



# San Diego County Probation Department

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**Tamika Nelson, Chief Probation Officer**

July 27, 2022

Yvette Klepin  
Juvenile Justice Commission Chair  
2901 Meadow Lark Drive  
San Diego, CA 92123

## **Response to the 2021 Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) Facility Inspection Report for East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility (EMJDF)**

Dear Ms. Klepin:

We are in receipt of the JJC 2021 Facility Inspection Report for EMJDF. Below, please find the San Diego County Probation Department responses to the JJC recommendations as it pertains to EMJDF.

### **Recommendation a:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends the Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS):

- i. Increase the number of CTE instructors
- ii. Provide more variety of CTE courses
- iii. Collaborate with Probation to develop afterschool programs for the youth

### **Response a:**

In the last year, the population at EMJDF has changed. In 2020-21, the students JCCS served were long term students who were provided programming through a variety of CTE courses with several instructors. This is no longer the case. EMJDF now serves pre-adjudicated students with a highly transient population different than before. Many of the CTE instructors now work with the population at the "new build" at the Youth Transition Campus (YTC) located in Kearny Mesa. With the new population of students, JCCS has begun to look at the needs and how they can provide them with quality CTE courses and build out pathways that can be carried through to their next placement. Probation and JCCS Leadership are continuing to work together and plan for the next phase and CTE options.

As stated above, JCCS is continuing to explore CTE options with the new population of highly transient students. This fall JCCS will be offering new CTE and certifications such as, Drivers Education pre-permit course, CPR and First Aid, and Food Handler's Card. If students transfer to the YTC, they will apply their learning in Culinary Classes, Building and Maintenance/Construction, and a Screen-Printing Class. EMJDF will also continue to offer concurrent enrollment in Community College courses working with Southwestern College to build out the college program.

JCCS and Probation are continuing to add after school programming called the Futures Led by Youth (FLY) program which is funded through the ASSETs grant for the 2022-23 school year. The following are programs for the upcoming year:

- The Barber Club by Ron Nocum
- CrossFit by Oscar Eberle
- Piano/Ukulele/Guitar instruction by Mid-City Community Music
- Choir/Poetry by Roxanne McNiel
- Painting/Dance/Zumba & Yoga by Veronica Lopez
- Personal Wellness/Self-Care by Angie Castenada (not yet scheduled).
- JCCS also anticipates eSports beginning in the fall.

JCCS and Probation will continue to work together and build the FLY program to bring fun and exciting programs to our students

**Recommendation b:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends Probation:

- i. Continue to monitor OC spray
- ii. Continue to work towards limited to no use of OC spray
- iii. Continue to train staff in de-escalation
- iv. Implement the Mandt training.

**Response b:**

The Probation Department is committed to developing and sustaining a positive youth development culture; wherein, youth on youth violence is lessened, and the use of OC spray is limited or no longer needed for the protection of the youth or where officers do not feel the need to carry OC spray for their own safety. The Probation Department has trained all staff in the areas of Adolescent Brain Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Implicit Bias, and Restorative Practices. It is hopeful this will improve communication and rapport between staff and youth and result in a reduction of serious incidents and the use of force including OC spray.

The Probation Department began rolling out the first phase of the Mandt System to all Institutional management staff and supervisors. In August 2022, front line officers will begin attending the initial modules of Mandt.

Each facility monitors the use of OC within their facilities, and its use is always documented in the form of a written incident report. From these reports we are able to collect data on the frequency, the amount of OC being used, and which specific officers are using this type of force. This data is regularly reviewed at a Department Executive level and at the Facility Management level, as well as through the facility's Incident Review Committee. The purpose of the Incident Review Committee is to render a single finding to determine if the force used was within policy and will provide recommendations for additional training, changes in policy, or if further administrative investigation is needed. The Probation Department has partnered with national experts from the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) to review and improve our de-escalation and use of force practices to ensure they are within national best practices, along with recommendations relative to national standards. The department is also contracted with

Performance Based Standards (PbS), which is an additional data system that effectively identifies trends within our facilities.

**Recommendation c:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends Probation:

- i. Add clerical and nursing staff positions
- ii. Consult with nurses and the program manager of the medical agency to ensure there is proper coverage for the safety of youth as well as for the opportunity to take healthy needed breaks
- iii. Ensure medical staff have the means to transport medical equipment to emergencies (i.e., crash cart)

**Response c:**

Medical staffing meets the clinical needs of the youth population served within our facility. In consultation with the contracted Health Service Administrator: (i) an Administrative Assistant position has been added to their staff, (ii), the current daily staffing plan at EMJDF includes two 12 hr. Registered Nurses and one 12 hr. Licensed Vocational Nurse allowing for nursing coverage to meet the clinical needs of the youth and the opportunity for the nursing staff to take their required breaks, and (iii), necessary emergency medical equipment is transported in a wheeled medical bag during a medical emergency.

