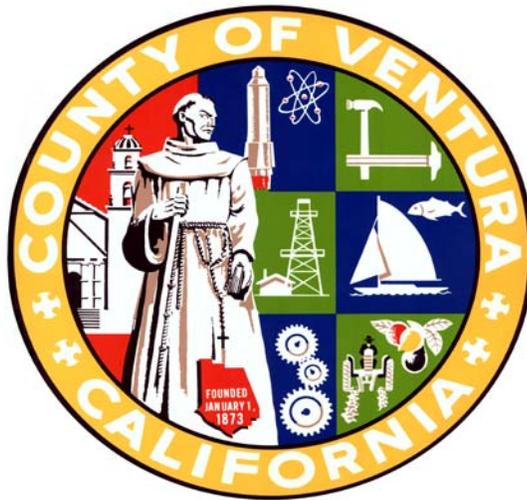


# **Ventura County Grand Jury 2009 - 2010**



## **Final Report**

### **Utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities**

**Date Issued**

**May 11, 2010**

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## **Utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities**

### **Summary**

The 2009-2010 Ventura County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) investigated the utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities (JJF) housing component, which is under the direction of the Ventura County Probation Agency (Probation Agency). In the course of the investigation, additional aspects of the juvenile justice system were considered.

The Grand Jury sought to ascertain if unused space within the JJF resulting from a decreased average daily census (Census) was being used appropriately. The JJF is operating at 45% of total capacity. The lower than anticipated Census has allowed the Probation Agency to operate the JJF with lower staffing levels than had been originally projected. The number of juveniles housed at the JJF is near the maximum allowed by current staffing levels. The incremental staffing costs for the Probation Agency to open an additional 30-bed detention housing unit would be \$951,527 annually. The incremental staffing costs for the Probation Agency to open an additional 15-bed commitment unit would be \$400,360 annually. Unused bed and classroom space in the JJF has allowed the Probation Agency to add two on-site programs beneficial to juveniles in their care.

Several factors have contributed to a lower than expected Census rate at the JJF since its opening in 2003. The juvenile crime rate in Ventura County (County) has decreased from the time when the JJF was designed, due perhaps, in part, to early intervention and crime prevention programs funded by the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA). Since 2002, the Probation Agency has participated in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), a juvenile justice system reform initiative aimed at reducing the unnecessary confinement of youth. As part of JDAI, the Probation Agency developed a Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) which is used to evaluate the public safety risk a youth poses to the community. The results of the RAI are then used to assist in determining if a juvenile should be detained or released. The Grand Jury examined the effectiveness of JDAI in the County. [Att-01]

The Grand Jury was also interested in the measurement of juvenile recidivism rates at the JJF. The Probation Agency tracks outcomes for specific programs at the JJF, but does not measure overall recidivism. The Grand Jury recommends that the Probation Agency establish a definition for recidivism and evaluate juvenile recidivism rates within the County.

The Grand Jury found that information regarding JDAI and the use of the RAI is not reaching patrol officers, Sheriff's deputies, and school resource officers (Officers), and it recommends that this lack of communication and/or understanding be remedied. The Grand Jury additionally recommends that a

formal procedure be established to inform Officers when juveniles with probation histories move from one jurisdiction into another within the County.

The issue of the utilization of the JJF is one of public safety. The use of the RAI has had the effect of decreasing the Census at the JJF and, consequently, staffing requirements, resulting in lower than anticipated staffing costs. Whether detention alternative programs are working to enhance public safety and whether the right juveniles are being diverted, however, has yet to be conclusively demonstrated in the County.

The JJF is a professionally run, state-of-the-art detention and commitment facility offering a wide range of services to juveniles in custody. Youth at the JJF are offered every opportunity for future success.

## **Background**

The Grand Jury received information that the juvenile housing component of the JJF might not be fully utilized. This information prompted the Grand Jury to open an investigation into the utilization of the JJF housing component.

The current JJF housing complex opened in 2003 at the present location on Vineyard Avenue in an unincorporated area of the County. Previously, the Probation Agency had a juvenile detention facility at the Clifton Tatum Center (CTC), built in 1941, as well as juvenile housing at the Frank A. Colston Youth Center and the Juvenile Restitution Project/Work Release Center. The 1997-1998 Grand Jury concluded that these facilities were “antiquated and chronically overcrowded.” In 1999, the County successfully competed for a \$40.5 million grant from the State of California (State) Board of Corrections, now known as the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA). This grant provided primary funding for the JJF and allowed the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to proceed with the planning, design, and construction of the JJF. [Ref-01]

Several factors contributed to the County’s decision to construct new facilities and centralize juvenile justice services. The facilities at CTC were in need of significant repairs and did not meet current facility standards, nor did they meet the size requirements for the Probation Agency in terms of the number of juveniles that could be safely housed. This lack of adequate space forced the County to divert some juveniles to housing outside the County after sentencing, resulting in increased costs.

