

Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission Annual Report Calendar Year 2022

BACKGROUND

Section 225 of the Welfare and Institutions Code requires each county in the State of California to have a Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC). The role of the commission is set forth in Sections 229, 230, 270, and 271 of the Code. Each commission is enjoined to inquire into the administration of juvenile justice in its county.

The law mandates that the Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission inspect Juvenile Hall and all institutions used by the county for the confinement of minors and report its findings annually to the Juvenile Court and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The commission consists of between seven and fifteen members appointed by the Juvenile Court Presiding Judge. Commissioners are not paid for their services to the county.

MISSION STATEMENT AND DUTIES

The mission of the Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission is to advocate for and protect the safety and well-being of dependent and delinquent youth in Sonoma County.

Commission responsibilities include:

- Inspecting juvenile facilities including detention facilities and group homes used for the placement of minors in Sonoma County.
- Conducting investigations into complaints brought to the commission concerning the welfare of children in the Juvenile Justice System.
- Conducting hearings on matters relating to juvenile law in Sonoma County.
- Advocating for needed services for youth in the justice system.

2021 – 2022 COMMISSIONERS:

Marc Andrade
Gayle Ballinger
Michael Charpiot
Mary Cone
Gina Crozier
Jeanette Lebell
Arnold Rosenfield
Greg Schmid
Jane Ure

Jeanette Lebell and Jane Ure were sworn in by Judge Ken Gness in December 2021, and received orientation in January 2022. Marc Andrade and Greg Schmid were sworn in by Judge Ken Gness in April, 2022 and subsequently received orientation.

Arnold Rosenfield resigned the Commission in November 2022. Gina Crozier was on a leave of absence for several months due to family health emergency.

INSPECTIONS

Due to the 2020-2022 COVID-19 Sonoma County Public Health Orders for “Shelter-in-Place,” in-person inspections were halted after March 15, 2020. The Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission has continued to conduct monthly phone contact check-in with Facility Directors instead. A guideline of questions and reporting was developed for these phone check-in’s.

As the commission is mandated by law to inspect any jail or lockup within the county that is used for the confinement of minors and report the results to the Juvenile Court, the Juvenile Justice Commission conducts annual inspections of Juvenile Hall, the Probation Camp and Valley of the Moon Children’s Home. Additionally, for each of these three facilities commissioners review incident reports on a monthly basis. Sonoma County Probation Camp officially closed December 2020. Director Melissa Segura requested a final physical inspection by the JJC. To retain current status to be transitioned to housing youth at any time in the near future, Director Segura requests that the JJC continue to provide annual inspections. A program to house Secure Track youth may include the Probation Camp facility.

The Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission also annually inspects group homes housing dependent or delinquent youth within the county and reports the results to the Juvenile Court, the Probation Department, Community Care Licensing, respective facility director, and CA Board of State & Community Corrections.

Normally two commissioners conduct inspections of group homes. Facilities are notified in advance that they will be inspected on a designated date and are required to fill out a pre-inspection report prior to the Commissioner’s visit. This form contains relevant information such as the number and ages of youth served, average stay, staff training requirements, grievance procedures, etc.

The actual inspection includes a session with administrative staff, house staff and private interviews with house residents. Emphasis is placed on overall facility condition, adequacy, comfort and cleanliness of accommodations. Commissioners look into safety procedures, educational and recreational opportunities, maintenance of the facility, and anything else relevant to the fair and safe treatment of the youth.

During the calendar year 2022, one or more commission members checked-in monthly with the following group homes:

- Greenacre Homes
- Hanna Boys Center
- Seneca Family of Agencies: Sonoma Compass
- TLC Child and Family Services
- Victor Treatment Center
- Valley of the Moon Children's Home

In-person facility inspections resumed in May 2022, including Santa Rosa Police Department.

Additionally, commissioners inspected and/or checked-in monthly with the Sonoma County Juvenile Hall

These reports can be found on the Commission website at:
www.juvenilejusticecommission.org

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION

Academic Awards for Youth

The commission presents a certificate and annual cash honorariums to youth in Juvenile Hall, the Probation Camp and in Group Homes who have earned their GED, High School Diploma, or Certificate for High School Completion.

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE YEAR 2022

- The Membership Committee reviewed and interviewed incoming Commissioner Applicants
- The Continuum of Care Reform Committee continued to review current legislative actions and maintain contact with other JJC/JJDPCs.
- The Sonoma County Probation Camp is not currently housing court-appointed youth. The Director requested an in-person inspection, citing: "It is unclear at this time whether there will be any residents living there in the near future, but since a yearly inspection had not been done as yet, she believed it was important to have one done and available to meet any protocols in place for when there would be full time occupants even if unsure if it is required." The Probation Camp facility is being offered to other agencies for use at this time. In the future, this facility may be

utilized for Secure Track youth. The JJC conducted a facility site inspection May 27, 2022.

- An educational video for youth entering the Juvenile Court was prepared and provided to the Probation Department. Commissioner Arnold Rosenfield initiated and finalized this project. Partnerships on this project included Commissioners, Probation Department representatives, Judge Ken Gness and the education director at Juvenile Hall. This video was presented in May 2022.
- Inbound Education:

The commission continues to educate all members to ensure we are knowledgeable about juvenile justice issues in the county. Speakers over the course of the year included:

- Sky Gray, Director, Valley of the Moon Children's Home, County of Sonoma Children's Emergency Shelter regarding in-progress licensing to STRTP
- Nick Honey, Division Director: Family, Youth and Children's Services, Sonoma County
- Community Care Licensing team that oversees facilities in Sonoma County

Respectfully submitted on January 31, 2023 by

Mary Cone, Co-Chair

Michael Charpiot, Co-Chair

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