

STANISLAUS COUNTY

JUVENILE JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Thursday – November 20, 2025

Stanislaus County Probation Department

MEMBERS/DESIGNEES PRESENT:

Mark Ferriera, Chair/Chief Probation Officer, Probation Department
Karina Franco for Jeff Anderson, Sierra Vista Child and Family Services
Robert Housden for Ruben Imperial, Behavioral Health & Recovery Services
Gina Machado, Director, Center for Human Services
Brandon Gillespie, Modesto Police Department
Saundra Day for Scott Kuykendall, Stanislaus Office of Education
Kenneth Sylvia, Youth for Christ
Jorge Garcia, for Christine Huber, Community Services Agency
Michael Houston for Jeff Laugero, District Attorney's Office
Nancy Brown, California State University, Stanislaus

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sara Noguchi, Modesto City Schools
Jeff Dirkse, Sheriff's Office
Marian Martino, Volunteer
Jennifer Jennison, Public Defender's Office

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS PRESENT:

Tracie Martin, ACPO Probation Department
David Costa, Facility Superintendent
Olivia Lopez, Probation Department
Trisha Birchard, Probation Department
Rajit Sen, Probation Department
Honorable Annette Rees, Stanislaus County Superior Court
Taylor Beckham, Center for Human Services
Sonnia Gilmour, Without Permission
Brandon Fromm, Stanislaus Office of Education
Jeremy Green, Leaders in Community Alternatives (LCA)
Denise Gutierrez, Leaders in Community Alternatives (LCA)
Natalia Reynoso, Leaders in Community Alternatives (LCA)

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTION

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m. by Chief Probation Officer (CPO) Mark Ferriera. Members, designees, and additional participants introduced themselves.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Members of the public were not present.

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM JULY 24, 2025

MOTION: Mark Ferriera. SECOND: Gina Machado. The Meeting Minutes for July 24, 2025, were unanimously approved.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF NEW JUVENILE JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL MEMBER

The Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) revisited Nancy Brown's membership application due to a procedural recording issue. To ensure procedural accuracy and avoid future errors, the matter was revisited.

MOTION: Mark Ferriera. SECOND: Kenneth Sylvia. The recommendation of Nancy Brown as a Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council member was unanimously approved.

V. JUVENILE INSTITUTIONS & PROBATION FIELD SERVICES UPDATE

Facilities Superintendent David Costa provided the following Juvenile Institutions' updates:

- The recent inspections of the Juvenile Institutions by the Juvenile Justice Commission, Civil Grand Jury, Environmental Health, and the Board of State Community Corrections (BSCC) were completed successfully. The BSCC representative praised the facility for its cleanliness and organization, calling it the cleanest and most organized facility inspected in the state. Overall, all inspections went well, reflecting strong operations and teamwork across organizations.
- The facility has undergone significant construction, including a complete remodel of the booking area and an upgrade to the camera system, which is nearly finished. Youth attending the Construction Program helped with painting and remodeling, fostering a sense of pride in their work. Additionally, to combat ongoing contraband issues, the facility has enhanced safety measures by installing a new body scanner.
- Programming is expanding to include larger truck-driving and construction groups, a new industrial mechanics curriculum, ongoing cognitive-behavioral therapy, and upcoming financial literacy courses.
- The facility has seen an increase in serious offenses, with 19 youths in custody for murder or attempted murder over the past 18 months. Of the 73 youth currently housed, 25% are aged 18 or older, prompting the opening of a second maximum-security unit.

Juvenile Field Services Division Director Olivia Lopez reported the following:

- Between July 1 and November 15, 195 youths were booked. Of these, 67 were arrested by the Modesto Police Department (MPD), 32 by the Sheriff's Department, and 22 by the Turlock Police Department (TPD), with the remaining arrested by other agencies.

AB 1376 was discussed. The bill significantly limits youth probation to a general maximum of 12 months from disposition, replacing the prior offense-based system that could extend probation to age 25 for certain offenses. Probation may be extended only through a court hearing finding continued supervision is in the youth's best interest, with required six-month review hearings.

The bill is expected to have significant operational impacts, including a high volume of hearings, and concerns were raised about unclear drafting.