Based on the County’s justification for State grant funds and the development of a needs assessment, a 420-bed facility was designed and constructed. [Ref-02]

## **Methodology**

The Grand Jury conducted internet and newspaper archive searches on topics related to the juvenile justice system and the JJF. The Grand Jury received from the Probation Agency copies of documents used in the planning and development of the JJF.

The Grand Jury interviewed the Director/Chief Probation Officer of the Probation Agency. The Grand Jury took a comprehensive tour of the housing facilities at

the JJF. The Grand Jury met with the director of the JJF and with members of the JJF staff. The Grand Jury examined JJF capacity and Census data and studied County and State juvenile crime rates. The Grand Jury analyzed a JDAI Final/Annual Progress Report and reviewed information regarding the Boys & Girls Club Targeted Re-entry Program, the Girls Inc. Program, the Recovery Classroom, and the Healthy Returns Initiative.

The Probation Agency, the Ventura County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's Department), and the Cities of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Ventura provided the Grand Jury with their policies and procedures with respect to juveniles in the justice system. The Grand Jury reviewed copies of the RAI used by Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties. The Grand Jury interviewed Officers. The Grand Jury attended protocol visits at police departments in all ten cities of the County and received an agency briefing from the Sheriff.

The Grand Jury inquired into the juvenile facilities of other counties, requesting information on the capacity and average daily Census of facilities in the Counties of Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara, as well as their policies for accepting juveniles from outside their jurisdictions. Los Angeles County did not respond to any requests for information.

## **Findings**

- F-01.** Groundbreaking for the JJF was held in 2001. At the time of construction, it was anticipated that the JJF would be filled to near capacity by 2010 based on demographic trends and juvenile crime projections. [Ref-02]
- F-02.** The JJF has a total CSA rated capacity of 420 youths in detention and commitment housing. Total CSA rated capacity is the number of juveniles that can be housed in a facility according to the CSA of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.
- F-03.** Detention housing has a CSA rated capacity of 240 youths. Detention housing is intended for juveniles requiring custody pending court action and also provides temporary custody for those in need of short term placement or awaiting transfer.

Detention housing units are configured as follows:

- Matilija, Sycamore, and Wheeler are general population housing, each with two 30-bed living units, which have their own dayrooms, classrooms, staff stations, interview rooms, and outdoor exercise areas
- Balcom is special population housing with three 20-bed living units each with its own dayroom, classroom, staff station, and interview rooms and sharing two outdoor exercise areas

Balcom is designed for juveniles with mental health issues, those who present high security risks, or those who are new to the JJF. [Ref-03]

- F-04.** Based on current staffing levels, the capacity of detention housing is approximately 140 youths.
- F-05.** In JJF detention housing, two 15-bed units in Matilija, four 15-bed units in Sycamore, two 15-bed units in Wheeler, and one 20-bed unit in Balcom are in use.
- F-06.** Commitment housing has a CSA rated capacity of 180 youths and holds juveniles serving court imposed commitments of up to one year.  
  
Each of the three commitment housing units, Anacapa, Santa Cruz, and Santa Rosa has four 15-bed living units which include three 4-person dorms and three single rooms, each unit with its own dayroom and outdoor exercise area and sharing four classrooms, two program rooms, and a dining and activity area. [Ref-03]
- F-07.** Based on current staffing levels, the capacity of commitment housing is approximately 90 youths.
- F-08.** In JJF commitment housing, three 15-bed living units in Anacapa and two 15-bed living units in Santa Cruz are in use. In Santa Rosa, two classrooms are in use and the living units are empty.
- F-09.** The average total daily Census of the JJF over the past 12 months was 188 juveniles, 45% of CSA rated capacity. Average daily Census for detention was 94 juveniles. Average daily census for commitment was 94 juveniles. Average daily census is the average number of juveniles housed each day for a specified period of time.
- F-10.** The JJF no longer houses juveniles separately based on gang affiliation. This practice had reduced the number of youth that could be housed because space was intentionally kept empty in order to separate specific juveniles.
- F-11.** The County has mutual aid agreements with Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County to house juveniles from each other's jurisdictions in cases of emergency.
- F-12.** In addition to housing, the JJF includes an intake/booking area, recreation areas, gymnasium, classrooms, visiting center, medical and staff offices, kitchen and dining areas, and a laundry. [Ref-03]
- F-13.** The JJF was designed for and houses Providence School, an accredited kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade school administered by the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools. Each youth at the JJF is required to attend an average of 270 minutes (4.5 hours) of school a day.
- F-14.** Psychiatric, crisis intervention, and group, individual, and family therapy services are provided by the County's Behavioral Health Department under the Health Care Agency. Probation Agency staff and community based organizations also provide therapy services. Routine outpatient medical services are provided by a private contractor. [Ref-03]

