

Legislative Report – Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Transition Plan

Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 736.5, the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) will cease operations on June 30, 2023. The Division will continue, until closure, to ensure the continuity of all services, including adequate staffing and provision of programming in a safe and rehabilitative environment. Statute also requires the Director of DJJ to develop a plan by January 1, 2022, for the transfer of jurisdiction of youth remaining at DJJ who are unable to discharge or otherwise transition from DJJ.

DJJ currently provides treatment and rehabilitative services for approximately 660 high-needs youth from 40 unique counties in California. Under SB 823, Chapter 337 (Statutes of 2020), juvenile offenders cannot be committed to DJJ after July 1, 2021, unless a youth who is otherwise eligible to be committed under existing law and in whose case a motion to transfer the minor from juvenile court to a court of criminal jurisdiction was filed. Since July 1, 2021, there has been 24 cases where youth were committed to DJJ. (11 cases have been accepted, 8 cases are being processed for acceptance and 5 were rejected due to not meeting the criteria.)

As of December 2021, preliminary analyses suggest there are approximately 250 youth currently at DJJ who are ineligible for discharge prior to the closure. This number will increase as it does not include those youth whose cases are pending delivery, cases currently in process of acceptance, youth eligible for future placement at DJJ under SB 823, and youth who could be denied discharge prior to June 30, 2023.

Fiscal Year Average Daily Population			
Fiscal Year	Total*	Male	Female
Actual			
2020-21	733	705	29
Projected			
2021-22	657	630	27
2022-23	544	521	24

* Totals may not add up due to rounding

Note: Actuals from monthly raw DJJ Reports

This will require collaboration among all members of the youth's Interdisciplinary Treatment Team, family, and community stakeholders and can be achieved through the Integrative Behavioral Model, which is DJJ's framework for assessing, understanding, and treating youth. Under this model, stakeholders develop the youth's treatment plan and provide cognitive-behavioral treatment interventions and ongoing support according to a youth's individual needs, as determined by the California Youth Assessment Screening Instrument and other assessment tools. This vital process can be leveraged to transfer the care of youth from DJJ treatment to local care upon the closure of DJJ.

DJJ is focused on mapping out the next 18 months in terms of service delivery and population management as units and facilities begin to downsize. DJJ will continue to provide interventions, education, and specialized programming. The needs of DJJ's youth are significant and complex, which is why a measured approach is important when making decisions regarding ongoing programming, unit closures, and the manner in which the transition of care is coordinated. To that end, DJJ is engaged in conversations with state and local stakeholders, including the Chief Probation Officers of California, Judicial Council, Office of Youth and Community Restoration and community stakeholders as the transition of care for each youth will be coordinated with those entities.

To achieve a successful transition from DJJ to local care, the following will serve as a guide to develop individual transfer plans and foster increased collaboration and partnership between DJJ and county probation departments when preparing for youth to return to local care.

The goal of the partnership is to work together to ensure that youth committed to DJJ have the necessary services, support, and opportunities while in DJJ facilities and upon return to the community can continue to desist from criminal behavior and initiate a successful transition into adulthood upon completion of their adjudication period.

Essential components of transition planning include identifying and planning for securing an appropriate placement, addressing higher risks, addressing ongoing physical and mental health needs, and continued positive development in education, employment, and other outcomes related to avoiding recidivism. This requires a transition support network that will support them when they return to local care.

DJJ's role will be to continue to provide a secure placement for youth and provide them with treatment, through the closure, that lowers their risk to re-offend by addressing underlying criminogenic needs and providing opportunities to develop their strengths and interests that will prepare them for a safe return to local care.

Key Components:

DJJ County Liaisons: To facilitate this communication, each county is assigned a DJJ liaison. The liaisons perform a variety of tasks in collaboration with probation and outside stakeholders. Tasks include but are not limited to screening calls to determine potential eligibility and connecting probation staff to the appropriate facility or person to coordinate service delivery and support services and youth transition back to local care.

DJJ Acceptance: For those cases that meet the criteria for acceptance to DJJ before closure, a Family Re-Entry Survey will be mailed to the youth's parent(s)/guardians(s) upon acceptance. Information received from the survey is utilized to determine the support systems the youth had in the community and to provide information vital to the case and transition planning that may not have been captured in probation reports and court documents.

Within 5 Weeks of Arrival: Initial Case Review (ICR) - Probation will be notified of the ICR date and time. The ICR will focus on the treatment needs of the youth that will be addressed while at

DJJ, recognizing that the goals will become more short-term to ensure the youth can realistically accomplish them prior to their transition back to local care.

Within 30 Days of Program Placement: Upon completion of the intake process, youth are assigned a program placement to begin participating in treatment. Critical needs for each youth (e.g., mental health needs, lack of family/community supports) are identified, and a treatment plan is developed to address areas of risk while building on areas of interest and strength.

Ongoing Treatment and Transition Planning – Case Conferences 30–120 Days: Depending on program placement, case conferences are conducted in 30-120 day cycles. These meetings are held with the youth, the youth's treatment team and probation to discuss the youth's progress, obstacles, update case planning, and conduct re-entry/transition planning. This collaborative process will occur for both youth currently committed to DJJ and for those identified above. The benefits are significant as probation will be the supportive entity upon a youth's return and will likely have a greater understanding of the individual services available for youth in their communities.

Discussions during treatment team meetings include but are not limited to:

- Review placement plans and communicate regularly to confirm if still viable.
- If identified as in need of critical support, the assigned probation officer will participate in the case conference process to work collaboratively to identify potential services/supports for youth in the community.
- Review the youth's current treatment plan goals to include strength-based activities/achievements and community supports. Review treatment/program progress.

Other benefits:

- Checking in and participating in the youth's DJJ placement: Allows probation to be updated on treatment progress, treatment team concerns, and expectations about returning to local care. The youth's questions and concerns about community supervision can be addressed by their probation officer.
- Building and engaging a strong community network while in DJJ: Motivates youth to do well and to begin planning and living the life they will continue upon transition. Identify, recruit and engage in early, frequent and meaningful interaction with family members, individuals, and organizations that are a part of the youth's transition support network.

6 Months Before Transition to Local Care: The treatment team, probation, and youth will begin to finalize the treatment information, community supports, and ongoing treatment recommendations. The assigned probation officer will review the continued treatment program recommended by DJJ, and indicate if the recommendations are viable and, if not, provide

Page 5

additional recommendations for treatment and support services, as well as, identify obstacles for critical cases. Families and community-based organizations will be included when possible

DJJ is focused on providing meaningful and tailored rehabilitative services for every youth until DJJ closes. DJJ is also focused on coordinating with the Judicial Council, families, probation, and community-based organizations to ensure the transition of care plan for each youth returning to the county is comprehensive and available to partners as the courts determine future placement for each youth who is not able to discharge from DJJ prior to closure. The inclusion of probation in the case planning for each youth is a key component of the transition of care so the probation staff are aware of the youth's strengths and needs, services the youth received, additional treatment needs recommended, educational attainments, and behavioral activities while in DJJ.

DJJ will continue its mission to ensure every youth leaves with a re-entry plan that connects the youth with resources and opportunities to achieve better outcomes and that results in a lower risk to reoffend. As DJJ plans to transition youth back to local care, DJJ will focus on ensuring every youth who cannot discharge prior to June 30, 2023, leaves DJJ with an individualized case plan and recommendations for continued treatment to support the needs of the youth.