



# County of Santa Cruz

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Probation Department

**JUVENILE JUSTICE CRIME PREVENTION ACT  
& YOUTHFUL OFFENDER BLOCK GRANT  
(JJCPA-YOBG)**

**FY 2022-2023**

**CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PLAN**

# **JUVENILE JUSTICE CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PLAN**

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# JUVENILE JUSTICE CRIME PREVENTION ACT & YOUTHFUL OFFENDER BLOCK GRANT (JJCPA-YOBG)

## FY 2022-2023 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PLAN

### Part I. Service Needs, Priorities & Strategy

#### A. Assessment of Existing Services

*An assessment of existing law enforcement, probation, education, mental health, health, social services, drug and alcohol, and youth services resources that specifically target at-risk juveniles, juvenile offenders, and their families.*

Santa Cruz County has a wide array of services across the continuum that include diversion, community supervision and reentry that are provided to young people and families. We have services provided by partners which include traditional services (pre-pandemic) and creative, innovative services that have resulted from the pandemic that has lasted for two years. The combination of these services has allowed young people and their families opportunities to receive support that is focused on culturally responsive service delivery, increasing young people and family engagement, and creating opportunities for success. The juvenile division of the probation department offers supervision services for young people who have encountered the juvenile justice system but over the past several years there has been a move to not solely focus on traditional supervision but to also focus on prevention and intervention efforts before a young person is formally introduced to the system. This pivot has been supported by several grant projects, most of which have been awarded by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), that have created more resources to focus on diversion efforts to support young people and their families. These efforts have been led by several community-based organizations (CBOs) in partnership with probation, mental health, social services, and law enforcement. The CBO partners that are leading these projects include Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County (CAB), Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Services, Inc. (PVPSA), Encompass Family Services, Conflict Resolution Center of Santa Cruz County (CRC) and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE). The different projects have focused on how to connect young people with services that can support them in a variety of ways. One example of this is the Luna y Sol grant project in which a "Hub" has been created for both justice involved and non-justice involved youth and their families. The hub or one-stop center is in the center of Watsonville and is designed to allow drop-ins between Noon and 7pm, five days a week. Once someone walks into the Hub, they are greeted by staff who work with young people and their families to identify services that can support them. The staff utilize assessment tools and identify a path that may best benefit the person in getting the support they need. The different paths focus on the following areas of services: academic support, economic opportunities, job readiness support, civic engagement, and linkages to basic needs/wellness. For much of the 2021 this was not possible due to the pandemic but now the Hub has opened and is serving the community daily. The Hub is just one example of a place where a multitude of resources can be offered but there are so many other providers in the community who offer a tremendous number of resources and services including a dynamic array of assessments, ranging from risk and needs, substance use, trauma, CSEC to therapeutic intervention assessments. Additional resources include Parent Teen Mediation (PTM), Victim Offender Dialogue Program (VODP), Broad-based Apprehension, Suppression and Treatment (BASTA), Student Success Project (SSP), Alcance - employment services, WRAP/Fuerte, Aztecas, Caminos Diversion Program (WPD) and the Luna Evening Center. These are just some of the resources for young people and their families that promote family engagement and provide equitable opportunities that support well-being. All services can be provided in both English and Spanish.

In addition to the partners mentioned above we also have very strong partnerships with local law enforcement agencies and our primary law enforcement partners continue to be the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, the City of Watsonville Police Department, and the City of Santa Cruz Police Department. The work being done in the county would not be possible without the support of the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office who also happens to be a partner on a diversion grant, and the Superior Court. Together, the staff that deliver the services and support young people and families in our county create a System of Care (SOC) that collectively is making a positive impact on the lives of so many in Santa Cruz County.

Approach used to facilitate collaboration amongst the organizations listed above and support the integration of services.