**Recommendation d:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends Behavioral Health:

- i. Follow up on referrals to community agencies to ensure youth have transitioned to community services
- ii. Ensure quality assurance reviews are conducted for all contracted services
- iii. Review and reconsider a contract that provides more transitional services from custody to community such as what was provided by Bridgeways until this year (2021)

**Response d:**

Probation re-entry officers are the leads on referrals and follow up for community services for youth. BHS staff participates in the pre-release meetings and provides referrals and assists in the referral process. In addition to services to in-custody youth, since 2003, the STAT Team has provided transition services for a subset of probation youth being released who were seen in custody when ongoing care is clinically indicated. Services are designed to meet the individual needs of the youth within the context of the youth's family and cultural life. The goals of this service, in addition to providing mental health services, are to maximize successful transition into the community and minimize negative mental health outcomes. Services typically last 30 to 90 days. In March of 2020, with the onset of the COVID pandemic, STAT team changed procedures and now follows up on all youth released, that received STAT services, for a minimum of 30 days post release to ensure that they are connected to community resources, if needed. If youth did not receive STAT services, the STAT team works to assist youth, the caregiver and or coordinates with Probation to offer community resources. Any referrals that are made by STAT team directly to a community provider are followed up on to ensure youth have been connected. Once the youth

leave the institution, unless it is a part of their release orders, services are voluntary, and youth can decline services.

As a Managed Health Care Plan, Behavioral Health Services monitors and evaluates our contracted providers as well as the services provided by our STAT program to ensure contract obligations and standards of care are met. This is done through, but not limited to, Quarterly Status Reports, annual site visits, annual medical record reviews, audits, and monthly/weekly meetings with program managers.

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Behavioral Health Services (BHS) and The County of San Diego Department of Probation have made significant efforts in developing programs to meet the multi-disciplinary needs of youth in the Juvenile Justice System for many years. Over the past 6 - 7 years one development we partnered on was reducing the population but increasing acuity. It was apparent that risk levels and presenting needs of youth increased, specifically around mental health, substance use, and criminogenic needs.

In 2018, BHS and Probation designed and implemented the Bridgeways treatment program. The program had 3 components, Institutions, Field, and Outpatient Treatment. BHS funded the Field and Outpatient components, and Probation funded Institutional Services. Probation's JJCPA funding was discontinued in 2019 for the institutional component and other funding was leveraged to keep the institutions component through the end of June 2021. BHS was notified by Probation, that Institutional Services would be managed outside of the Bridgeways contract.

Bridgeways continues to offer community-based outpatient treatment primarily to the Juvenile Justice population and referral pathways remain active from Institutions so that Probation and STAT staff can ensure referrals are made and youth and their families are connected.

BHS and Probation have continued our collaboration and designed a new intensive treatment program for in-custody youth that began in July 2021. The "Healing Opportunities for Personal Empowerment" (HOPE) Program, supports the juvenile justice system's transition to a positive youth development model while also focusing on the interrelated triad of treatment needs typical of youth who are in custody and provides evidence-based and evidence-informed treatments for Criminogenic, Mental Health and Substance Abuse needs. This program is designed to assist the youth in their transition to the community through a furlough and aftercare component to ensure they are connected to resources and can be successful upon release. Due to the pandemic both components have not been launched; however, with the move to YTC and expected COVID restrictions lifting we look forward to implementing them with Probation.

### **Recommendation e:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends Probation:

- i. Increase staff morale through more transparency at the higher executive levels
- ii. Include line staff when changes to programs, policies and procedures are Anticipated
- iii. Continue to update policies and procedures that take into consideration day to day operations as well as administrative needs
- iv. Executive level staff provide on-going updates in regard to program development of SB823 youth
- v. Provide the means for staff to have camaraderie-building opportunities (i.e., BBQs)

**Response e:**

In an effort to increase officer morale through more transparency at the higher levels, the Deputy Chief Probation Officer, and the facility Division Chief(s) host quarterly Town Hall meetings with all staff; wherein, updates on policies and procedures are discussed, departmental updates are provided, and officers are encouraged to have a voice in discussions. Discussions include updates and changes in facility policy and procedures. In addition, officer's voices are heard during daily facility briefings, participation in the Institutional Solutions Committee, which encompasses line officers in discussion of facility matters, and through the Division Chief(s) who have an "open-door policy."

The Probation Department takes into consideration day-to-day operations including Title 15 mandates before making any decisions. The Probation Department has an assigned Supervising Probation Officer and Deputy Probation Officer to the program development of SB823. They work closely with executive level staff and receive on-going updates regarding the development of the program.

The Probation department has provided staff multiple break rooms; wherein, staff build camaraderie during their breaks. In addition, monthly potlucks are coordinated with staff to allow them an opportunity to eat and enjoy a meal with one another and a staff specific counselor designed to enhance staff wellness was added.

The Probation Department has provided Major League Baseball (MLB) tickets as an incentive to officers who consistently go above and beyond their duties. In addition, an Employee of the Month board display has been created; wherein, it features all the employees of the month via photography. Furthermore, the employee of the month is designated a parking space. An employee of the year award is provided at the end of the year.