

PLACER COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

Background

California Penal Code §925 authorizes the Grand Jury to investigate and report on the operations of the officers, departments, or functions of the County, including the Juvenile Detention Center.

The Grand Jury is pleased to note that Placer County operates a modern facility to house juvenile delinquents in a detention center with significant additional capacity to meet the needs of a fast growing youth population in the County. The facility, which opened in March 2000, meets all state and federal requirements related to the physical aspects of juvenile detention facilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The 2001-2002 Grand Jury inspected the facility in February 2002 and again in March 2002. The facility appeared clean and the detainees were dressed in clean, neat clothes. The facility can house up to 76 detainees and usually averages 40 to 50. At the time of the second visit, four new detainees were processed, bringing the count to 64. Staff was cordial, friendly, and seemed eager to do a good job. It should be noted that at the time of this year's inspections, the Probation Department, which is in charge of the Juvenile Detention Center, has been without a Chief Probation Officer since December 2001.

Discussion

The Probation Manager of the Juvenile Detention Center provided a tour of the facility to the Grand Jury on February 13. In addition, members of the Grand Jury visited the facility again on March 11, 2002 to interview staff and detainees. Members of the Grand Jury spoke to four detainees who had been in custody from one to eight months.

The 2001-2002 Grand Jury is concerned that some recommendations made by the 2000-2001 Grand Jury have not been addressed. Overall, staffing levels meet the minimum requirements of California Code of Regulations Title 15. However, there are times when staff levels are not adequate to ensure complete coverage of the facility's needs and to provide proper supervision to both male and female minors in some situations. For example, when a female officer is not available to supervise female detainees, two male officers are required to supervise.

In response to this finding of the previous Grand Jury, the County hired a consultant to perform an independent review of the operations of the Juvenile Detention Facility. Also, the Chief Probation Officer was directed to conduct a staffing study of the Juvenile Detention Center and submit a written report to include findings and

recommendations to the County Executive Officer. These reports are being completed, and no action has been taken at this time.

Last year's Grand Jury found that staff requested the use of pepper spray as a defensive tool. Although signs posted in the facility stated that staff carried pepper spray, in reality all staff had not completed training and had not been authorized to carry pepper spray.

A policy manual which defines procedure to be followed is available to staff. Staff appears to have a basic understanding that policies exist, but there is a lack of consistency implementing these policies and procedures.

The detainees no longer receive counseling from a Health and Human Services counselor, and detainees do not receive professional help in areas such as anger management, substance abuse, suicide prevention, and social skills.

Finding 1

The Probation Department, which supervises the Juvenile Detention Center, has been without a Chief Probation Officer since December 2001.

Recommendation 1

The County should fill this vacancy as quickly as possible.

Finding 2

Although staffing may meet minimum requirements of California Code of Regulations Crime Prevention and Corrections, staffing is inadequate to ensure complete coverage of the facility's needs at all times and to provide proper supervision to male and female minors in some situations. See attachment (Title 15, Sections 1320 and 1321(c) & (e)).

Recommendation 2

Staffing levels should be re-evaluated for compliance with Title 15.

Finding 3

Training for the use of pepper spray is incomplete.

Recommendation 3

Complete pepper spray training for staff as soon as possible.

Finding 4

A policy manual is available to staff defining procedures to be followed.

Recommendation 4

Conduct workshops on a regular basis to ensure staff becomes familiar with policies to be followed.

Respondents

Placer County Board of Supervisors
Placer County Executive Officer
Placer County Juvenile Detention Center Director
Placer County Director of Health and Human Services

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:

The Honorable James D. Garbolino
Presiding Judge Superior Court
County of Placer
Historic Courthouse
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603

**California Code of Regulations
Title 15. Crime Prevention and Corrections**

Division 1. Board of Corrections

Chapter 1. Board of Corrections

Subchapter 5. Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities

Article 3. Training, Personnel, and Management

§1320. Appointment and Qualifications

§1321. Staffing

§1320. Appointment and Qualifications.

(a) Appointment

In each juvenile facility there shall be a superintendent, director or facility manager in charge of its program and employees. Such superintendent, director, facility manager and other employees of the facility shall be appointed by the facility administrator pursuant to applicable provisions of law.

(b) Qualifications

Each facility shall:

- (1) recruit and hire employees who possess knowledge, skills and abilities appropriate to their job classification and duties in accordance with applicable civil service or merit system rules;**
- (2) require a medical evaluation and physical examination including tuberculosis screening test and evaluation for immunity to contagious illnesses of childhood (i.e., diphtheria, rubeola, rubella, and mumps);**
- (3) conduct a criminal records review on each new employee; and,**
- (4) require a psychological examination, pursuant to Section 1031 of the Government Code. (emphasis added)**

§1321. Staffing.

Each juvenile facility shall:

- (a) have an adequate number of personnel sufficient to carry out its program;**
- (b) have a sufficient number of supervisory level staff to ensure adequate supervision of all staff members;**
- (c) assign sufficient child supervision staff to provide continuous wide awake supervision of minors, subject to temporary variations in staff assignments to meet special program needs. Staffing shall be in compliance with a minimum child-staff ratio for the following facility types:**
 - (1) Juvenile halls and special purpose juvenile halls**
 - (A) during the hours that minors are awake, one wide-awake child supervision staff member on duty for each 10 minors in detention;**
 - (B) during the hours that minors are asleep, one wide-awake child supervision staff member on duty for each 30 minors in detention;**
 - (C) at least two wide-awake child supervision staff members on duty at all times, regardless of the number of minors in detention, unless an arrangement has been made for backup support services which allow for immediate response to emergencies; and**
 - (D) at least one male and one female child supervision staff member on duty whenever both male and female minors are housed in the facility. (emphasis added)**
 - (2) Camps**
 - (A) during the hours that minors are awake, one wide-awake child supervision staff member on duty for each 15 minors in the camp population;**

- (B) during the hours that minors are asleep, one wide-awake child supervision staff member on duty for each 30 minors present in the facility;
 - (C) at least two wide-awake child supervision staff members on duty at all times, regardless of the number of minors in residence, unless arrangements have been made for backup support services which allow for immediate response to emergencies;
 - (D) at least one male and one female child supervision staff member on duty whenever both male and female minors are housed in the facility;
 - (E) in addition to the minimum staff to child ratio required in (c)(2)(A), consideration shall be given to the size, design, and location of the camp; types of offenders committed to the camp; and the function of the camp in determining the level of supervision necessary to maintain the safety and welfare of minors and staff;
 - (F) personnel with primary responsibility for other duties such as administration, supervision of personnel, academic or trade instruction, clerical, farm, forestry, kitchen or maintenance shall not be classified as child supervision staff positions; and,
- (d) have sufficient food service personnel relative to the number and security of living units, including staff qualified and available to: plan menus meeting nutritional requirements of the sex and age groups fed; provide kitchen supervision; direct food preparation and servings; conduct related training programs for culinary staff; and maintain necessary records; or, a facility may serve food that meets nutritional standards prepared by an outside source; and,
- (e) have sufficient administrative, clerical, recreational, medical, dental, mental health, building maintenance and other support staff for the efficient management of the facility, and to ensure that child supervision staff shall not be diverted from supervising minors.** (emphasis added)