The Santa Cruz County Probation Department works closely with the partners listed in the previous section but there are many other partners who contribute to the well-being of the young people and their families in Santa Cruz County. Those partners include Barrios Unidos, United Way of Santa Cruz County, Food What, and Community Bridges. In addition to the many partners, there are also a wide array of initiatives underway in the county to support young people and their families. To increase our overall efficiency and offer the most resources possible, our county has begun looking at ways to consolidate efforts and the primary vehicle for this consolidation has been leveraging the System of Care (SOC) model to facilitate collaboration and to support the integration of services. This model which to some degree has been in place for years supports the continued work initiated by Assembly Bill 403, Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) which sought to improve outcomes for young people served in California's child welfare system by drawing together a series of new and existing principles. The CCR aims to ensure that young people have their day-to-day physical, mental, and emotional needs met and that they can grow up in permanent and supportive homes. To further the work identified in the CCR, in 2018, Assembly Bill 2083 required that counties develop a coordinated, timely, and trauma-informed system-of-care approach for young people in foster care who have experienced trauma. As a result of this legislative directive, Santa Cruz County began working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) designed to ensure that all public programs for young people in Santa Cruz County will provide services in an integrated, comprehensive, culturally responsive, trauma-informed, evidence-based/best practice manner, regardless of how young people enter the system. The MOU identified five primary partners: Santa Cruz County Probation Department, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (HSA), Santa Cruz County Human Services Department (HSD), San Andreas Regional Center (SARC), and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE). There are also two Advisory Members: Superior Court and First 5 Santa Cruz County. This MOU was signed by the respective Department Heads in April of 2021. Since this time, this workgroup has been meeting monthly to further the work identified in the MOU and have already seen several system improvements including the creation of a universal Release of Information (ROI) to be used between county agencies, created a process to allow CBH to share the information from the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment tool with FCS and Probation, and introduced the principles of the Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) to probation staff. Some other good examples of collaborative efforts being used across the system include Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM), the Student Success Project (SSP), and the Stable Transitions After Reentry (STAR) grant project. There are other on-going meetings, such as the quarterly justice partners meeting that define tremendous partnerships. There are also the less frequently held, but very significant, convenings such as Santa Cruz County Realignment event that kicked off our SB 823 work in the county. This event had local, state, and national representation which truly signified and elevated the work, and eventually led to the creation of the JJCC subcommittee that helped to identify the SYTF we currently use. While the goals of these efforts are somewhat different, they do share the collaborative piece that is needed to fully support young people and their families. All these efforts rely on a "team approach" to identify how best to serve young people. The increased communication and familiarity with young people and their families allows for team members to work together to ensure gaps are filled, services are delivered in a timely manner and most importantly is responsive to youth and family voices.

## **B. Identifying and Prioritizing Focus Areas**

*Identify and prioritize the neighborhoods, schools, and other areas of the county that face the most significant public safety risk from juvenile crime.*

The population of Santa Cruz County is 277,587 with a juvenile population of 24,292 and most of these residents reside in three distinct areas of the county. These three areas are: North County, Mid County and South County. Probation caseloads, which consist of CAPS (Connecting and Promoting Success) and non-CAPS caseloads are represented as follows: South County 56%, Mid County 25%, North County 5%, and out-of-county 11%. As can be seen in the aforementioned numbers, most of the young people on probation reside in South County and most reside in the City of Watsonville, which is a community of 53,111 people. To provide some context South County is an underserved area of the county and has several impoverished areas with many living in poverty and lacking resources. The current population of South County is represented as follows: 75% Latino, 17% white, 2% African American and 6% other /unknown. Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) is the largest school district in the county and several of the schools in the district have a history of gang activity including gang recruitment by known gang members. The County Office of Education also plays a significant role in working with young people who may be at-risk as they provide several alternative school options throughout the county including South County.

The data indicates that Latino youth in Santa Cruz County were 2.5 times more likely than White youth to be committed to Juvenile Hall. In 2021, Latino youth represented 68% of all bookings into juvenile hall and of those bookings, 52% were from Watsonville. Arrest data also indicates that a higher percentage of arrests involved Latino youth and 37% of all arrests in 2021 occurred in Watsonville.

To support the young people and families in South County, most of the Juvenile Probation Department's staff are physically located in Watsonville and all our juvenile probation officers in Watsonville are Latino and bilingual. The Luna Evening Center (LEC) is also located in South County as are a majority of CBO's who provide direct services to youth on probation and their families. The probation department has teamed up with many of our partners in the county to focus on the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities in the youth justice system; achieve accountability without resorting to legal sanctions or the threat of confinement; and, to promote the well-being of young people and families impacted by the youth justice system. As noted earlier in this report, the addition of the Luna y Sol "Hub" should also prove to be a valuable resource for South County residents into the foreseeable future.

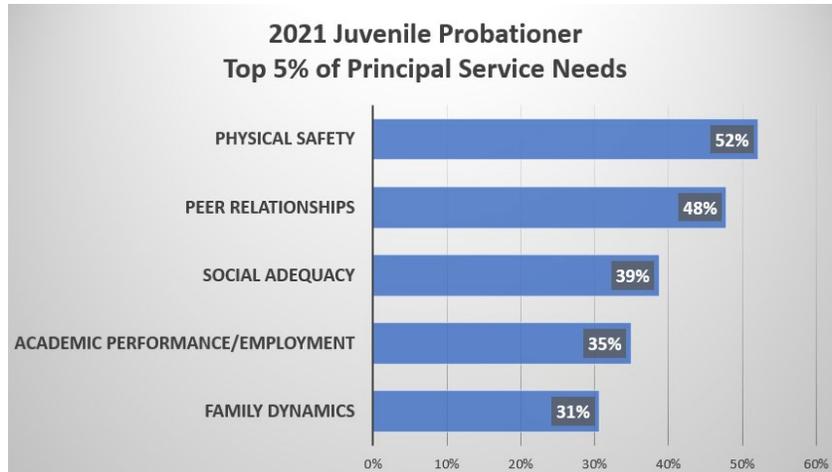
## **C. Juvenile Justice Action Strategy**

*Describe your county's juvenile justice action strategy. Include an explanation of your county's continuum of responses to juvenile crime and delinquency as well as a description of the approach used to ensure a collaborative and integrated approach for implementing a system of swift, certain, and graduated responses for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders.*

Santa Cruz County Probation is committed to using the least restrictive alternatives when youth contact the Juvenile Justice System. These efforts are aligned with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) and are applied to youth when contact is made at the earliest point in the Juvenile Justice System. These efforts seek to eliminate the unnecessary use of secure detention; utilize data-driven decision making; improve court processing; develop risk-based detention criteria; increase the use of community-based detention alternatives; improve conditions of confinement; and reduce racial disparities. Many of the programs in our Continuum of Services are designed to help meet the goals and objectives of JDAI and create equitable opportunities to make a measurable difference.