- F-15.** The JJF runs a Leaders' Program for juveniles 16 to 18 years of age which stresses vocation, education, and socialization. A majority of the participants in the Leaders' Program subsequently pass the General Educational Development Tests (GED), earn a high school diploma, or pass the California High School Exit Examination.
- F-16.** The JJF offers programs on tolerance, parenting, gender specific issues, anger management, and substance abuse, none of which are court mandated programs.
- F-17.** Classes offered at the JJF include chess, music, and dance.
- F-18.** Juveniles housed in Commitment are given the opportunity to volunteer for non-profit organizations in the community.
- F-19.** Since 2002, the Probation Agency has participated in JDAI, a juvenile justice system reform initiative aimed at reducing the unnecessary confinement of youth. Launched in 1992, JDAI focuses on the juvenile detention component of the juvenile justice system and is an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), a private charitable organization. JDAI holds that youth are often inappropriately placed in detention at a high cost to the public, with negative consequences for public safety and youth well-being. [Ref-04]
- F-20.** The Probation Agency approached the AECF to participate in JDAI because prior juvenile facilities were in the midst of an overpopulation crisis. In 2001, ACEF representatives first consulted with Probation Agency officials about JDAI. [Ref-05]
- F-21.** The AECF initially provided the Probation Agency with a grant of \$126,588 to implement JDAI and now gives the Probation Agency \$25,000 annually. [Ref-05]
- F-22.** Groundbreaking for the JJF was held in 2001, prior to the Probation Agency's adoption of JDAI in 2002.
- F-23.** The goals of JDAI are to:
- decrease the number of youth unnecessarily or inappropriately detained
  - reduce the number of youth who fail to appear in court or re-offend prior to adjudication
  - redirect public funds toward effective juvenile justice practices and public safety policies
  - reduce disproportionate minority confinement
  - improve the juvenile justice system [Ref-06]
- F-24.** A County JDAI Committee meets monthly to analyze policies and services, identify policies that can be improved, identify gaps in service that should be filled, and create improved policies and services. The

Committee is co-chaired by the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court and the Chief Probation Officer of the County. Membership includes representatives from:

- Ventura County Superior Court
- Probation Agency
- City of Oxnard Police Department
- City of Ventura Police Department
- Ventura County Sheriff's Department
- Ventura County District Attorney's Office
- Ventura County Public Defender
- Ventura County Behavioral Health Department
- Ventura County Health Care Agency
- Community Action Partnership
- Ventura County Office of Education
- Interface Children and Family Services
- other community-based groups, community activists, and faith-based organizations [Ref-07]

**F-25.** According to a Justice Policy Institute (JPI) report, studies have shown that detention has a profoundly negative impact on juveniles' mental and physical well-being, their education, and their potential for future employment. The JPI is a public policy organization dedicated to ending society's reliance on incarceration. [Ref-08]

**F-26.** JDAI has been implemented in San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and Ventura counties, in over 100 jurisdictions in 25 states, and in the District of Columbia. [Ref-09]

**F-27.** Other initiatives of the AECF aimed at child welfare reform, assisting youth leaving foster care, collecting data and advocating for the well-being of youth on a state and local level, and helping families and children in higher crime neighborhoods are active in Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, and Riverside counties. JDAI is the only AECF initiative operating in the County. [Ref-10]

**F-28.** Santa Cruz County is a JDAI model site. According to the AECF, the results of JDAI implementation in Santa Cruz County are as follows:

- the average daily juvenile detention population was reduced by 65% between 1997 and 2005
- juvenile felony arrests decreased 47% from 30 youths per 1,000 in 1997 to 16 youths per 1,000 in 2004

- the average minority population in juvenile hall was reduced from 64% to 47%
  - more than \$7 million in detention expenses have been redeployed to community alternatives since 1998 [Ref-11]
- F-29.** According to the JPI report, many counties across the United States implementing JDAI state that they have reduced the number of youth confined and that juvenile crime rates have fallen as much as, or more than, national rates. The report states that these communities experienced an increase in the number of young people who return to court for sentencing after they had been released from detention, further reducing the need for detention. [Ref-08]
- F-30.** A 2009 study of JDAI in Washington, a JDAI model state, conducted by the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee concluded that participation in JDAI yielded substantial savings in detention costs, with no increase in recidivism or juvenile offenses. Data collected indicates a decrease in average daily population, average length of stay in juvenile detention, detention admissions, and juvenile arrest rates. [Ref-12]
- F-31.** In 2009, the AECF produced a report reviewing 17 years of JDAI results from its inception in 1992 to 2009. The report concluded that participating jurisdictions have significantly reduced their reliance on secure detention for youth awaiting trial or pending placement. The report also stated that JDAI has generated considerable savings for taxpayers by enabling participating jurisdictions to avoid costs for the construction and operation of secure detention facilities. According to the report, JDAI sites do not have consistent measures of public safety outcomes. However, those sites that do measure indicators of public safety showed outcomes improving during the period of JDAI participation. [Ref-13]
- F-32.** According to the Probation Agency, the incremental annual staffing costs to open an additional 30-bed detention housing unit at the JJF would be \$951,527. The incremental annual staffing costs to open an additional 15-bed commitment unit at the JJF would be \$400,360.
- F-33.** In the "Ventura County Comprehensive Multi-Agency Juvenile Justice Plan" dated April 2008, the County calculated the daily cost of JJF detention per youth at \$389.42 and the daily cost of JJF commitment per youth at \$280.64. In comparison, intervention and prevention programs aimed at gang violence and repeat offenders cost between \$10.39 and \$29.56, respectively, per youth per day. The Grand Jury could not find evidence that the County has undertaken a full cost-benefit analysis of its juvenile justice programs. Models for such analyses exist and cost-benefit analyses of juvenile justice programs have been conducted in other jurisdictions. [Ref-14, Ref-15]

