




Probation and the County Education Office: Partners for Positive Youth Development

Chief Probation Officer Holly Benton

March 13, 2025

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Primary Goals

- Four primary countywide systemic goals for juvenile justice, as developed by the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council:
 1. Reducing Recidivism – use of evidence-based practices to interrupt behaviors and address criminogenic needs
 2. Enhancing Diversion Opportunities
 3. Collaboration between youth-serving agencies and departments for better outcomes
 4. Addressing Disparities

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About Probation

Youth who are referred to Probation are dealing with multiple challenges, often have been involved with the child welfare system, and many have experienced significant trauma.

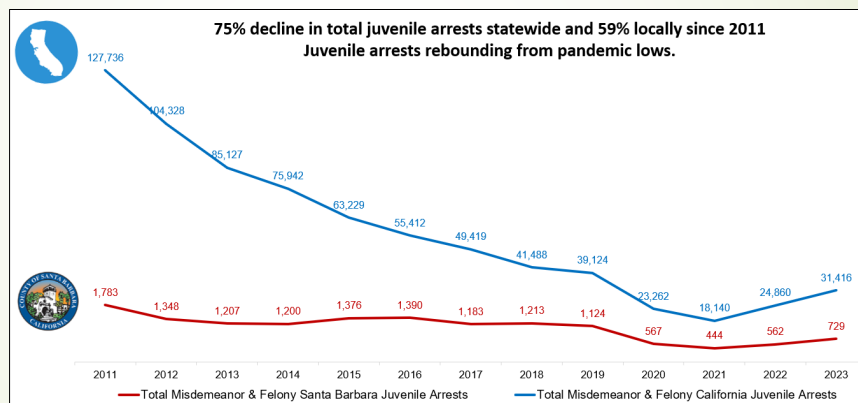
Probation takes an individualized approach to assessing, understanding, and addressing each youth and family's unique circumstances.

Statewide, over 90% of justice-involved youth are served in the community and remain in their home.

Services provided are evidence-based, trauma-informed, focused on cognitive behavior change, and case-managed by dedicated probation officers.

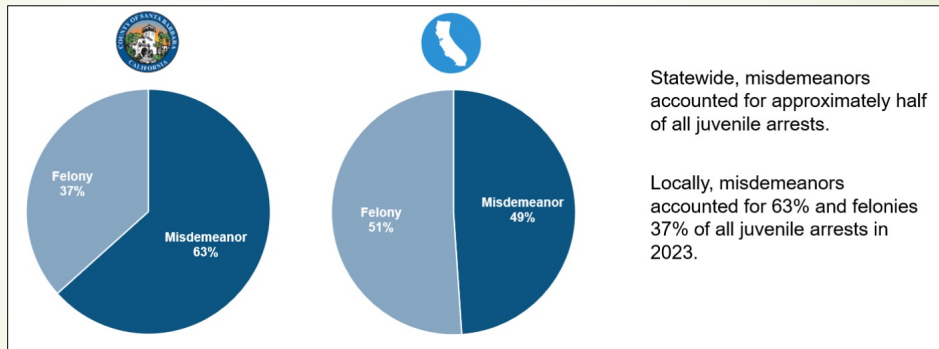
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Local Statistics



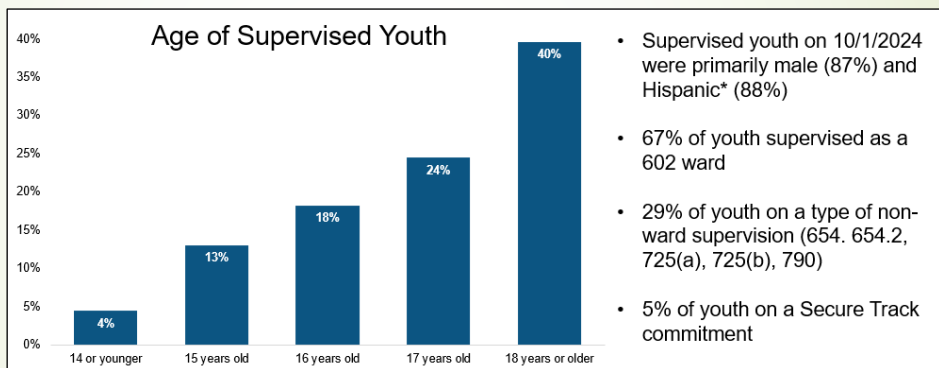
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Local statistics



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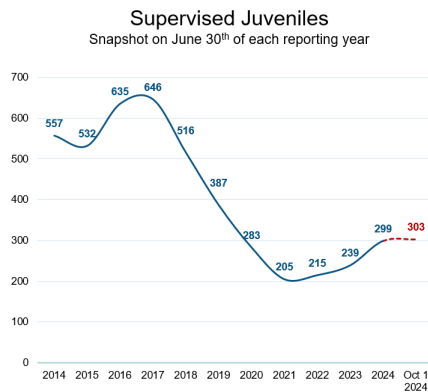
Local statistics



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Local statistics

- Supervised juveniles increased 25% from the year prior
- 7% decrease in misdemeanor referrals
- 18% increase in felony referrals
- Increase to 29% of youth on some type of non-ward supervision (654.654.2, 725(a), 725(b), 790) from 18% the year prior



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Evolution of Juvenile Justice