Focusing on diversion strategies, when possible, Santa Cruz County utilizes different assessment tools to inform case management decisions. These tools include the DRAI (Detention Risk Assessment Instrument) and the JAIS (Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System). The DRAI is a tool to make objective admissions to detention. The DRAI ensures that detention is used appropriately and that

unnecessary or inappropriate uses of detention do not occur. The DRAI measures two forms of public safety risk: the risk to reoffend prior to the court hearing and the risk of failure to appear to a court hearing. The DRAI is linked to detention alternatives such as home supervision, electronic monitoring to include GPS tracking. The JAIS is a supervision model that builds rapport between a young person and a worker while bringing valuable information to the surface. At the heart of JAIS is a one-on-one conversation that focuses on who the young person is, particularly their underlying motivations for behavior.



Once a determination is made that a youth may not be eligible for diversion, there is the possibility they may be eligible for Informal Probation. If the youth is deemed ineligible for that option, then the matter is referred to the District Attorney’s Office to review for filing a petition. If a petition is filed, there are several options the court can consider including Court – Informal Probation, Deferred Entry of Judgement, Six months without Wardship and Wardship. If a youth is unable to complete the court ordered term of Probation, the next steps in the graduated continuum of care could include placement in a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP), a commitment to a Ranch Camp, and finally a commitment to a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) pursuant to SB 823.

The Santa Cruz County Probation Department is an active participant in the development and implementation of the Santa Cruz County System of Care (SOC) which includes the following essential values: family preservation in which children shall be maintained in their homes with families whenever possible; Interagency collaboration and coordinated service delivery in which the primary child service agencies shall collaborate at the policy management and service levels to provide a coordinated, goal directed system of care for seriously emotionally disturbed children and their families; Least restrictive setting which requires youth must be placed in their natural environments, where they live and learn, when possible; Family involvement and participation is an integral part of assessment, evaluation, and treatment; And cultural competence which requires service delivery to be both culturally relevant and competent.

All juvenile programs and services utilized by Santa Cruz County Probation are developed and implemented with the SOC values as fundamental guideposts. Balanced and restorative justice encompasses an alternate framework for the juvenile justice system that acknowledges three primary stakeholders: the victim, the community, and the youth; the goals being accountability, competency building, and public safety. The Juvenile Division is committed to ensuring public safety through the reduction of recidivism by increasing life skills and competencies of the youth and families we serve. The Division accomplishes this by adhering to the Principles of Risk, Need and Responsivity which focuses on key supervision strategies including evidence-based supervision, family engagement, decreasing criminogenic risk factors, increasing protective factors, utilizing alternatives to detention, and providing services/interventions and programs that increase critical thinking skills. Probation has strategically and successfully partnered with community-based organizations and key stakeholders to provide comprehensive and culturally responsive supervision. One of the main objectives for the

division is to decrease the over representation of Latino youth that encounter the justice system. Our approach to address this matter is to work collaboratively with our partners by naming this issue and creating a space to problem solve so that equitable opportunities are afforded to all. Areas of focus for the upcoming year will include prevention and diversion, strengthening families and increasing the identification of natural supports and supporting these relationships.

Key Supervision Strategies	Methods	How we are implementing strategies
1. Use empirically based assessment to guide decisions.	Use of Risk Based Supervision: matching dosage with risk/needs.	Utilization of risk/needs assessments and reassessment: <u>Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS)</u> .
2. Family Engagement.	Child and Family Team Meetings and Family meetings. Identification of Natural Supports beginning at intake.	Youth/Family participate in planning meetings to contribute to program determination/case planning and commitment from identified team members.
3. Focus on skill enhancement and reduction of criminogenic risk factors.	Effective use of supervision practices and tools.	Utilization of <u>Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS)</u> ; <u>Aggression Replacement Training (ART)</u> .
4. Increasing protective factors.	Increasing youth/family understanding of needs, and mental health diagnosis; engaging support, services, and prosocial activities.	Specialized caseload assignments: FUERTE/Wraparound -application of <u>Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)</u> and <u>Family Engagement</u> . Provide education to access community services, treatment, and pro-social activities. Aztecas soccer program.
5. Utilizing alternatives to detention.	Offering appropriate programs to youth in lieu of detention such as Home Supervision, Electronic Monitoring, GPS and Evening Center.	Utilizing the Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) at the Intake level to assess the risk to reoffend and/or appear for court hearings pending adjudication.
6. Redirect antisocial thinking and behaviors.	Application of graduated responses.	Use of Rewards/Incentives: utilization of Violation Response Grid.

