnering for Youth Realignment known as the “Consortium”. The Consortium was incorporated in March 2022 as a California Public Benefit Nonprofit Corporation to function as an inter-county collaborative resource for local probation departments in their efforts to identify strategies for youth with intense and complex needs who are ordered by the juvenile court into a SYTF. The Consortium was created in response to the State’s decision to close the state-operated youth facilities.



The Consortium is a resource for county probation departments with the mission to:

- facilitate collaboration across counties when there are youth who require a SYTF that is not available within their own county;
- convene discussions among participating counties to connect counties who need services with counties that have services available;
- provide local or statewide analysis about gaps in secure youth treatment needs and training or other technical assistance as needed; and
- facilitate discussions and agreements amongst government partners to problem-solve the needs of youth in a SYTF.

HIGHLIGHTED AREA 2: SUPPORTING SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS

Many counties indicated that they are not able to care for certain categories of youth. Notably, 43 counties (74%) indicated that they planned to contract with neighboring counties or join a regional agreement for specialized treatment for youth who had committed sex offenses. Eighteen counties (31%) indicated that they would be able to care for girls at their county facilities. Fifteen counties (26%) identified local sex abuse offense treatment programs in their plan, with Fresno and Sonoma counties having established regional hubs for sex abuse offense treatment.

HIGHLIGHTED AREA 3: ALREADY PLANNING FOR STEP-DOWN PLACEMENTS

Twelve counties (21%) identified a step-down placement for youth in their plan, and many more stated they plan to establish relationships with community service providers to develop step down plans. For youth to successfully reenter into society, OYCR notes it will be important that counties have step-down options, and that youth are not served in maximum security facilities for extended periods of time.

ANTICIPATED PRIORITY AREAS OF SUPPORT BASED ON JIRBG PLANS

During the process of plan review and discussions with county stakeholders, some common areas of need were identified and OYCR will work with counties to support best practices and offering technical assistance in these areas.

OYCR is in the process of connecting with each county, via site visits, to learn how to support the current work being done to facilitate change in systems, build capacity, improve practices, and develop performance metrics. These visits are also an opportunity for OYCR to highlight best practices within the counties and share innovative ideas and successes with other counties.

NEED 1: CHALLENGES FOR SMALL, RURAL COUNTIES

OYCR’s review of county plans coupled with meetings with probation representatives revealed strengths and challenges of small, rural counties. While small counties were often able to engage in individualized diversion and placement of youth preventing the need to send them to DJJ, they also indicated that they lacked necessary, easily accessible services due to a scarcity or total lack of community-based organizations or mental health providers, or to the distances required to access such services. Of California’s 58 counties, there are 30 “small” counties, as designated by the Board of State and Community



Corrections (BSCC) based on Department of Finance census data¹², and for purposes of this report, we are referring to as rural. Of these 30 rural counties, ten counties (33%) listed over five provider partnerships, indicating that robust community-based services are available, nine counties (30%) listed three or four partnerships, and eleven counties (37%) listed only one or two, or indicated that they plan to partner with neighboring counties.

OYCR is committed to working with small, rural counties to identify priority areas of need and to develop innovative means to bring additional community-based resources into communities lacking the wealth of community-based organizations larger counties often have.

NEED 2: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

The plan review and meetings with each county made apparent the wide range of approaches and capacities across the state to collect and analyze data relating to court-involved youth. While some counties had sophisticated data collection and analysis systems, others were manually counting youth. Additionally, while some counties were using a large set of qualitative metrics to evaluate youth outcomes, others remained focused on metrics of recidivism and similar measures typically used for adult correctional outcome measurement.

NEED 3: RETAINING YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE SYSTEM

A key goal of SB 823 and juvenile justice realignment is the recognition that youth are better cared for in the juvenile system and not in the adult prison system. As part of an effort to ensure that the closure of DJJ does not result in an increase in transfers to the adult criminal justice system, each county provided a description of how they plan to retain youth at the juvenile level.

The majority of counties plan to retain youth in the juvenile system by developing robust county or regional secure treatment placement that support the youth, with a guarantee that specialized treatment and programming options will be available to meet the high-need youth and that evidence-based practices are used at all levels of programming and services. Counties plan to offer a continuum of services through partnerships with community-based organizations and give youth an opportunity to succeed at the lowest level of intervention as possible. Many counties stated that formal recommendations from probation to the court are to be approved by the Chief Probation Officer and consider the youth's individualized education plan and document goals and programs completed by the youth for regular review by the court.