- Downward trend in juvenile arrests for over twenty years, and a concurrent downward trend in youth incarceration
- Shift from compliance and rule-based supervision to risk/needs assessment and positive youth development, as adolescent brain science was better understood, and the impacts of detention became more clear through research. Youth make mistakes and must be allowed to learn and grow.
- Removal of "status offenses", school behavior, truancy and petty crimes from probation supervision – research-based changes
- Diversion of youth who can be positively impacted through treatment at home/in the community
- Continued trend of realignment of youth to the counties, most recently with SB 823

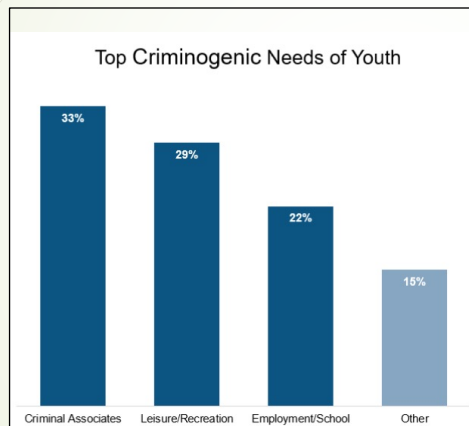
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Evolution of Juvenile Justice

- Those youth who must be in custody fall into four primary categories in the County of Santa Barbara: awaiting disposition or change of placement (short term stays), serving moderate commitments, or secure youth track commitments (long-term stays in our PEAK program).
- Youth with serious or violent offenses, which are a very small percentage of the youth we serve, are now committed for longer periods of time.
- While in custody, youth receive educational services through our County Education partners, as well as technical education and vocational training
- Youth in custody also receive a large variety of other services to address treatment needs, wellness (physical, mental and behavioral), and more.

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Local statistics



Protective Factors	VS	Elevated Risk Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental support Stable residence Treatment progress Positive progress on Probation Regular school attendance Engaged in pro-social activities Sober and engaged in treatment Employed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of parental support Unstable residence or transient Lack of treatment compliance Pattern of non-compliance on Probation Excessive truancy Increased anti-social activities Active use/recent overdose/hospitalization

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Programs & Services

- Joven Noble (CommUnify)
- Seeking Safety (CommUnify)
- Los Compadres Mentoring (CommUnify)
- Moral Reconciliation Therapy (BWell)
- ARISE (Probation)
- Substance Abuse Disorder Treatment
- Conflict Mediation (Fighting Back)
- Youth Specialist (CSI)
- Sex Offender Treatment
- Allison Online Vocational



- Interactive Journaling (BWell)
- Individual and Group Therapy (BWell)
- Youth Leadership Team (Probation)
- Sex Education (Fighting Back)
- Secondary Education
- Vocational Programs (CTE)
- Behavioral Incentives
- Incentive Cards
- PEP Prison Education Program
- Re-Entry Specialists (Fighting Back)
- Strategic Case Management

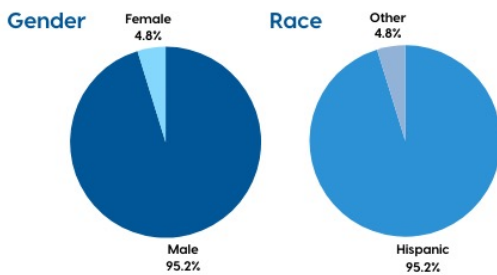
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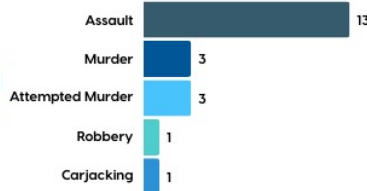
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Current SYTF Population – 21 youth

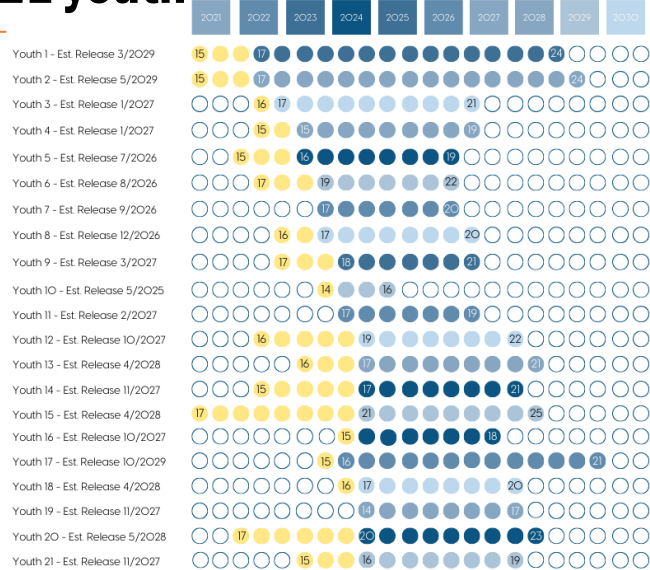
Snapshot on December 31, 2024



Highest Charge



Age at Discharge



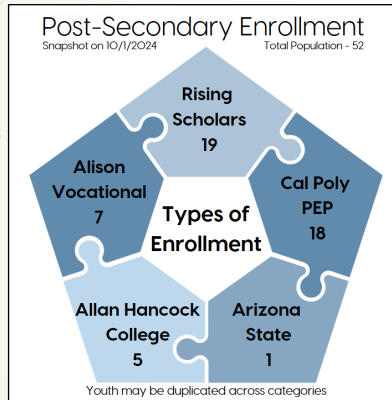
*Numbers shown (yellow) are ages at time of offense if different than ages upon disposition to Secure Track (blue), and ages upon latest projected release

Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council & Juvenile Justice Realignment Subcommittee

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The Importance of Education



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Thank you!

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