



Ventura County Probation Agency

Calvin C. Remington
Director/Chief Probation Officer

August 14, 1998

Mr. Lin Koester, Chief Administrative Officer
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

Response to the 1997-1998 Grand Jury Final Report Conclusions and Recommendations

Grand Jury Conclusion: "CTC (Juvenile Hall) is an antiquated and chronically overcrowded facility. Treatment programs recommended in the *Ventura County Juvenile Justice Local Action Plan* cannot be implemented under present conditions, although a risk/needs assessment instrument is being developed."

Response: Probation definitely agrees with the Grand Jury's assessment that the Hall is antiquated, crowded and inadequate for the needs of Ventura County. We are currently in the process of completing a needs assessment for a new Juvenile Justice Complex which includes plans for a much larger Juvenile Hall. Even though the facility is inadequate, we are implementing in-house programming and setting up a referral network for minors leaving the facility. In-house programming will include anger management, conflict resolution, substance abuse counseling and other programs designed to assist the minors while in the facility and when they leave. We are also designating a Sr. Deputy Probation Officer to act as a "case manager" to assist the minors while in the facility. They will also assess individual and family needs and interface with other agencies and community organizations to link the minors and their families with appropriate community programming and resources.

Grand Jury Conclusion: "Two recommendations of the Local Action Plan touch upon common characteristics of incarcerated girls, but specific programs for the needs of a small minority of female offenders are difficult to implement in an institutional setting."

Response: As part of the 1998-1999 TANF spending proposal that will be going to the Board of Supervisors on September 15, 1998 for their approval, we have included programming for incarcerated girls and their mothers. The program will deal with sexual and physical abuse and self-esteem issues. This program will be offered to all females in our three juvenile facilities. Working with the girl and her mother will also be

continued after the girl leaves the facility. There is currently a pilot program at the Colston Youth Center, similar to the program included in the TANF request, which has been successful and well received.

Grand Jury Recommendation: "That the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Master Plan include long-range planning for a tri-county girls' camp to parallel the boot camp program for boys, but designed to develop skills and strengths in a manner applicable to female offenders."

Response: We strongly support this Grand Jury recommendation for gender specific programming for female offenders. We have explored the possibility of a shared boot camp program with Santa Barbara, however, because of the relatively small number of females in our facilities, it would be a cost prohibitive facility for us to consider at this time. As mentioned previously, we are expanding our female specific programming within our existing facilities and through the use of TANF monies will be increasing programming even more. If in the future we find ourselves dealing with a larger juvenile female population, a shared female facility is definitely something we support and will explore.

Grand Jury Recommendation: "That the Ventura County Placement Aftercare Team (JPAT) be expanded to provide aftercare to juveniles released from the Juvenile Restitution Program and long-term commitment at Clifton Tatum Center."

Response: We would very much support providing intensive aftercare services to all the juveniles released from all of our facilities and placements. However, as the staff in the JPAT Unit are already struggling with large caseloads, alternative solutions to meeting the needs of the juveniles will possibly be met through our proposed programming plan. As mentioned earlier, the proposed SrDPO at CTC will be responsible for evaluating the needs of the youth and their family and linking the youth and their family to appropriate community resources prior to the youth being released back into the community. While not the intensive level of services JPAT would provide, this release plan, coupled with regular probation supervision, will give some additional direction and structure for the youth and their family. The JRP program will be expanded, modified and enhanced with the move to Building 252 at the Work Furlough site. Part of those changes could include a release plan similar to the one prepared for youth released from CTC. Again, this will provide additional direction and structure for the youth and their families but not the level of JPAT supervision.

Grand Jury Recommendation: "That the JPAT staff be increased sufficiently to allow caseloads appropriate for full utilization of Multisystemic Therapy, and additional Behavioral Health Department social workers be assigned to advise and assist DOPs in dealing with issues of substance abuse and mental health."

Response: While we would support the increase of JPAT staff to allow caseloads appropriate for full utilization of Multisystemic Therapy, existing resources do not allow us to reassign additional staff to JPAT at this time. However, with TANF funds providing

additional community resources throughout the County, connecting with these new resources will allow JPAT staff to refer the youth and their families to the appropriate services, thereby reducing the demands on the Probation Officers to provide those services. If additional staff resources become available in the future, we will strongly consider allocating new staff to this Unit.

Grand Jury Recommendation: "That resources be allocated to develop mental health and substance abuse programs at juvenile detention facilities, as recommended in the *Ventura County Juvenile Justice Local Action Plan.*"

Response: As indicated earlier, TANF monies are being requested for a Senior Deputy Probation Officer position at the Clifton Tatum Center to establish programming which will include anger management, conflict resolution and substance abuse counseling. This officer will also assist the minors in making a satisfactory adjustment within the facility and a successful transition back into the community. As the "case manager" the SrDPO will evaluate individual and family needs and interface with other agencies and community organizations to link the minor with appropriate programming and resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this Grand Jury report and I appreciate the favorable comments made by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Calvin C. Remington by Karen J. Staples

Calvin C. Remington
Director/Chief Probation Officer