- F-34.** The Probation Agency collects and submits data on specific JDAI performance measures to the AECF as part of its ongoing grant. The Probation Agency measures average daily population, average length of stay, failure to appear, pre-adjudication re-arrest rates, and the number and percent of minority youth in secure detention. For the reporting period, January 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009, failure to appear was 3% and the pre-adjudication re-arrest rate was 10.3%. [Ref-16]
- F-35.** One of the core strategies of JDAI is the development of objective admissions criteria and an RAI for use by juvenile facilities.
- F-36.** The JJF Intake Department (Intake) uses the RAI to determine the need for secure, locked confinement by evaluating which youth pose a public safety risk to the community. (Att-01)
- F-37.** The RAI is a written checklist of criteria applied to each juvenile for release versus detention-related risks. The overall risk score, a point value, is used as a guide by Intake to decide whether a juvenile is eligible for secure detention, for Community Confinement Program, or for release on a Promise to Appear in court. Intake can override the results of the RAI if deemed appropriate. [Ref-17]
- F-38.** Juveniles who are eligible for the Community Confinement Program are allowed to remain at home under strict conditions and close supervision with or without electronic monitoring. [Ref-03]
- F-39.** The Probation Agency states that the number of juveniles in the JJF has been reduced through the use of the RAI.
- F-40.** The Director/Chief Probation Officer believes that community alternatives to detention reduce crime and recidivism more effectively than detention, as suggested by the JDAI concept.
- F-41.** The juvenile crime rate in the County as measured by juvenile felony arrests per 1,000 juveniles aged 10 to 17 has fallen from 1998, when plans for the JJF were completed, to 2007, the latest year for which complete information is available.
- In 1998, the juvenile crime rate in the County was 14.6 juvenile felony arrests per 1,000 juveniles. In 2007, the juvenile crime rate was 11.4 juvenile felony arrests per 1,000 juveniles.
- Statewide during the same time period, the juvenile crime rate fell from 20.2 to 14.2 juvenile felony arrests per 1,000 juveniles. [Ref-18]
- F-42.** Recidivism is a commonly used measure of the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system. It is defined by Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary as “a tendency to relapse into previous criminal behavior.” The Grand Jury could find no evidence that either the County or the State uses a standard definition or measure of recidivism. [Ref-19]
- F-43.** The three most common measures of recidivism are:
- re-arrest, being charged with a new offense

- reconviction, being found guilty of a new offense in a court of law
  - re-incarceration, being sentenced to a secure facility after being found guilty of a new offense [Ref-20]
- F-44.** The Director/Chief Probation Officer stated that the most useful definition of recidivism is the commission of a new offense, or re-arrest.
- F-45.** Instead of measuring negative outcomes, some jurisdictions focus on positive results, gathering information on their success rates in meeting specific juvenile justice goals. [Ref-21]
- F-46.** Outcomes are measured only for specific programs at the JJF including the Boys and Girls Club Targeted Re-Entry, Girls Inc., Health Returns Initiative, and Recovery Classroom.
- F-47.** Studies of juvenile recidivism rates have been conducted in many jurisdictions, including Washington, Oregon, and Virginia, allowing these states to evaluate the effectiveness of programs intended to reduce recidivism. [Ref-22 through Ref-24]
- F-48.** The Probation Agency has not established a definition of recidivism and does not measure it for the JJF as a whole. The Probation Agency receives State, federal, and private grants which require the measurement of recidivism for funded programs, but each grant organization uses a different definition of recidivism.
- F-49.** In 2000, the California Legislature passed the JJCPA, which was designed to provide a stable funding source for community-based programs that have proven effective in reducing crime and delinquency among at-risk youth and juvenile offenders. [Ref-25]
- F-50.** In 2009, the JJCPA provided over \$2 million to the County to support:
- aftercare and day reporting centers
  - enhanced institutional services
  - expansion of the Early Intervention Program
  - Gang Violence Prevention Program
  - HOPE (Habitual Offender Prevention Endeavor) aimed at repeat offender prevention
  - Juvenile Drug Court
  - THRIVE (Truancy Habits Reduced Increased Vital Education) aimed at truancy reduction

These early intervention and prevention programs are not part of JDAI. [Ref-26]

**F-51.** The table below shows the total CSA rated capacity (detention and commitment) and Census for juvenile facilities in other Southern California counties.

