

# **YOLO COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY**

## **SUMMARY**

The staff, programs, and facilities at the Yolo County Juvenile Detention Facility (YCJDF) are exemplary. Medical care and educational opportunities for the minors are of high quality and are easily accessible. Living conditions are humane and appropriate.

## **REASON FOR VISIT**

The 2010-2011 Grand Jury inspected this facility as mandated by California Penal Code Section 919(b), which provides that “The grand jury shall inquire into the conditions and management of public prisons within the county.”

## **ACTIONS TAKEN**

The Grand Jury inspected the juvenile facility in November 2010, and again in February 2011. The Grand Jury reviewed policies and procedures, a sampling of recent incident reports and grievances, and met with management and approximately ten custodial, clinical and educational staff members.

## **WHAT THE JURY DETERMINED**

### **The Staff**

All management and staff members encountered by the Grand Jury expressed enthusiasm for their work and mission. Many were eager to share their experiences at the YCJDF with the Grand Jury and appeared highly motivated to improve the lives of the minors.

All custodial staff have successfully completed peace officer academy training required by Penal Code section 832, which mandates training in areas such as use of force and physical fitness. All custodial staff completed the required Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Academy law enforcement training and most have attained bachelor’s degrees. Many are bilingual, predominantly in Spanish. YCJDF staff and management are often contacted by other jurisdictions to consult on the effective management of youth detention facilities.

### **The Facility**

The housing units were very clean. Windows, floors, walls, doors, cells, desks, and bedding appeared clean and well maintained. The facility looks new, although it is nearly six

years old. The housing units were well-lit, smelled clean, and temperatures were comfortable and well regulated.

Clothing services and meals, including any necessary special diets, are provided by the Monroe Detention Facility. Meals are delivered with the ward's name and needs written on the meal containers.

All housing, hallway, visiting, booking and exercise areas are under surveillance and recordings are kept for one year.

New exercise yard turf, fully paid using Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) funds, was installed during early 2011.

Quarterly quality assurance meetings are held to discuss any topics affecting the facility and its minors.

## **Security**

The Grand Jury was informed that the YCJDF provides the level of security normally seen in high-level adult facilities. It is one of the most secure juvenile detention facilities on the west coast. The YCJDF is set apart from other juvenile facilities by its modern central control room, which electronically controls the movement of staff and minors throughout the facility.

## **The Population**

There are three housing units known as "pods" at the YCJDF. Each pod has a maximum capacity of 30 minors.

One of the pods was used to house 20 inmates pursuant to a contract with Sacramento County. That pod is now empty because the contract recently expired, resulting in the return of the inmates to Sacramento County.

A second pod houses the Yolo County population and four to five Tuolumne County minors. This population is comprised of juveniles who are facing charges as adults in Superior Court or Juveniles awaiting processing in Juvenile Court.

The third pod contains up to 25 juveniles pursuant to a contract with the Department of Homeland Security. This contract, under the auspices of ICE, utilizes the YCJDF to house a nationwide population of juvenile offenders awaiting resolution of their immigration issues. Many of these juveniles are non English speaking. In 2010 one of them became the first in the nation to obtain a GED while under ICE detention. The YCJDF was informed that the reason for its selection to perform this lucrative contract is due to the high degree of security for its juvenile population.

## **Programs and Activities**

Detainees are taken to Woodland Memorial Hospital to check for medical and mental health problems prior to booking at the YCJDF. This is followed by a screening process that takes up to 72 hours. During the screening process immunizations are updated. Some minors have never been immunized.

There is a medical professional on site during the day and on call at night. A physician is available on call 24 hours a day. Evaluations for medical, dental and mental health needs are done within 96 hours of booking, unless staff determines there is an immediate health risk. Mental health services are available on call, by EMT's, and the Yolo County Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health when needed or requested by a health professional.

The minors are assessed for English competency, math and reading skills. They are advised of YCJDF policies, including disciplinary procedures and their due process rights. Contact with families, when appropriate, is available through mail and weekly visiting.

Education and literacy services are a central focus for the minors. County-funded classes are provided for County students, while ICE funding is used for youths under federal detention. Ninety-seven percent of youths attend classes. Tutoring and library/literacy services are provided on a regular basis. GED testing is available to youths not currently enrolled in an outside school.

The YCJDF relies heavily on community participation. Staff say they "simply could not do what we do without local volunteers." Services provided by volunteers or by grant funding include mentoring programs and spiritual services, as well as classes on teen parenting, coping skills, and Aggression Replacement Training. Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous programs are available.

## **FINDINGS**

- F1.** The facility is clean and well-maintained. Living conditions are appropriate, with no overcrowding problems.
- F2.** Medical care and screening are readily available and appear to be of high quality.
- F3.** A wide range of educational and character-building services are available to all minors. Local community volunteers are invaluable for the provision of these services
- F4.** Staff are enthusiastic and well trained.
- F5.** The YCJDF is developing a positive national reputation for its participation in ICE.
- F6.** The YCJDF is a credit to Yolo County.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

None

**REQUEST FOR RESPONSES**

None