A key issue is whether the bill applies prospectively or retroactively. Statewide discussions indicate many counties, including locally, are preparing for retroactive application, which could affect nearly half of the current ward population. Some youths may have their wardship terminated, while others would require hearings to justify continued probation. With that direction becoming clearer, a meeting is planned for early December to bring all interested partners together to discuss implementation strategies and how to approach the changes as the bill becomes effective January 1, 2026. The Presiding Juvenile Justice Judge, Annette Rees, and the Chief Probation Officer, Mark Ferriera, are actively discussing a plan to hold review hearings at 11.5 months after disposition.

Recent legislation has brought substantial changes to juvenile justice operations. The most significant shift is the closure of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), with responsibilities now realigned to local probation departments. This transition has introduced expectations never imposed on the state, including the development of less restrictive programs and community-based alternatives for youth serving long commitments.

Locally, youth who previously would have been housed in state facilities are now placed in Secure Youth Treatment Facilities, with opportunities to serve portions of their commitments in community residential programs. Partnerships with the courts, judges, and community-based organizations, such as the Center for Human Services, have been critical to making these programs viable.

Beyond these changes, new laws also impact the age at which youths are tried as adults and the implementation of minimum standards in juvenile facilities. Collectively, these reforms signal a major operational shift, requiring adaptation and coordination at the local level. Although progress has been made, the pace of legislative change suggests ongoing challenges ahead.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leaders in Community Alternatives (LCA) continues to actively deliver services across the Secure Youth Treatment Facility, Juvenile Hall, and out-of-custody, with multiple graduations scheduled before the start of the new year.

- A success story was shared about a couple of youth housed in the SHINE unit who have shown consistent engagement in case management and group programming. Both graduated from high school, actively participate in the trade program, and support one another as positive role models. They demonstrated leadership by presenting their success plans during a Cognitive Behavioral Intervention-Core Youth Graduation.
- The less restrictive program has served six participants, with two youth currently enrolled as full-time Modesto Junior College (MJC) students, one of whom is preparing to transfer to a four-year university. The program has helped them obtain identification, employment, education, and other resources to support a successful transition into the community.
- Before youth are released, a reintegration meeting is held for a seamless transition to the community, with services, education, and care continuing without disruption.
- A potential additional housing unit has been identified to support females transitioning from juvenile hall to a less restrictive program, with a property tour scheduled to assess suitability and a follow-up visit planned if appropriate. Following state realignment, efforts have primarily focused on male youth due to historically low female commitments; however, with 16 males and one female currently in the Secure Youth Treatment Facility, the need to plan for appropriate housing and services for females upon release is crucial.

Chief Ferriera appreciated LCA's proactive planning and highlighted the challenges of housing youth in the community. These include finding suitable homes and ensuring they are available when needed, without leaving them vacant for long. Releases happen unpredictably and depend on each youth's needs and progress in rehabilitation, requiring careful management. Although challenging, recent planning efforts have generally been successful in meeting these needs.

The Community Services Agency (CSA): The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits have been restored, supported by the Stanislaus Foundation's rapid \$350,000 allocation to SNAP recipients and resource centers throughout Stanislaus County. The program aided unemployed individuals, working-class residents, and seniors. Resources were efficiently distributed, reducing the strain on local businesses, with the United Way, 211, and CSA coordinating information and access. Additional funding from the Stanislaus Foundation supported local food pantries.

Since June, Juvenile Justice and Dependency Court matters have been combined into a single courtroom, overseen by the Presiding Juvenile Justice Judge Annette Rees. This improves efficiency, supported by a significant statewide decrease in dependency cases, from over 500 to just over 300 in Stanislaus County. The combined court benefits dual-status youth and prepares the system to handle additional hearings related to AB 1376. Lastly, courthouse remodeling is set to begin in February; all juvenile matters will be heard in the Court Clerk's Office, which will temporarily serve as the Juvenile Courtroom.

Youth for Christ is starting a program in the Waterford area to support local youth, with staff providing relational support.

Stanislaus Office of Education (SCOE): To better support youth transitioning out of custody, the ESoft in-custody instructor will participate in the Reintegration meetings.

Deck the Halls is an annual project led by Marian Martino aimed at youth in custody and on probation. A flyer with a QR code was distributed for anyone wishing to support this cause. Funds collected will be used to purchase items like socks, blankets, books, playing cards, toiletries, and other daily essentials for those who might otherwise go without.

VII. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.