#### D. Comprehensive Plan Revisions

*Describe how your Plan has been updated for this year.*

Due to the restrictions and limitations that were put in place in March of 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic our 2021 plan remained very similar to the 2020 plan. We continued to take precautions when meeting with young people and their families but as the year progressed “in-person” meetings became a little more frequent still being mindful of social distancing mandates and masking requirements. There was one significant change to our plan during 2021, and that was directly in response to Senate Bill 823 which outlined the phased-out elimination of centralized Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) custodial facilities. Under SB 823, intake to the current DJJ facilities ended July 1, 2021, and local jurisdictions assumed responsibility for custodial care and supervision. Commencing FY 2021-22, and annually thereafter, the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant allocation is in place for counties to provide appropriate rehabilitative housing and supervision services for the realigned DJJ population. The allocated funding for Santa Cruz County for FY 2021-22 is \$250,000. Based on the allocation formula in SB 823, at full implementation (FY 2023-24) Santa Cruz County will receive a total of \$984,429 to serve realigned DJJ population. To be eligible for the block grant funds, counties were required to create a subcommittee of the multiagency Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) to develop a plan which describes facilities, programs, placements, services, supervision, and re-entry strategies that are needed to provide appropriate rehabilitation and supervision services for the realigned DJJ population.

Our SB 823 subcommittee consisted of the Chief Probation Officer, and representatives from the following agencies: Superior Court, District Attorney’s Office, Public Defender’s Office, Human Services Agency, Human Services Division, County Office of Education and four community members who have experience providing community-based youth services or youth justice advocates with expertise and knowledge of the juvenile justice system or have been directly involved in the juvenile justice system.

After meeting on May 5, 2021, and again on May 18, 2021, the SB 823 subcommittee reached a decision that the Santa Cruz County Probation Department would seek a host county to provide services to the realigned population. There were several factors that were considered in making this decision but most significant was the state of our Juvenile Hall facility. The facility, which was built in 1967, is both older and smaller when compared to many Juvenile Halls around the state. The newer facilities, many of which have been built with multiple units, can more easily address the need for separate programming and maintaining separation between youth who may be confined as part of DJJ realignment and youth who are housed for local violations. Another concern is the need to potentially house youth as young as 13 and as old as 25 years old. This is a significant range in ages and without the ability to separate youth into different units this presents potential issues that would be unavoidable.

For the reasons listed above, the Santa Cruz County Probation Department completed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Sonoma County Probation Department to host our youth who need a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF). The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors approved this MOU on September 28, 2021. On November 12, 2021, the Superior Court in Santa Cruz County ordered our first youth to be housed in the Sonoma SYTF.

## Part II. Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA)

### A. Information Sharing and Data

*Description of information systems and their ability to facilitate the sharing of data across agencies within your county. Describe the data obtained through these systems and how those data are used to measure the success of juvenile justice programs and strategies.*

The Santa Cruz County Probation Department, Juvenile Division, relies extensively on a case management system, AutoMon Caseload Explorer, which is used for several case management functions. The information system requires regular trainings for staff to remain current on updates and allows for our staff to suggest functionality options to be built into the system as needed.

An overview from AutoMon is as follows: Caseload Explorer helps efficiently track and manage Juvenile Offenders while adhering to jurisdictional security and judicial mandates. Caseload Explorer stores demographic and personal information such as gender, DOB, address, and phone, as well as information related to their offense such as charge type, restrictions, and conditions. Caseload Explorer also tracks Active Referrals or Case file(s), as well as the assigned Supervisor and/or Caseworker. If the Juvenile is placed into a juvenile facility, Caseload Explorer allows caseworkers to easily manage intake with a customizable intake/release workflow, providing the functionality to track appointments and release information, manage property, record behavioral habits, and access events and disciplinary action.

The data obtained through our internal case management system is used in a variety of ways including a review of recidivism numbers, tracking caseload size, and looking at individual program outcomes to determine public safety performance. In the end, it is the responsibility of the department to ensure good, accurate data to inform management on how best to allocate resources to provide the programming needed for youth to be as successful as possible on probation.

In addition to the utilization of Caseload Explorer, there are other stand-alone data bases that have been created to capture information specific to certain programs in the department. One of those data bases that was created by our Department Data Analyst is the Evening Center Data Base. The information that is tracked in this data base allows data to be entered on a nightly basis and allows for real time tracking of youth who are participating in our Evening Center program. The key data points that are tracked include: name, zip code, DOB, ethnicity, and the reason for referral. All the above information is important for our department to monitor but the reason for referral speaks to trends in the department that allow for bigger discussions when preparing our annual division report and is essential when trying to determine allocation of important resources. The reasons for referral to the program include positive drug tests, probation violation (non-compliance), school violations, new offenses, Alternative to Detention (ATD) violations and self-referrals.

Another example of a standalone data base is a data system for the Student Success Project (SSP) which was created to track daily interventions by cohort (diversion/probation) and intervention responses to behavior and truancy. This system also tracks referrals to services and other case management activities. The results of this data are captured in a quarterly summary highlighting school credits earned, school days missed and overall performance of each young person.

