

Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission Annual Report Calendar Year 2023

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.

2022– 2023 COMMISSIONERS:

Marc Andrade
Gayle Ballinger
Michael Charpiot
Mary Cone
Gina Crozier
Jeanette Lebell
Greg Schmid
Stacy Spector

Stacy Spector was sworn in by Judge Ken Gness in December 2023, and received orientation in December 2023.

Beginning May 2020, JJC Monthly Meetings were conducted electronically via Zoom. Meetings continue to be conducted via Zoom.

INSPECTIONS

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 and Valley of the Moon Children's Center. Additionally, for each of these two facilities, commissioners review incident reports on a monthly basis.

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 2023, one or more commission members checked-in monthly with the following group homes:

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

Per BSCC reporting, Santa Rosa Police Department was inspected.

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 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. This committee participated in a Statewide JJC Task Force in creating a “Youth Advocacy Letter” to be presented to statewide elected officials.
- 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:

- Donna Broadbent, Division Director: Family, Youth and Children’s Services, Sonoma County
- Judge Ken Gness, Sonoma County Delinquency Court

Respectfully submitted on January 15, 2024 by

Mary Cone, Co-Chair

Michael Charpiot, Co-Chair

Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission
PO Box 358
Santa Rosa CA 95403
www.juvenilejusticecommission.org