



**NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY
2015-2016**

May 6, 2016

FINAL REPORT

NAPA COUNTY JUVENILE HALL

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SUMMARY

The 2015-2016 Grand Jury inspected Napa County Juvenile Hall (NCJH) and conducted formal interviews with management and staff, and informal interviews with detainees. The mission of NCJH is to remove juvenile offenders from the community and to offer them rehabilitation programs which will enable a successful return to family and community.

The 2015-2016 Grand Jury found that NCJH is well maintained and provides a safe and healthy environment for juveniles with a strong focus on rehabilitation and education. The 2015-2016 Grand Jury was concerned that previously identified problems with video camera surveillance have not been resolved.

BACKGROUND

Each year, as mandated by State Law, the Napa County Grand Jury must physically inspect all jail and detention facilities within Napa County. Napa County Juvenile Hall (NCJH) is one of the detention facilities required to be inspected.

Two previous Grand Juries found and recommended that outdated video surveillance cameras, which produced poor quality and uneven sequencing of images, be replaced. Previous Juries also found that some areas of NCJH are not covered adequately by camera surveillance thus creating "blind spots". This Grand Jury felt that additional investigation into these findings should be explored to confirm that the situation was resolved, as well as ensuring NCJH was following protocol for the safety and well-being of employees and detainees.

METHODOLOGY

A. Interviews Conducted

- Napa County Probation Office
- Two NCJH Supervisors
- Two NCJH Counselors
- Ten NCJH Detainees (informal interviews)

B. Documents Reviewed

- NCJH Grand Jury Reports – 2009-2014
- NCJH Population Statistics – January 2006-December 2015
- NCJH Orientation for Minors
- NCJH Medical Screening Form
- NCJH Classification Assessment

Napa County Juvenile Justice Center Behavioral Summary
Napa/American Canyon Peer Court Program
NCJH Policy and Procedures Manual
NCJH Minor's Grievance Reports, June-December 2015
NCJH Fire, Food, Health, and Safety Reports 2014-2015
Juvenile Hall-Crossroads School Yearly Report, 2014-15
NCJH Organization Chart, 2015
NCJH Probation Division Budget-Juvenile Hall, FY2015-16
Juvenile Justice Commission Annual Inspection Report, 2015

C. Napa County Juvenile Hall Facility Inspection

Sally Port, Holding, and Booking areas
Control Desk, including Observational and Padded Cells for Juveniles at risk
Prospect and Merit Wards, including Cells and Control Desks
Shower Facilities in both Wards
Common Areas in both Wards
Outside Recreation Areas
Kitchen
Library
Family Visiting Area

DISCUSSION

Grand Jury interviews were conducted with counselors, supervisors, superintendents as well as the Chief Probation Officer. During each interview we heard from highly professional, courteous, and well-trained professionals who were dedicated to the successful rehabilitation of the youths they support, and who treat both the youths and one another with respect and courtesy.

The 2015-2016 Grand Jury found the NCJH to be secure and well maintained. Overall, NCJH provides a safe and healthy environment for the detainees and staff. Medical care, counseling, and education programs are provided for each youth with the goal of rehabilitation and successful return to family and community. There is a high level of professionalism, dedication, and respect among the staff at NCJH. The youths are required to treat each other and staff with courtesy and respect. The rules are made clear and good behavior and achievement of goals is rewarded. Work done in cooperation with the Juvenile Probation Department and other community agencies is crucial to successful rehabilitation. The steady decline in census at NCJH and in the number of juveniles on probation in Napa County is testimony to the successful implementation of meaningful programs.

Funding for NCJH comes from the Napa County General Fund and the State of California. The requested budget for FY2016 represents a 4% increase over FY2015 from \$5.323M to \$5.35M. The budget reflects an increase of \$157,524 in salaries and benefits resulting from a three-year

labor agreement negotiated in FY2014-15, and an increase in cost for services by the medical service provider, California Forensic Medical Group.

There is a close working relationship between NCJH and the Napa County Juvenile Probation Department. Juvenile probation programs are fundamental to the rehabilitation process as they help facilitate the transition for NCJH detainees as they re-enter the community. The Napa County Juvenile Probation Department also works in cooperation with local non-profit organizations including the Wolfe Center, the Boys and Girls Club, and ALDEA Children and Family Services. In spite of the fact that approximately 25% of the youth in the Napa juvenile probation system are associated with gangs, the severity of gang activity has lessened in recent years as a result of successful community intervention programs.