It is also worth noting that every four years the Santa Cruz County Probation Department, Juvenile Division, releases a Request for Proposals (RFP) to youth serving organizations to provide culturally responsive evidence-based Juvenile Delinquency, Prevention, Intervention, and Young Person, Family and School Engagement services that will collectively impact the well-being of justice involved youth. The determination on what service areas are needed is tied directly to the data probation can gather. At the same time there is also a high level of expectation that any provider who is funded will track data themselves and be able to report it on a monthly or quarterly basis to the Probation Department.

**B. Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils**

*Does your county have a fully constituted Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) as prescribed by Welfare & Institutions Code § 749.22?*

Yes.

**C. Funded Programs, Strategies and/or System Enhancements**

**Luna Evening Center (LEC)**

Evidence Upon Which it is Based: The principles for which the center operates can be found in the California Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) for Children, Youth and Families. The five key components of this model are engagement, assessment, service planning/implementation, monitoring/adapting and transitions. The ten principles of the ICPM include: team-based, family voice and choice, natural supports, collaboration and integration, community-based, culturally respectful, individualized, strengths-based, persistence and outcomes-based.

Description: The Luna Evening Center (LEC) is a partnership between Probation, community-based organizations, and county agencies. The services provided at the LEC incorporate a system of care model that includes family preservation and supportive services for young people and their families in a setting that is culturally and developmentally responsive to the needs of those who participate. The LEC operates Monday through Friday from 4:00p.m. to 8:00p.m. Snacks and dinner are provided each evening as part of the program. LEC staff provide transportation to the young people participating in the program by picking up each young person at their home. There is a weekly schedule of activities, services and vendors that will be available to participants throughout the week. Services at the LEC are aimed at addressing areas of need that are identified through assessments as well as other promising and evidenced based practices.

The program, which has been in existence for nearly two decades, is designed to serve young people while at the same time allowing them to remain in the community. Providing a probation response in lieu of court hearings is achieved through supportive programming aimed at addressing critical thinking skills. The LEC provides a structured after-school environment where young people can examine their thoughts and feelings that impact their decision-making. Staff at the LEC work with the participants to identify a variety of ways they could make better choices and minimize their contact with the juvenile justice system.

Over the past several years there has been a significant evolution in how the program serves young people in the County. The focus, especially during the pandemic, has been to assess the needs of young people and families and provide much needed emotional support, educational support and improve the overall well-being of young people and their families. These efforts are confirmed by looking at the program data for the past two years beginning in January of 2020 in which a total of 131 referrals were made to the LEC. A significant number of referrals, nearly 34%, were self-referrals from young people who had previously been in the program, followed by referrals to support probation responses and identified needs that support young people remaining in the community. These were followed by educational support, referrals from the court and the ATD program. The high number of self-referrals speaks to the positive experience the young person had while attending previously and further demonstrates the need for this type of support and outreach. Another example of working with families as part of Evening Center programming is the weekly Cara Y Corazon family sessions that are facilitated by Santa Cruz County Children’s Behavioral Health. In 2021, there were 18 adults and nine young people who participated in the program. These sessions were initially conducted virtually during the pandemic but toward the end of the year and into 2022 these sessions have been held in-person.

In February of 2020, the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County (CAB) received grant funding to open a “one-stop” service center that has allowed the LEC to expand service delivery to young people and families by increasing diversion efforts and by serving non-justice involved young people and families. The project, known as the Luna y Sol or the “Hub” is based on a service delivery model between community-based organizations (CBOs) and Probation to offer an array of services and resources at one location that are comprehensive, trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and responsive to the needs of young people, families, and caregivers.

The Hub, which began operation at their centrally located site in Watsonville in March of 2022, increases accessibility for the community at-large and reflects the important role of CBOs to address basic needs, wellness, education, economic opportunities, cultural and community engagement. By being able to serve the community in this manner, our young people, families, and community will be connected, thriving and have equitable opportunities that support well-being.

### **Connecting and Promoting Success (CAPS)**

Evidence Upon Which It is Based: This program uses principles from the research shown to be most effective in the field of community supervision by utilizing the principles of risk, need, treatment and fidelity. Officers use evidence-based risk/needs assessment tools to determine the level of risk for re-offending and to target resources to both higher risk and higher need offenders, and to match intensity of services and supervision to level of risk.

The tools allow staff to identify criminogenic needs and protective factors that should be considered in creating individualized case planning decisions. Case planning efforts are trauma-informed and are inclusive of young people and families in establishing goals. There is also every effort made to identify natural supports and include them in Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) so that the young person’s voice and choice is lifted and supported by those who know the young person best. Probation Officers use motivational interviewing techniques and Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) when working with justice involved youth.

