



**NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY  
2014-2015**

**JANUARY 12, 2015**

**FINAL REPORT**

**NAPA COUNTY JUVENILE HALL  
ANNUAL REVIEW**

# NAPA COUNTY JUVENILE HALL ANNUAL REVIEW

## I. SUMMARY

Each year, as mandated by State law, the Napa County Grand Jury must physically inspect all jail and detention facilities within Napa County. The 2014-2015 Grand Jury inspected the Napa County Juvenile Hall (NCJH) on October 27, 2014, and met with senior supervisory staff. At a later date, follow up interviews were conducted with two of the juveniles, along with two counselors. The Grand Jury also interviewed the Napa County Deputy Public Defender who is assigned to cases within the juvenile justice system.

The focus on juvenile detention at NCJH is centered on rehabilitation rather than punishment. NCJH uses a variety of evidence-based programs to achieve this goal, such as the Evening Support Center. Educational and counseling services are also offered the juveniles in an effort to help offset the negative effects of alcohol and drug abuse. Mental health counseling is available as well to help the juveniles take responsibility for their own behavior.

Visitation rights are limited to family members over the age of 18. However, the Court or Probation Officer can grant special authorization to allow visitation for siblings under the age of 18. Juveniles are afforded the opportunity to file grievances against other juveniles or counselors.

A nurse is present on a daily basis and also available on-call 24 hours to accommodate the medical needs requested by the juveniles. Exercise for all juveniles is part of the daily routine at NCJH. The supervisory staff and counselors are required by state law to complete training classes every year as a requirement for employment.

Security is a high priority at NCJH with a central control room that monitors all movement within the building and along the perimeter of the exercise yard. The Grand Jury would like the Chief Probation Officer to re-visit the Recommendations by the 2013-2014 Grand Jury that address the updating of video equipment in the Juvenile Hall facility. Overall, the Grand Jury found the NCJH to be a secure, well maintained and professionally operated facility.

## II. BACKGROUND

Juvenile Detention centers in California are required to adhere to mandated standards, rules and regulations under Title 15 and Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. Every two years, the Board of State and Community Corrections reviews/inspects the Juvenile Hall to make sure the standards are being met. Each year, the Juvenile Justice Commission, a mandated county commission, conducts a thorough and comprehensive inspection of the Napa County Juvenile Hall facility.

In 2004, a new Juvenile Hall was built adjacent to the Napa County Department of Health and Human Services facility on Old Sonoma Road in the City of Napa. The new juvenile detention and rehabilitation center is administered by the Napa County Probation Department. The Chief Probation Officer is responsible for the overall operation of the Juvenile Hall, which is managed by a Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

NCJH currently employs 27 full time counselors with one Spanish bilingual staff per shift, all of which are classified as peace officers. NCJH also employs 16 extra-help staff to assist the counselors. The ideal ratio of staff to juveniles for supervision is one to 10. However, this ratio may fluctuate depending upon the number of juveniles under supervision. The staff does not carry weapons or pepper spray within the facility.

The maximum capacity of NCJH is 60 youths although the Probation Department has limited the facility to 50. The population fluctuates with an average being 25 juveniles per day. The average population for the month of November 2014 was 21. The Assistant Superintendent told the Grand Jury that a gradual downward trend in the facility's population has been evident since 2004.

The average age of the juveniles is between 15 and 17 years old, with more males than females. However, the Grand Jury was told by the Chief Probation Officer that juveniles as young as 11 years old have been detained. The length of stay for juveniles in the Juvenile Hall ranges from a few weeks to several months depending on their status and the charges against them. NCJH is a locked, secure, 24-hour facility.

Upon intake, all juveniles undergo comprehensive medical and mental health screenings, after which they are classified according to their arrest status and housed on an appropriate unit. There are two housing units in the Juvenile Hall. The Merit Unit houses females and/or male juveniles with less serious charges. The Prospect Unit houses the older male juveniles. In addition to the rooms on each unit, there is a TV, a dining area, showers, interview areas and two telephones accessible to the juveniles.

NCJH's mission is to provide custody, counseling, medical care and guidance to delinquent and custodial children in a variety of short and medium term programs. In recognition of its outstanding programs, the American Probation and Parole Association awarded Napa County Probation Department the American Probation "Presidents Award" in 2014.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. Interviews Conducted**

- Napa County Chief Probation Officer
- Assistant Superintendent of Napa County Juvenile Hall
- Two Napa County Juvenile Hall Counselors
- Napa County Deputy Public Defender
- Two Napa County Juvenile Hall Detainees

#### **B. Documents Reviewed**

- NCJH Policy and Procedures Manual
- Nineteen Incident Reports ó January 2013 to September 2014
- Grand Jury Reports ó 2009 through 2013
- Biennial Inspection of NCJH by Board of State and Community Corrections
- NCJH Grievance Manual
- Juvenile Justice Commission Annual Inspection Report -2014

#### **C. Napa County Juvenile Facility Inspection**

- Holding Cells
- Restrooms and Shower Area
- Visitation Area
- Control Room
- Classrooms
- Dining Area
- Exercise Yard
- Library

## **IV. DISCUSSION**

### **A. Rehabilitation vs. Punishment**

The Chief Probation Officer of NCJH told the Grand Jury that the primary goal of the staff at NCJH is to focus on rehabilitating troubled juveniles rather than on punishing them for their offenses. The detained juveniles are held accountable for their behavior but the nature of the detention is more centered on changing their behavior in an effort to reduce the rate of recidivism.

The Assistant Superintendent told the Grand Jury that it is difficult to measure accurately the rate of recidivism, because of the complex structure of the reporting agencies. However, the Grand Jury was told that the current average daily population of detained juveniles is the lowest it has been in 10 years.