Napa County Juvenile Hall can adequately house 50 youths. However, the census has dropped steadily over the past several years as a result of community programs. One program that has significantly contributed to the census decline is the Evening Report Center (ERC). The ERC is a court ordered program and serves as an alternative for wards going through the Court process. Eligible youth are assessed at moderate or high risk to re-offend but do not have prior or pending violent felonies or sex offenses. The ERC provides service during high risk times of the day (3PM-7PM) since most juvenile crime occurs during the hours after school and before parents return home from work. The program lasts 60 days and includes intensive supervision along with cognitive behavioral training, education groups, guest speakers, pro-social activities, and, parenting groups. In 2009, when the ERC opened, 736 youths were on probation and the average daily census at NCJH was 44. In 2015, there were 250 youths on Probation and the average daily census at Juvenile Hall was 17.

In 2014, the Napa County Probation Department was awarded the American Probation and Parole Association's President's Award for exemplary community corrections programs. The award recognizes visionary organizations that have implemented innovations which will lead community corrections into the next decade.

The age range for youths held in detention at Juvenile Hall is 13-17 years old. The most common reasons for detention are theft, disturbing the peace, and sex offenses. Homicide and other serious violent crimes are far less common reasons for detention. Seventy to eighty percent of youths who are detained have drug issues. Mental health issues are also prevalent, and it was noted during staff interviews that recently there has been an alarming rise of younger teens in detention with mental health issues.

Medical services are provided under a contract with the California Forensic Medical Group (CFMG). Two RN's from CFMG and two mental health staff from Napa County Health and Human Services provide coverage at Juvenile Hall seven days a week. A psychiatrist from CFMG is on call 24 hours per day. Psychiatric counseling is also available via scheduled teleconferencing. Each youth receives a physical exam by a medical doctor within 24 hours of detention.

Crossroads School, located in classrooms connected to each of the two detention housing units, is operated by the Napa County Office of Education (NCOE). School attendance is mandatory for all youths who have not already received a high school diploma. Crossroads serves a variety of students, many of whom are deficient in high school credits. The academic level, number of credits needed, and special education needs are assessed for each student entering Crossroads. Student transcripts are evaluated to determine subject areas needed to meet graduation requirements. Additional tutoring during and after school hours is available for students who are struggling to meet these requirements. Youths attending Crossroads School may earn a High School Diploma, a General Education Development certificate; or, a State High School Proficiency Certificate. Napa Valley College representatives also work with the school to help teach students how to successfully transition to college.

In 2015, 50 students graduated from the Crossroads program earning a high school diploma or certificate. Many students participated in graduation ceremonies held at the Juvenile Justice Center where they received recognition from family, staff, local law enforcement, and representatives of the Napa Superior Court.

NCJH has 32 full time employees, consisting primarily of Juvenile Hall counselors and supervisors who report to the Assistant Superintendent. In addition to orientation training, within the first year of employment NCJH counselors are required to complete five weeks of Correctional Worker Core Academy (CORE) and the "Laws of Arrest" course. Once this training is complete the counselor becomes a Certified Correctional Officer.

When initially detained, each youth is assigned to a counselor. Counselors spend most of their working hours interacting with the youths. They begin their 12 hour shift by debriefing on each youth. Throughout their shift counselors maintain order and discipline in order to create a safe environment for both youth and the staff. They offer general support in all aspects of daily activity. They ensure the juveniles' good behavior during meals and recreation. They work closely with teachers and medical staff. They participate in every aspect of the youth's day to day life to insure successful rehabilitation and return to the community. They search cells for contraband and perform cell checks every fifteen minutes. They are also responsible for "Behavioral Summary Reports," which are due every two weeks. Counselor/Youth assignments are rotated frequently in an effort to gain fresh perspectives on challenges and progress for each detainee.

There is a weekly multidisciplinary NCJH team meeting attended by NCJH staff, Juvenile Probation, medical professionals, and mental health workers who meet to review the status of each youth.

When initially detained, the youths are given an orientation packet which explains the NCJH rules and policies. They are also instructed on conflict resolution through a grievance reporting process which is available to all detainees.

There are two cell units at NCJH, Prospect and Merit. When the census is high, both units are utilized. Younger, lesser offenders are placed in Merit and more serious offenders in Prospect. The average length of detention in 2015 was 24 days.