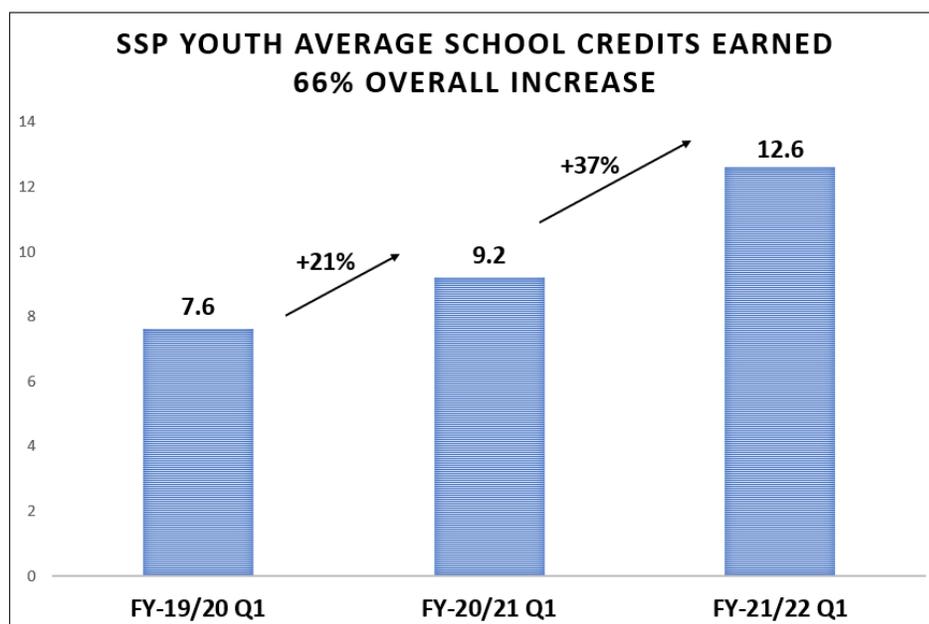
Description: A significant change from previous years is the renaming and re-shaping our juvenile supervision caseloads. Probation supervision in Santa Cruz County has steadily evolved and moved in a direction where probation staff are spending their time engaging with young people and their families to identify ways to promote equitable opportunities for success. This does not discount the need for continued accountability with terms and conditions of probation, but it allows young people the space to move forward and focus on ways to better themselves and hopefully prevent future contacts with the justice system. Reimagining what the goals of specific caseloads could be, and now seeing ourselves as coaches and not referees, has led to the renaming and re-shaping our juvenile supervision caseloads. The caseloads that formerly made up the Community Accountability Program (CAP) will now be assigned to the Connecting and Promoting Success (CAPS) caseload. The word connection is of great importance, as we see our role as connecting young people and family to supports that will sustain their well-being far beyond their term of supervision.

Probation staff assigned to supervising the CAPS caseloads work closely with our community-based partners utilizing a variety of assessment tools and making referrals to available resources in the community. In the past year there have been four separate grant projects (SSP-JAG, CRY-J, STAR and Luna y Sol) underway in the County which have greatly enhanced the number of resources and the number of staff who are working together with young people on probation and their families. Many of the services are focused on prevention and diversion but others provide counseling and mental health assistance, job readiness, educational and vocational support, and increasing wellbeing and wellness.

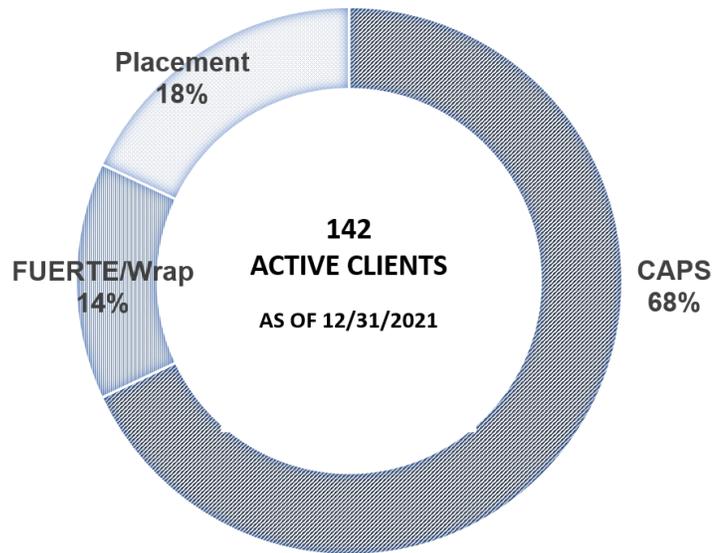
Probation Officers assigned to supervise youth on the CAPS caseloads are trained in using tools to assist in case planning and overall supervision. The utilization of the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) allows officers to better serve youth as "agents of change" who encourage pro-social behaviors and improve decision-making skills. It should be noted that officers have been trained to develop case plans based on risk and needs and using a trauma informed lens when considering supervision goals for young people and the impact of previous trauma. Every month, JAIS information is compiled by the Department Data Analyst and shared with staff in the form of a monthly Data Blast. Included in this monthly report is information on the number of JAIS assessments completed during the month, the number of reassessments due, and the number of overdue reassessments.