**Capacity and Census of Juvenile Facilities by County**

NAME OF COUNTY	TOTAL CSA RATED CAPACITY OF FACILITIES	AVERAGE DAILY CENSUS LAST 12 MONTHS OF DATA	PERCENT OF CAPACITY
Imperial	72	31	43%
Kern	475	440	93%
Orange	955*	805*	84%
Riverside	368	241	66%
San Bernardino	650	359	55%
San Diego	1,103	875	79%
San Luis Obispo	45	40	89%
Santa Barbara	236	190	81%
Ventura	420	188	45%

\*Orange County permanently closed a facility with a rated capacity of 156 juveniles in July 2009. The total capacity includes this facility. The average daily census includes data for this facility from November 2008 to June 2009.

**F-52.** The Orange County Probation Department attributes the significant reduction in the population of incarcerated minors in Orange County to their adoption of JDAI principles, although they are not a JDAI site.

**F-53.** The Probation Agency uses unoccupied housing and classroom space within the JJF to add two on-site programs: the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme (BGC) and a Regional Occupational Program (ROP).

**F-54.** The BGC approached the JJF with funding from the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the State to locate a club within the facility. In Anacapa, the BGC occupies two 15-bed commitment housing units, one classroom, and one office. The Probation Agency provides this space rent free as a grant-in-kind. This BGC opened in 2007 in the JJF and serves only youth from within the facility.

**F-55.** The BGC operates the Targeted Re-entry Program, a partnership among the BGC, the Probation Agency, the Coalition to End Family Violence, and the Palmer Drug Abuse Program, which provides services to juveniles at the JJF based on each youth's needs, interests, and strengths. [Ref-27]

- F-56.** The BGC counsels youth after their release, assisting them with finding employment, completing school, and receiving health and counseling services.
- F-57.** The Probation Agency offers ROP in previously unused space within the JJF. ROP occupies three commitment classrooms in Anacapa originally intended for use by the Providence School, but unused because of the lower than expected Census. ROP is a public education service offered through the Ventura County Office of Education.
- F-58.** The goal of ROP is to provide hands-on career preparation by offering classes in silk screening, computer repair, and landscaping services, and by stressing work ethic and employment-seeking skills. [Ref-28]
- F-59.** Upon satisfactory completion of an ROP class, students earn a Certificate of Proficiency which can be shown to potential employers.
- F-60.** Police departments within the County and the Sheriff's Department have extensive written policies and procedures regarding the detention, arrest, and disposition of juvenile offenders as required by State law.
- F-61.** The majority of Officers interviewed by the Grand Jury contact Intake to receive prior approval before transporting juveniles to the JJF. The Grand Jury was unable to find any instance where doing so is a specific written policy.
- F-62.** Officers from several jurisdictions said that they found it difficult to get juveniles admitted to the JJF and, therefore, assumed that the JJF was, in their word, "full."
- F-63.** Officers said that they believe all felony and violent misdemeanor offenses should qualify for booking into the JJF.
- F-64.** Felony and violent misdemeanor crimes do not automatically meet the RAI criteria for booking into the JJF. (Att-01)
- F-65.** Officers expressed concern that some chronic repeat offenders did not meet the RAI criteria for acceptance into the JJF and expressed belief that such offenders should be accepted. (Att-01)
- F-66.** The majority of Officers interviewed were unfamiliar with the use of the RAI and with JDAI policies.
- F-67.** Officers indicated interest in having the RAI available for their use in preliminary screening in order to understand subsequent actions taken by Intake.
- F-68.** The Probation Agency states that it has made police departments and the Sheriff's Department aware of the RAI and of JDAI by contacting police chiefs and by attending some shift briefings on an ongoing basis.
- F-69.** The Director/Chief Probation Officer stated that Officers' recommendations regarding juveniles are considered by Intake.

- F-70.** Officers interviewed stated that either their recommendations are not taken into consideration by Intake or that they stopped making recommendations because they were not followed by the JJF.
- F-71.** The Officers said that Intake personnel are professional in their dealings with juveniles and with law enforcement.
- F-72.** All Officers interviewed said that they are usually at the JJF for 15 to 20 minutes when bringing a juvenile to Intake.
- F-73.** Some Officers interviewed stated that they were not informed when juveniles with probation histories moved into their jurisdiction from other jurisdictions in the County. In their opinion, this lack of notification results in crimes that might otherwise have been prevented through intervention or surveillance.
- F-74.** The Probation Agency confirmed that no formal process exists to notify officers when juveniles with probation histories move into their jurisdiction.
- F-75.** Intake is staffed from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. During regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., telephones are answered by the reception staff at the JJF.

After regular business hours, the reception telephone line rolls calls over to Central Control. Central Control is staffed 24 hours per day, seven days a week. If Central Control staff cannot answer a question, the call is transferred to the on-duty Watch Commander. Watch Commander coverage is provided by either a Supervising Deputy Probation Officer or a Senior Deputy Probation Officer 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Watch Commanders are able to answer most questions, but, if necessary, the on-call Division Manager is contacted. All of these personnel are JJF staff.

