



Ventura County Probation Agency

Karen J. Staples
Director/Chief Probation Officer

August 21, 2008

Foreman Don Cody
Ventura County Grand Jury
800 S. Victoria Avenue, L#3751
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: Response to 2007-08 Grand Jury Report Titled, "Ventura County Detention Facilities: Conditions and Management"

Dear Mr. Cody:

Below please find the Ventura County Probation Agency's responses to the 2007-08 Grand Jury Report titled, "Ventura County Detention Facilities: Conditions and Management."

Grand Jury Report Findings:

Item F-14: The County Probation Agency's Work Furlough Program has a published capacity of 235 inmates.

Response: The Probation Agency disagrees with Finding F-14. This capacity is only applicable if proposed repairs/renovations are completed. The current capacity, based upon currently funded staffing levels, programming, and condition of the building, is 140 beds.

Item F-15: There are currently only 140 inmates enrolled and housed in the Work Furlough's 64 year-old Camarillo facility because of the dated condition of the facility. A decision to remodel or build a new facility is under study by the County Probation Agency and CEO's office.

Response: The Probation Agency agrees with Finding F-15 and notes that although the current capacity of the program is 140 inmates, the Work Furlough population fluctuates based upon screening and acceptance of inmates who are appropriate for the program. Factors considered in screening inmates for the program include the commitment offense, prior record, substance abuse history, potential for violence, risk to the community, and employability.

Item F-16: Each inmate enrolled in the Work Furlough Program reimburses the County up to \$62.00 per day.

Response: The Ventura County Probation Agency disagrees with Finding F-16. The Work Furlough daily rate for Fiscal Year 2007-08 is \$73.00 per day.

Item F-17: The Probation Agency's Juvenile Justice Complex, detention and commitment components, was built to house 420 male and female youths. The current California state-certified capacity is 250. In May of 2008, there were 205 youths residing at the facility.

Response: The Ventura County Probation Agency agrees with Finding F-17. There are many innovative probation programs and services designed to provide rehabilitative programs for minors and support for their families in an effort to deter incarceration. These programs include a mental health court and drug court, as well as "wrap-around" services. The programs have had an impact on retaining minors in the community with services and treatment instead of incarceration. Other programs which have had a positive impact on services for minors in the community include the Boys and Girls Club Targeted Re-Entry Program; Girls, Inc.; Healthy Returns; R.O.P.P. (Repeat Offender Prevention Program); and Youth Services Early Intervention. Additionally, our collaborative Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative effort has played a significant role in population reduction at the Juvenile Facilities.

Grand Jury Report Conclusions:

Item C-06: The County Probation Agency's Work Furlough Program has the potential for housing 235 inmates, if funding is available to upgrade and staff current facilities. If this capacity is fully attained, overcrowding within the County jail system could be partially alleviated.

Response: The Ventura County Probation Agency agrees with Conclusion C-06, but notes that in addition to funding for building renovations and staffing, increased funding will also be necessary to implement additional programming to target a greater number of qualified offenders. Such programming will include drug and alcohol treatment services provided by Alternative Actions, literacy services provided by Ventura County Library Services, an expanded "Look for Work" component, and a post-Proposition 36 component.

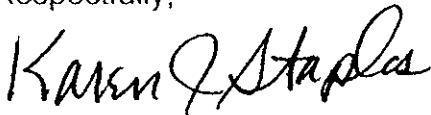
Grand Jury Report Recommendations:

Item R-03: The County Probation Agency and the CEO should decide whether to remodel, expand, or rebuild the Work Furlough Program facility so that the maximum capacity of 235 inmates can be attained.

Response: The Probation Agency agrees with Recommendation R-03. The CEO's Capital Planning Committee decided in May 2008 that the Work Furlough Program facility should be remodeled (renovated) based upon a Needs Assessment completed by the architectural firm of Rasmussen and Associates at the request of the County's General Services Agency (GSA) and the Probation Agency. It is anticipated that implementation of the renovation will occur within 24 months (estimated construction period for renovations), provided funding is secured for construction.

I would be happy to discuss these responses with you further. Please feel free to contact me at 805-654-2100.

Respectfully,



KAREN J. STAPLES
Director/Chief Probation Officer

KJS:smw