Several counties had innovative strategies that are promising practices with the potential to be used across the state. For example, Los Angeles County plans to engage leadership of youth formerly

¹² California Department of Finance, Forecasting Webpage <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/Demographics/>

incarcerated in DJJ, in the adult system, and survivors of serious crimes in developing the continuum of effective alternatives.

NEED 4: FACILITIES DESIGN AND STEP-DOWN APPROACHES

While counties have put substantial thought into adapting existing facilities to serve as Secure Youth Treatment Facilities, transforming an existing and often old facility into a therapeutic environment is a challenging endeavor. Since youth are already being placed in the secure treatment and others will return to their home counties from DJJ by July 1, 2023, OYCR is committed to supporting counties in ensuring that therapeutic, developmentally appropriate environments are provided for youth with longer stays. To that end, OYCR is working to develop expertise in therapeutic facility design by seeking collaborations with experts in therapeutic facility design. This expertise will allow OYCR to work directly with counties as they continue to develop their approach.

In addition to developing therapeutic secure facilities, OYCR is committed to supporting counties in evolving their continuum of care to allow youth to move (or “step down”) from secure facilities into less restrictive environments where they have more access to educational, vocational, social-emotional, and community-based activities that will progressively enable them to develop the capacity to reenter the community. Having youth step down to less restrictive environments promotes positive youth development. Moreover, research shows that longer commitment in highly restrictive settings can increase the potential for recidivism, which does not result in improved public safety outcomes.^{13, 14} Given OYCR’s focus on supporting counties to decrease recidivism, OYCR will help counties build the capacity to develop step-down options, which are a critical piece of realignment success.



MOVING FORWARD

Even in the face of tight timelines, counties included youth voice and stakeholders to begin developing and implementing programs and services for youth who would have previously been sent to DJJ. There is much promise in these early programs and opportunities for continued development. Numerous community and advocacy groups have made contributions to the plans and are core to the delivery of

¹³ Sarah Cusworth Walker & Asia Sarah Bishop (2016). Length of stay, therapeutic change, and recidivism for incarcerated juvenile offenders, *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 55:6, 355-376, DOI: 10.1080/10509674.2016.1194946

¹⁴ Winokur, Kristin Parsons, Alisa Smith, Stephanie R. Bontrager, & Julia L. Blankenship (2008). “Juvenile Recidivism and Length of Stay,” *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 36, No. 2.

community-based services for the target population. OYCR looks forward to receiving annual county plan updates, ongoing collaboration and furthering these efforts as the State works towards supporting these youth in their successful transition into adulthood, creating healing not only for youth but also communities along the way.

ADDITIONAL RELATED MATERIALS ON OYCR WEBSITE

In addition to the JIRBG plans, OYCR consulted, and is providing links on the OYCR website, other materials related to the same issues, including the following categories of documents:

- *Youth Programs and Facilities Grant (YFPG) Application*. The YFPG Application allows the BSCC to award one-time grants to counties for the purpose of providing resource for infrastructure-related needs and improvements to assist counties in the development of a local continuum of care. The Part A YFPG allows counties to apply to develop regional hubs to serve either females, youth with sex abuse offenses, or seriously mentally ill youth referred by other counties. The Part B YFPG allocates funds to counties based on the county juvenile population to support the in-county population of realigned youth.
- *Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act and Youthful Offender Block Grant (JJCPA-YOBG) Annual Plan*. The JJCPA-YOBG Annual Plan provides funding for counties to implement programs that have been effective in reducing crime and delinquency among at-risk youth and to deliver custody care who previously would have been committed to DJJ.
- *County Notice of Proposed Operation and Description of Secure Youth Treatment Facility*. The County Notice of Proposed Operations and Description of Secure Youth Treatment Facility outlines the operations of the secure youth treatment facility a county is proposing to establish.
- *Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council Websites*. [Welfare and Institutions Code section 749.22](#) requires each county to create a multiagency juvenile justice coordinating council.
- *County Probation Websites*. County probation offices are responsible for the care and rehabilitation of our court-involved youth. Many of their websites have valuable resources related to their juvenile justice continuum of care and other resources.