Additionally, the Data Blast tracks the number of youth who had their risk score increase, the number of risk scores which decreased and the number that stayed the same. The monthly data typically indicates around 50% of the youth risk scores stay the same or are stable and about 30% of the risk scores decrease which are indicative of significant progress toward successful completion of probation. The report also captures the number of EPICS sessions completed during a given month. EPICS (Effective Practices in Community Supervision) is a structured dialogue to help guide youth in a positive direction and more appropriate responses. Field visits conducted during a given month are also captured and since the on-set of the COVID-19 pandemic we have been tracking the number of virtual contacts with young people as well.

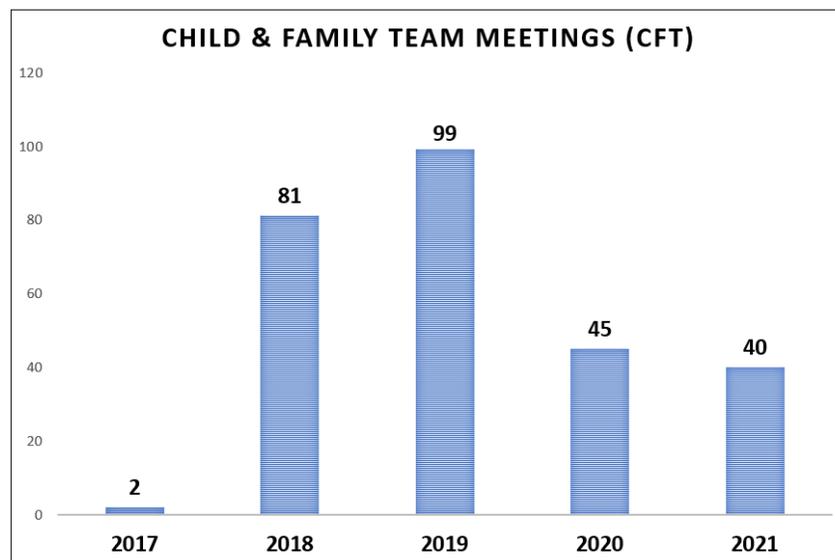
Probation Officers assigned to the CAPS caseloads are very involved in another project that seeks to support youth who are experiencing educational and behavioral challenges at school. The project, known as the Student Success Project (SSP), is a project that works with schools in South County to increase student credit accruals and decrease suspensions and expulsions. Since the inception of the project, the results have been nothing short of dramatic. From the first year of the project to the second year of the project there was a 21% increase in school credits earned by participants. However, from year two to year three there was a 37% increase in school credits and for the three years the project has been in place there has been a 66% increase in participant school credits earned. Initially, the project began with two schools, Sequoia and Freedom but over the past three years has expanded to include PV High School, New School, and Renaissance. To date, probation officers are assigned to the five schools listed above but have served young people in a total of eight schools.



At the end of December 2021, there were 142 young people on probation in Santa Cruz County and 97 were being supervised on CAPS caseloads. The remaining 45 young people of probation were assigned to either FUERTE/Wraparound (20) or to the Placement Unit (25).



To assist in the supervision and engagement with the young people on their caseloads the CAPS officers routinely hold Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM). In 2021, there were a total of 40 CFTM and most of those involved young people on CAPS caseloads. The CFTM allows for the young person to identify who they would like to be part of their CFTM which often addresses resources needed by the young person as part of their case plan. In addition to the young person and their family, the CFTM provides an opportunity for natural supports to attend and participate and often includes multiple community-based providers and other connected county agencies. The CFTM epitomizes a “team-work” approach that is a best practice in juvenile justice and a staple of the CAPS caseloads.



## Part III. Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG)

### (Welfare & Institutions Code Section 1961(a))

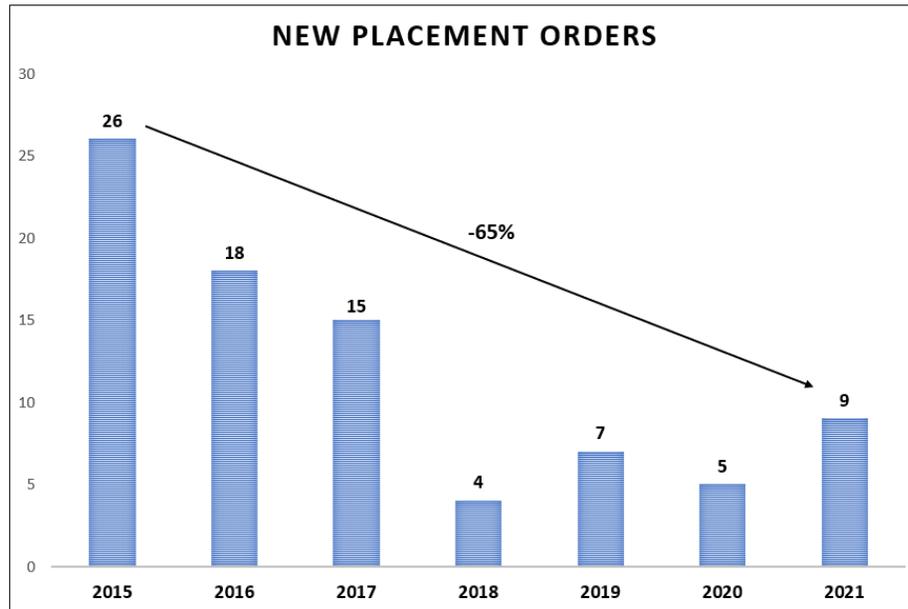
#### A. Strategy for Non-707(b) Offenders