A typical day for the youths starts at 6:30 am with cell cleanup, shower, and breakfast. Crossroads school is in session from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. All youths get one hour per day of large muscle exercise in the outside recreation yard and some downtime, which may include structured after school programs from 3:15 to 5:00 pm. The youths are allowed 2 one-hour supervised visits per week with parents or guardians. They must receive special permission from Juvenile Probation for visits with siblings or friends. They have limited telephone privileges. They may write letters. Their outgoing correspondence is not censored, and postage is free. They have access to clergy and to attorneys upon request.

In addition, youths are placed in special behavioral programs that address their particular needs. These programs utilize measurable outcomes. The staff uses "Evidence Based Practices" developed by the Carey Group, which have been demonstrated to improve offender outcomes. A behavior modification merit system, which encourages positive behavior and results in privileges such as staying up later and access to special snacks or other items, has also been implemented.

On weekends there are additional programs with community volunteers that may include art classes, language arts, and pet therapy. Movie night and extra recreation can also be part of weekend activities.

Youths may file a grievance report if they experience problems or have a complaint. They are advised that doing so will not result in reprisal. All grievance reports are reviewed within twenty-four hours by counselors who work with the youths to arrive at a mutually agreed upon resolution. Between June and December, 2015, 35 grievances were filed and each was reviewed by the Grand Jury. The majority of grievances were minor. Complaints focused on conflicts with staff or other detainees, or were a result of misinterpretation of the rules. Incidents that involved threatening and/or physical aggression were also reported by staff. In 2015 there were 13 "Youth on Youth", and 3 "Youth on Staff" Incident Reports filed at NCJH.

Some youths reach the age of 18 while detained at NCJH and are not eligible for probation. In 2015, five youths who reached the age of 18 were sent to Youth Camps operated outside of Napa County. None were transferred to Napa County Jail.

Informal interviews with the youths were conducted by the Grand Jury during a lunch break. Generally, the youths were polite, pleasant and responded openly to questions. Although not happy about their circumstances, they felt that they were treated fairly and that they were safe.

CONCLUSIONS

During our facility inspection in October 2015, the 2015-2016 Grand Jury enquired regarding "Findings and Recommendations" from both the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 Grand Jury

investigations. Both previous Grand Juries found and recommended that outdated video surveillance cameras, which produced poor quality and uneven sequencing of images, be replaced. These Grand Juries also found that some areas of NCJH were not covered adequately by camera surveillance, thus creating "blind spots". During our investigation and interviews the 2015-2016 Grand Jury learned that, in spite of previous recommendations, video equipment had not been replaced and additional cameras were not installed to address the blind spots. In the fall of 2015, the Grand Jury was told that funding for the video camera upgrade continued to be delayed due to the strain on the Napa County Budget as a result of the August 2014, earthquake. The Grand Jury was assured by Juvenile Hall management that camera upgrades were scheduled to be made in late 2015 or early 2016. In addition, the Grand Jury learned that two way radios used by staff had poor quality sound and that there were "dead spots" in a few areas with no reception. In early 2016, new radios were purchased to improve radio communication throughout Juvenile Hall. The Grand Jury was also advised that as of spring 2016, NCJH was in the process of purchasing new camera equipment, but that installation would take time since a decision had been made to update the entire video surveillance system at Juvenile Hall. No completion date for the camera installation and system update was available as of the writing of this report.

The 2015-2016 Grand Jury is satisfied that inconsistent radio communication at Juvenile Hall was addressed in early 2016. However, the Grand Jury is concerned that video surveillance cameras have needed updating for the past several years and, although recommended by the two Grand Juries, upgrades still have not been completed. This issue continues to pose a possible safety risk to both staff and youths at Juvenile Hall.

FINDINGS

- F1:** The video surveillance cameras are outdated and of poor quality.
- F2:** Inadequate video surveillance leads to "blind spots" in the recreation yard and at the control desk areas in two detention units

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1:** Replace video surveillance cameras with up-to-date technology by December 31, 2016
- R2:** Place new cameras in areas where blind spots have been identified by December 31, 2016

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing body:
Napa County Board of Supervisors: **R1, R2**

From the following individual:
Napa County Chief Probation Officer: **R1, R2**

COMMENDATION

The 2015-2016 Napa County Grand Jury commends the Napa County Chief Probation Officer, the superintendent, assistant superintendent, supervisors, and counselors for their courtesy and professionalism, and for their dedication to successful rehabilitation of the youths at Napa County Juvenile Hall.

DISCLAIMER

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.