The Grand Jury was informed during an interview with the Chief Probation Officer that 90% of the detained juveniles return home on probation after an initial detention of one to 10 months. The remaining 10% of the detained juveniles are either placed in residential treatment centers or assigned to Juvenile Camps where they receive treatment for mental health, substance abuse and behavioral issues.

NCJH uses a variety of evidence-based programs to discourage juveniles from the frequency of coming in contact with the juvenile justice system. The primary goals of the evidence-based programs are to hold juveniles accountable for their behavior while reducing the negative outcomes experienced by those who enter the juvenile justice system. Some of the evidence-based programs include the Evening Support Center, Anger Replacement Therapy, Thinking for Changes and Youth at Risk. Most of the programs in the Hall are provided by volunteer organizations.

### **B. Educational and Counseling Programs**

The Grand Jury verified through interviews and observations that the NCJH educational program offers a clear pathway for all detained juveniles to obtain high school diplomas. The classes are small with students attending classes Monday through Friday. The educational program is coordinated through the Napa County Office of Education.

The Grand Jury further learned that the counseling services provided at NCJH enable juveniles to practice cognitive thinking skills to help them cope with anger management, life skills and peer resolution.

Juveniles are given one hour of outside exercise activity each day, which is the state mandated minimum time limit. The juveniles told the Grand Jury that sometimes the

exercise activities are limited or too structured, and that they would like to have more free exercise time.

The visitation rights of the juveniles allow two family visits per week but no one under the age of 18 is allowed to visit without prior authorization of the assigned Probation Officer or the Court. Two juveniles, who were interviewed, expressed a desire to visit with their younger siblings but were unaware of the procedure for them to request visits. The juveniles also said they would like their parents to be given written guidelines governing the visitation rights for younger siblings.

### **C. Mental Health Services**

The Grand Jury learned from the Chief Probation Officer that crisis intervention for juveniles with severe mental health issues is available on a 24-hour basis. The Chief Probation Officer of NCJH also told the Grand Jury that more juveniles are now being detained at NCJH for behavioral problems consistent with mental health issues.

### **D. Security**

NCJH has a Control Center that monitors all movement on the exterior and interior of the building. All doors are locked and can only be opened by a staff member in the Control Center. Video cameras are located at strategic locations throughout the facility.

The video feed from the cameras to the screens in the Control Center lacked a clear resolution, making it difficult to clearly identify individuals in the building. The Grand Jury also made note of several blind spots in the exercise yard that were not covered by video cameras. Supervisory staff is aware of these issues.

The 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report included a Recommendation that addressed the outdated and inadequate video/camera system at the NCJH. The Recommendation stated that the video/camera system located within the NCJH facility should be updated within a reasonable time frame with current state-of-the-art equipment.

A second Recommendation by the 2013-2014 Grand Jury stated that additional cameras should be installed at locations in the exercise yard to ensure that there are no blind spots within the facility. The Director of NCJH responded to the Recommendations by stating that by the end of FY 2015 these two Recommendations would be fully implemented.

The tour conducted by the 2014-2015 Grand Jury on October 27, 2014, revealed little or no progress on the implementation of either Recommendation. However, it was noted by a supervisor that the NCJH staff have initiated a process to research the viability of purchasing and installing a new video system consistent with current budget limitations.

A variety of video systems are currently being examined for their compatibility with the existing technology at NCJH.

The Grand Jury was told that the replacement and updating of equipment currently in use at the NCJH would be delayed due to the financial impact of repairing other county buildings caused by the August 24, 2014 earthquake.

### **E. State Mandated Training for Staff**

When hired, Juvenile Hall Counselors complete 40 hours of orientation training. Within their first year of employment, they also must complete five-weeks of Correctional Worker Core Academy (CORE) training certified through the Standards and Trainings of Corrections (STC). In addition, they complete a week of training on powers of arrest pursuant to Penal Code section 832. Extra help Juvenile Hall counselors are not required to complete STC training. However, they are expected to complete the other required training for Napa County Probation personnel.

### **F. Grievance Policy**

Juveniles may file a grievance at any time against another juvenile or a counselor. Most grievances filed by juveniles center around the interpersonal relationships between either another juvenile or a counselor. All grievances are handled confidentially and in a timely manner.

## **V. FINDINGS**

- F1.** The video/camera system at the NCJH is still in need of the technical upgrading that would better identify the individuals on the monitoring screens in the Control Center.
- F2.** Extra surveillance cameras are still needed in the exercise yard area to help eliminate blind spots within the yard and on the perimeter of the facility.
- F3.** Some juveniles at NCJH are unaware of the procedures to arrange for visits by their younger siblings.

## **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Chief Probation Officer expedite by the end of FY 2015, the process of purchasing and installing upgraded video equipment in the Control Center consistent with current state-of-the-art equipment.
- R2.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Chief Probation Officer expedite by the end of FY 2015, the process of adding extra cameras in the exercise yard to ensure that there are no blind spots within the facility or along the perimeter of the yard.
- R3.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Chief Probation Officer provide both the parents and the juveniles with a written copy of the guidelines governing the visitation rights of younger siblings and post the guidelines in the visitation area.

## **VII. REQUEST FOR RESPONSES**

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests Responses as follows:

From the following individuals:

- Chief Probation Officer: **R1, R2, R3**

It is requested that the NCJH Chief Probation Officer certify by signature that the responses conform to the requirements of Penal Code Section 933.05

## **VIII. COMMENDATIONS**

The 2014-2015 Grand Jury commends the Director of NCJH for her leadership role in achieving the nationally recognized American Probation "Presidents Award" in 2014.