According to the JJF Chief Deputy Probation Officer, the after-hours determination of whether a juvenile meets booking criteria is often made by the Watch Commander who has the discretion to override the RAI.

- F-76.** Some Officers reported that after regular business hours they were unable to speak directly to a member of the Intake staff regarding juveniles but, instead, spoke with whomever was on call for the Probation Agency. They stated that they sometimes had difficulty getting answers to questions regarding juveniles.
- F-77.** Some Officers thought that persons 18 years of age and older should automatically be transferred from juvenile to adult probation.
- F-78.** The Director/Chief Probation Officer believes that only youth who have committed very serious offenses or who owe restitution should remain on juvenile probation after the age of 18, but noted that the Court makes this determination. An individual can be on both juvenile and adult probation at the same time.

- F-79.** California Welfare and Institution Code § 601 through 608 delineate who is under juvenile court jurisdiction. In California, the extended age of juvenile court jurisdiction is 21. If a juvenile is committed to the California Department of Juvenile Justice or to a mental health facility for certain offenses, jurisdiction may be extended until the offender's 25th birthday. [Ref-29]

## **Conclusions**

- C-01.** The Probation Agency provides a wide range of services to juveniles housed at the JJF. (F-3, F-6, F-12 through F-18, F-55, F-56, F-58, F-59)
- C-02.** Capacity planning for the JJF was done using the information available at the time (1998), but did not take into account the potential future impact of the implementation of JDAI since the design and construction of the JJF began prior to the Probation Agency's adoption of JDAI. (F-1 through F-3, F-6, F-20, F-22)
- C-03.** The housing components of both the detention and commitment units of the JJF are underutilized based on a comparison of the Census and CSA rated capacity, but the JJF is operating at near capacity based on present staffing levels. (F-2 through F-9, F-51)
- C-04.** Many factors may have contributed to a lower than expected Census at the JJF including the Probation Agency's participation in JDAI, use of the RAI, reduced juvenile crime rates, early intervention and crime prevention programs, and programs supported by the JJCPA. (F-10, F-19, F-20, F-23, F-28 through F-31, F-36 through F-39, F-41, F-49, F-50, F-52)
- C-05.** In order to be considered effective, JDAI results should show lower numbers of youth in confinement, increased public safety as demonstrated by lower juvenile crime rates, lower recidivism rates, an increase in the number of youth who appear in court, and decreased costs. (F-19, F-23, F-28 through F-31, F-34 through F-40)
- C-06.** Measuring recidivism rates and program success rates can provide useful information to indicate the success or failure of juvenile justice programs. (F-42 through F-48)
- C-07.** Studies of JDAI in other jurisdictions appear to indicate that the implementation of JDAI has led to decreased numbers of youth incarcerations and lowered costs without increasing the risk to public safety as measured by juvenile crime rates. However, juvenile crime rates have fallen throughout the State, not just at JDAI sites. (F-28 through F-31)
- C-08.** While literature on the dangers of detention for youth supports the basic principles behind JDAI, some of the studies of JDAI effectiveness appear

- to have been produced or funded by the AECF, the originator of JDAI. (F-28, F-31)
- C-09.** It is unclear whether the Probation Agency makes use of JDAI performance measures which it collects for submission to the AECF. (F-24, F-34)
- C-10.** The RAI does not necessarily advise the detention of juveniles alleged to have committed felony or violent misdemeanor offenses, contrary to the recommendations of officers interviewed. (F-63, F-64)
- C-11.** The RAI does not necessarily advise the detention of chronic repeat juvenile offenders. (F-65)
- C-12.** The issue of the utilization of the JJF is, at its core, one of public safety. The RAI has lowered the Census at the JJF, resulting in lower than anticipated staffing levels and costs. Whether the right juveniles are being diverted to detention alternatives, and whether those detention alternative programs are working to enhance public safety, however, have yet to be conclusively demonstrated eight years after the implementation of JDAI in the County. (F-23, F-28 through F-39, F-41, F-48, F-63 through F-65)
- C-13.** In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of juvenile justice programs in the County, a cost-benefit analysis would determine if the dollar value of a program's demonstrated level of success exceeds the cost of the program. The resulting information could guide decision makers in efficiently allocating resources. (F-32, F-33)
- C-14.** Without clear measurement of both juvenile justice program success and juvenile recidivism rates, and without a cost benefit analysis, there is little upon which to base decisions regarding how best to utilize space in the JJF. (F-46, F-48)
- C-15.** As in this County, other counties in Southern California are operating juvenile facilities below their rated capacities, which may be attributable to similar factors including adoption of JDAI and use of the RAI, reduced juvenile crime rates, early intervention and crime prevention programs, and programs supported by the JJCPA. (F-51, F-52)
- C-16.** Unused housing and classroom space resulting from a decreased Census allowed the Probation Agency to add programs within the JJF. (F-54, F-57)
- C-17.** BGC programs provide services which help incarcerated juvenile offenders make successful transitions back into the community. (F-55, F-56)
- C-18.** ROP classes at the JJF provide juveniles with vocational skills and job-seeking strategies which increase their chances for successful employment following their release. (F-58, F-59)

