



# San Diego County Probation Department

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*Tamika Nelson, Chief Probation Officer*

December 4, 2024

Maya De La Torre  
Juvenile Justice Commission Chair  
2901 Meadow Lark Drive  
San Diego, CA 92123

## **Response to the 2024 Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) Facility Inspection Report for the Youth Transition Campus (YTC)**

Dear Ms. De La Torre,

We are in receipt of the Juvenile Justice Commission 2024 Facility Inspection Report for the Youth Transition Campus. Below you will find the San Diego County Probation Department's responses as it pertains to the Youth Transition Campus.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** Probation to develop a method for tracking LGBTQ+ youth in population number with Probation's IT department.

**RESPONSE 1:** Probation will review best practices within our field and determine if there is an acceptable method of obtaining and recording the demographic information the JJC is requesting without infringing on the privacy of the youths or obtaining inaccurate information. To date, an acceptable method that is in the best interest of youth has not been determined.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** Probation to provide training in the area of Autism for new staff and period refreshers so staff are able to work with this population in a proactive and consistent manner.

**RESPONSE 2:** Probation has implemented a training course for sworn staff entitled, "Neurodivergent." This course is designed to educate participants in the variations in the human brain regarding sociability, learning, attention, mood and other mental functions.

Probation has also scheduled six (6) sessions of "Autism: A Guide for Law Enforcement" which are scheduled to begin in 2025. The need for refresher courses will be evaluated on an as needed basis.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** Probation provide training to all Probation Officers in the facility on the process of identifying youth that may benefit from Special Education services.

**RESPONSE 3:** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires all school districts to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. Our education partner, the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) undertakes this obligation to identify all children who may need special education services even

if their previous school was not providing special education services to the child. SDCOE assures an ongoing effort to identify all students with disabilities including those for whom English is not their primary language, students with low-incidence disabilities, students from highly mobile families, students in detention or who are suspected of having a disability, and those in need of special education even though they have advanced from grade to grade.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** Probation to develop a tracking system to obtain information from probation led and contractor/volunteer led programs in order to identify how many youths were able to participate in specified programs, how many repeated the program and how many completed the program in its entirety.

**RESPONSE 4:** Probation is implementing a technology-based system using radio frequency identification (RFID) to track the 24-hour daily activities, including, but not limited to: movement, location, and participation in programming. This technology will account for the number of youths participating and frequency of participation in any specified program. This information will be automatically uploaded to the Probation Case Management System (PCMS). We are currently in the pilot stage, testing the technology, and estimate we will implement in 2025. Probation will continue to work with our Research and Contracts units to assess completion rates and successful outcomes.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** Probation develops a system to connect youth to resources early on in commitment and after re-entry, especially in assisting with various applications.

**RESPONSE 5:** Probation utilizes a multi-disciplinary team approach to develop a case plan to build upon the youth and family's strengths to address the psychological, social and educational risks and needs of the youth housed within our juvenile facilities. Re-entry meetings are held prior to the youth's release wherein youth and their positive support system are provided with educational and community resources.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** It is again recommended Probation have a second medical staff (RN or LVN) on duty during youth waking hours.

**RESPONSE 6:** Effective October 1, 2024, Correctional Healthcare Partners (CHP) and Probation entered into contract for medical services. Since this agreement, CHP has staffed medical services with two (2) Registered Nurses (RN) and either one (1) Medical Doctor (MD) or one (1) Physician's Assistant (PA) during waking hours.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:** Probation to provide separate cottages for those under the age of 18 and those 18 and older.

**RESPONSE 7:** Probation policy section 5.2.4 Guidelines for classification notes "When determining an appropriate level of classification, officers are required to evaluate the security and personal safety needs of the youth. Criteria to consider for determining the appropriate classification includes but is not limited to: The offense, legal status, age and level of maturity, sex/sex identification according to the youth, criminal sophistication, physical/emotional needs, medical and mental health needs, gang affiliation and amongst other criteria, individual program needs.

**RECOMMENDATION 8:** Probation to house the Youth Development Academy female population at East Mesa Juvenile Facility where they can receive identical services and opportunity to all aspects of the program as the male population.

**RESPONSE 8:** Probation continues to explore the concept of housing the entire YDA population at a single location where similar services and opportunities may be provided. The female YDA population at the Youth Transition Campus is housed separate from the pre and post disposition population. They are currently provided with services through SBCS, the same provider that works with the male population.

**RECOMMENDATION 9:** Probation add Medical and Mental Health staff to the Use of Force Review Committee.

**RESPONSE 9:** Probation will continue to evaluate the feasibility of adding both Medical and Mental Health staff to the Use of Force Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION 10:** Probation to work with SDCOE to enhance CTE courses, online certification courses and resource fairs.

**RESPONSE 10:** Probation continues to collaborate with SDCOE to enhance CTE courses, online certifications, and implement resource fairs.

The collaborative efforts are geared toward providing sustainable skills with the area of food services, building trades and horticultural skills. Probation and SDCOE partner to put together quarterly Family Information Day events where resources within the community are provided to youth and their support system.

**RECOMMENDATION 11:** Allow youth to tour the school they will be attending in the community prior to release.

**RESPONSE 11:** Probation will consider the recommendation by the Juvenile Justice Commission to allow youth to tour the school they will be attending in the community prior to release.

Very respectfully,

Tamika Nelson  
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

CC: Denise Huffhines, Assistant Chief Probation Officer  
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