*Describe your county's overall strategy for dealing with non-707(b) youthful offenders who are not eligible for commitment to the Division of Juvenile Justice. Explain how this Plan relates to or supports that strategy.*

Assessments: When a young person encounters the juvenile justice system in Santa Cruz County our staff immediately assess the situation to determine what level of involvement is needed by probation, and subsequently the district attorney and court partners. If the matter is a non-mandatory referral to the district attorney's office and the young person meets the criteria for diversion services, probation intake staff will then make a referral to one of several diversion programs in the county. It is the hope that this type of informal handling of the matter will result in the young person not having further contact with the justice system. However, if it is determined the young person is not eligible for diversion services, then the matter is referred to the district attorney's office for review and potential filing of a petition for a law violation. If the young person's matter eventually results in a sustained petition and the young person is placed on probation, it is at this time that probation staff meet with the young person and their family and complete an assessment with a validated risk and needs instrument. This assessment tool helps staff determine an appropriate level of supervision which is essential in providing services and not contributing to a youth's unwarranted advancement in the Juvenile Justice system. By supervising young people based on risk level and regularly re-assessing risk levels, probation staff can focus on an increased level of supervision to young people assessed with moderate and high-level risk factors. Additionally, through treatment/intervention matching, probation staff can ensure the correct level of dosage and not "net-widen" by increasing engagement with young people assessed with lower risk factors. The utilization of evidence-based practices by implementing Risk-Based Supervision, JAIS Assessments and case planning with a trauma informed lens for the purpose of addressing the needs of the youth and to increase opportunities for youth to be successful if placed on probation.

Out of Home Placements: One of the county's strategies is to match and provide appropriate services to youth based on their level of need continues to be the utilization of out of home placements. As required by AB 403, the 2017 Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Act has worked to eliminate congregate care in the form of traditional group homes and instead replace them with Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP). These programs were created to place a higher level of emphasis on mental health treatment while at the same time offering shorter lengths of stay in the programs. The anticipated length of an STRTP program is six to nine months while traditional group home placements frequently lasted more than a year. The Probation department attempts to use local STRTP's when possible but in 2021 there was only one STRTP program open in Santa Cruz County, and it only accepts female residents.

As a result of having very limited options to place young people in a local STRTP program, we have had to utilize STRTP programs outside of Santa Cruz County. In 2021, there were nine (9) new placement orders.



The following programs were utilized during the course of the year: Gateway, Placer County; Lighthouse Mentoring Center, Contra Costa County (placed by FCS); Tyler House, Santa Cruz County; Promesa, Fresno County; Core Conditions, Fresno County; Greater New Beginnings, Alameda County; Sierra Quest Academy, Mariposa County; Valley Teen Ranch, Madera County; Children’s Home of Stockton, San Joaquin County; Koinonia, Placer County; The average length of stay for youth in the STRTP programs in 2021 was 258 days.

YOBG funds are utilized to fund a portion of one probation officer who is responsible for providing supervision for young people who have been removed from their home which includes placement in either an STRTP, Ranch Camp or Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF). In 2021, there were four (4) young people committed to Ranch Camp programs. In the past, Ranch Camp programs were used as an alternative to committing a young person to the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and it is likely they will be used similarly as an alternative to the new Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) programs.

The Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) legislation has done a great deal to ensure young people are staying in STRTP programs for shorter periods of time while receiving a higher level of treatment. One of the other impacts from the CCR is the timelines that have been established when Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) are held. When a youth is ordered into an STRTP, probation staff work tirelessly to find appropriate placements in a timely manner, but they also begin planning on transitional services for the young people so that they have a stable home environment to return to when they complete their STRTP. This is done by participating in CFTM during the time the young person is in placement and by working with families to ensure they remain in contact with their child and are as ready as possible for their return. A significant addition during the past year to placement staff in planning transition services has been the assistance of re-entry navigators who are part of the STAR grant project. The navigators get introduced to the young people and the families at least 90 days prior to the anticipated completion date of the STRTP and begin to prepare for the young person’s return. In addition to meeting with families, they also assist with school placement and vocational/employment needs of the young person.

Finally, as the department continues to look at ways of providing youth much needed services and keep youth in the community, the FUERTE/Wrap program continues to be fully utilized. This program, which is the successful combination of the FURETE grant initiative and the Wraparound program, provides youth the benefit of close supervision which includes a team approach while offering mental health treatment as provided by our community partners at Encompass Family Services.

The Juvenile Division is focused on meeting children's medical, emotional/behavioral, developmental, and educational needs. The use of YOBG funds allows for these opportunities.