- C-19.** BGC and ROP are programs of benefit to juveniles in the JJF and, therefore, constitute an appropriate use of previously unused housing and classroom space. (F-55, F-56, F-58, F-59)
- C-20.** Rehabilitation and enforcement, complementary goals, appear to be the respective objectives of the Probation Agency and law enforcement. (F-19, F-40, F-63, F-65)
- C-21.** There is a lack of communication between the Probation Agency and Officers who deal directly with juveniles in the community. This serves to decrease the effectiveness of the partnership between these two organizations. It is unclear whether the communication problem exists between the Probation Agency and the police departments and Sheriff's Department, or within the law enforcement agencies themselves. The result, however, is that information is not filtering down to Officers. (F-62 through F-70, F-73 through F-79)
- C-22.** Officers interviewed have not been given the RAI or information on its usage. Having Officers call the JJF to receive unofficial approval prior to transporting a juvenile may be expedient, but Officers should be made fully aware of the criteria used by Intake. Officers' recommendations regarding housing juveniles may not be given full consideration by Intake. (F-66, F-67, F-70)
- C-23.** Officers interviewed have not received information on JDAI and its effect on Intake and the Probation Agency. (F-66)
- C-24.** Patrol Officers' ability to prevent crime is hindered by the lack of formal procedures to notify them when juveniles with probation histories move into their jurisdiction from elsewhere within the County. (F-73, F-74)
- C-25.** Officers may have to go through several levels of JJF staff to receive answers to questions regarding juveniles after regular business hours. (F-75, F-76)
- C-26.** Since the State, not the County, determines who is under the authority of the juvenile court, a consideration of the age at which juveniles are transferred to adult probation is outside the purview of the Grand Jury. (F-79)

## **Recommendations**

- R-01.** The Probation Agency should establish a definition for recidivism and measure juvenile recidivism yearly within the County. (C-05, C-06, C-14)
- R-02.** The Probation Agency should conduct a comprehensive study of the effectiveness of JDAI in the County which should include input from police departments and the Sheriff's Department. (C-05 through C-12, C-14, C-21 through 23)

- R-03.** The Probation Agency should monitor success rates for all juvenile justice programs in the County on a yearly basis. (C-06, C-14)
- R-04.** The Probation Agency should perform a cost-benefit analysis of all juvenile justice programs in the County. (C-13 and C-14)
- R-05.** The Probation Agency should use data gained from program evaluation and cost-benefit analysis to guide decisions regarding the utilization of the JJF. (C-2, C-3, C-6, C-13, C-14)
- R-06.** The Probation Agency should modify the RAI to include the recommendations of police officers and Sheriff's deputies in the decision of whether a juvenile is to be housed at the JJF. (C-22)
- R-07.** The Probation Agency should modify the RAI so that any felony or violent misdemeanor offense is sufficient basis for housing a juvenile at the JJF. (C-10)
- R-08.** The Probation Agency should modify the RAI to assign higher point values for multiple repeat offenses. (C-11)
- R-09.** The Probation Agency should make certain that all police departments and the Sheriff's Department receive information on the criteria for accepting juveniles into the JJF, on the use of the RAI, and on JDAI. (C-21 through C-23)
- R-10.** Police chiefs and the Sheriff should provide Officers with Probation Agency information regarding the criteria for accepting juveniles into the JJF, the use of the RAI, and JDAI. (C-21 through C-23)
- R-11.** The Probation Agency should develop a formal procedure to inform police departments and the Sheriff's Department when juveniles with probation histories move into their jurisdiction from elsewhere in the County. (C-24)
- R-12.** The Probation Agency should ensure that members of law enforcement who deal directly with juveniles in the community have easy, direct after-hours access to JJF personnel able to answer their questions. (C-25)

## **Responses**

### Responses Required From:

Board of Supervisors, County of Ventura (R-01 through R-09, R-11 and R-12)  
City Council, City of Oxnard (R-10)  
City Council, City of Port Hueneme (R-10)  
City Council, City of Santa Paula (R-10)  
City Council, City of Simi Valley (R-10)  
City Council, City of Ventura (R-10)  
Sheriff, County of Ventura (R-10)

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## **Attachments**

- Att-01.** Ventura County Probation Agency, Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment Instrument

## **Glossary**

(AECF)	The Annie E. Casey Foundation
(BGC)	Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme
(Census)	Average Daily Census
(County)	Ventura County

(CSA)	Corrections Standards Authority of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
(CTC)	Clifton Tatum Center
(GED)	General Educational Development Tests
(Grand Jury)	2009 – 2010 Ventura County Grand Jury
(Intake)	Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities Intake Department
(JDAI)	Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative
(JJCPA)	Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act
(JJF)	Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities
(JPI)	Justice Policy Institute
(Officers)	Police officers, school resource officers, and Sheriff's deputies
(Probation Agency)	Ventura County Probation Agency
(RAI)	Juvenile Risk Assessment Instrument
(ROP)	Regional Occupational Program
(Sheriff's Department)	Ventura County Sheriff's Department
(State)	State of California

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**Attachment-01**  
**Ventura County Probation Agency**  
**Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment Instrument**

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**VENTURA COUNTY PROBATION AGENCY**

**JUVENILE RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT**

Case #(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Booking \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 Offense Code(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Automatic Administrative Detention Cases:** These cases are automatically detained but still scored. Circle the correct case and continue.

- 1. Court remand ..... Book 100
- 2. Inter-county transfer cases, out-of-county/courtesy holds..... Book 100
- 3. Minor returned from private placement, Commitment, CYA or EM..... Book 100
- 4. Immigration Hold ..... Book 100
- 5. Current escape from placement or secure facility ..... Book 100
- 6. Nondiscretionary warrant (score underlying offense)..... Book 100
- 7. Minor refuses to give name and other ID information ..... Book 100
- 8. Minor under the influence of drugs or alcohol **AND** no parent or responsible adult can be located to assume custody ..... Book 100

**II. Offense: Most serious instant offense:** (Choose only one item indicating the most serious charge. Arrest warrant booking are scored according to the underlying offense.)

- 1. 707(b) offenses and other violent felonies..... Book 12
- 2. Possession of firearm ..... Book 12
- 3a. Felony sex offense – vulnerable victim..... Book 10
- 3b. Felony sex offense – no vulnerable victim..... 4
- 4. Sale or possession for sale of drugs..... 6
- 5a. Other felony crimes – weapon..... 4
- 5b. Other felony crimes – property ..... 4
- 5c. Other felony crimes – drugs..... 4
- 5d. Other felony crimes..... 4
- 6. Misdemeanors with violence..... 4
- 7. Misdemeanors with alcohol / drug use ..... 2
- 8. Escape / AWOL from EM..... 2
- 9. Other misdemeanors ..... 2
- 10. 628.1 WIC (violation of electronic monitoring / home supervision) ..... 1
- 11. 777(a) WIC (violation of probation)..... 0
- 12. No new offense (courtesy hold, 300 WIC, out-of-county 601 WIC, return to custody) ..... 0

**Offense Points** \_\_\_\_\_

**III. History – Number of adjudicated offenses during the past 24 months:**

- 1. 1 felony plus any other offense or any 707b or weapons felony ..... 5
- 2. 1 felony..... 3
- 3. 3 or more misdemeanors ..... 2
- 4. 1-2 misdemeanors ..... 1
- 5. Pending court date for felony offense filed by DA ..... 2

**IV. History – Probation/parole status:**

- 1. Active probation/parole or pending case, new felony ..... Book 10
- 2. Active probation/parole or pending case, new misdemeanor..... 4
- 3. Not on active probation or Deferred Entry of Judgment, but has been on informal probation within the previous 12 months..... 1
- 4. Active probation/parole or pending case, technical violation (VOP) ..... 0

JF (12/01/06)

V. **History – Other risk of flight factors:**

1. Previous 871 WIC (escape from a secure facility includes EM if away 48 hours) .....	2
2. Previous abscond from a nonsecure placement .....	1
3. 2 to 4 previous court FTAs on which warrant was issued .....	3
4. 5 or more previous court FTAs on which warrant was issued.....	6

**History Points** \_\_\_\_\_

VI. **Aggravating Factors** (add all that apply, up to 2 points)

1. Multiple offenses are alleged for this referral.....	1
2. Attempt to flee or resist arrest.....	1
3. Under the influence of drugs during commission of crime .....	1
4. Gang enhancement.....	1

**Aggravation Points** \_\_\_\_\_

VII. **Mitigating Factors** (subtract all that apply, up to 2 points)

1. Involvement in offense was remote, indirect, or otherwise mitigated .....	-1
2. No arrests or citations within the last year.....	-1

**Mitigation Points** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Score** .....

**Please Circle Outcomes**

Detention Decision Scale: 0 – 5 points	Release without restriction
6 – 7 points	Release with conditions: Home Supervision
8 – 9 points	Release with conditions: Electronic Monitoring
10+ points	Detain

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**Detention Override** \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, reasons:

- a. Parent, guardian, or responsible relative or significant other cannot be located.
- b. Parent, guardian, or responsible relative refuses custody
- c. Release of a minor places victim in vulnerable position
- d. Minor poses risk to self
- e. Minor poses risk to person or property of another
- f. Risk to flee
- g. Other \_\_\_\_\_

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**Release Override (applies to non-administrative cases only)** \_\_\_\_\_ The minor is released because \_\_\_\_\_

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Override Approval: Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Screened by \_\_\_\_\_ Date/time \_\_\_\_\_

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Release to \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Date/time \_\_\_\_\_

Release by \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

JF (12/01/06)