



Los Angeles County Probation Department

COVID-19 Update

3/27/2020

Message from Interim Chief Probation Officer Ray Leyva_

This is a difficult time that none of us could have predicted. The L.A. County Probation Department staff, most of whom are sworn peace officers, have a responsibility to ensure community safety. Our communities are in a declared state of emergency and our clients need us to fulfill our duties. The health and safety of staff and clients are of the utmost concern, and in that regard, we are working on implementing increased health screenings for everyone in our facilities as well as enhanced cleaning and sanitation protocols.

We aim to keep youth safe, engaged and informed while also protecting the well-being of the staff who are leaving their families at home to serve the youth who are in our facilities. I continue to work with the courts to make sure we are detaining as few youth as possible while still prioritizing public safety. I have also directed field staff to supplement the staffing in our Juvenile Halls and Juvenile Camps to prevent any staffing shortages in these facilities. Executives and staff at L.A. County Probation are working closely with L.A. County Public Health and Juvenile Court Health Services to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on our operations.

To ensure Probation is ready to immediately respond to any COVID-19 related incident, the Department activated the Department Operations Center (DOC) in order to be fully prepared to respond to any departmental impacts resulting from COVID-19. Probation is dedicated to the safety of everyone who lives in, works in, and visits our juvenile facilities and area offices. The Department has longstanding outbreak management plans in place to address communicable disease outbreaks as well as preparedness procedures to address a variety of

medical emergencies and natural disasters. We are bolstering our response readiness by taking several proactive steps to educate those who are in or visit our facilities regarding ways they can protect themselves and those around them from COVID-19.

Juvenile Facilities

Youth Population and Staffing Levels at Probation Juvenile Facilities

	Staff Population Snapshot as of 3/25/20	Youth Population Snapshot as of 3/25/20
BJNJH	231	202
CJH	297	225
DSB TOTAL	528	427
CBA	48	54
CVK	59	53
CJS	32	13
CJP	47	51
CGR	64	60
DKC	90	52
RTSB TOTAL	340	283

**Note: Staff population includes all sworn and non-sworn staff throughout all three shifts.*

Expanded Precautions at Institutions

The Department has developed a Juvenile Institutions Operation Plan to minimize the risks of COVID-19 in the facilities that was reviewed and approved by the Department of Public Health. The plan is aligned with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other jurisdictions in California. The Department's role during the pandemic is detailed in addition to the implementation of practices and procedures that limit the transmission of the virus to staff and youth.

Department of Public Health (DPH) signage has been posted outside each facility and inside the living units, restrooms, kitchen, staff sleeping quarters. The Department has increased daily cleaning and

sanitation at each facility in addition to posting and distributing COVID-19 related information to educate staff and youth about the virus and precautions that are being taken.

Additionally, the Department is implementing mandatory verbal screening for every person entering a juvenile detention facility. Those attempting to enter a juvenile hall or camp at any time are required to verbally respond if they currently have new or worsening symptoms of a respiratory illness. If the individual's response is that they are experiencing symptoms, they will be restricted from entering the facility that day.

All Probation facilities have been instructed to conduct additional deep-cleaning efforts in high-traffic, high-volume areas, including visiting and health care facilities. Staff have also been granted permission to carry up to two ounces of personal-use hand sanitizer. Youth are also educated and encouraged to wash their hands frequently following Public Health guidelines.

Cleaning Efforts in Institutions_

Probation's Management Services Bureau has instructed janitorial services at facilities to ensure all bathrooms and staff quarters (where applicable) are cleaned daily and have readily available hand soap, paper towels, toilet paper, hand sanitizers and disinfectant. The Department is also bringing in additional staff to clean and disinfect common touch areas twice per shift.

Reducing the Population in Juvenile Facilities_

The L.A. County Probation Department is working with the courts and legal partners on methods to safely reduce the juvenile population housed at Probation facilities. The Community Detention Program will only detain violations when a youth cuts their ankle bracelet, is missing for more than 12 hours or commits a new crime. In terms of releasing post-adjudicated youth sent to camp for rehabilitation, we continuously screen for early release due to youths meeting their treatment goals. Those that meet eligibility criteria will be sent to court with a recommendation for release, however, only the court can authorize a release.

Screening on Entry into Juvenile Hall_

The Department is screening all youth admitted to facilities for risk of COVID-19 infection at the time of admission. Should it be required, Probation and Juvenile Court Health Services have identified appropriate space to isolate youth with medical issues. Probation and JCHS continue to complete a screening that includes asking questions related to infectious diseases which continue to be part of the Initial Intake Questionnaire. JCHS is immediately notified if any symptoms that are associated with the

COVID-19 are observed, if the youth has had close contact with an individual with COVID-19 or if the youth has traveled to an area previously identified as a COVID-19 area of concern.

Social Distancing Efforts in Institutions_

Probation has implemented several practices to encourage “social distancing,” which is a strategy recommended by public health officials to stop the spread of contagious diseases. Social distancing requires the creation of physical space between individuals, minimizing gatherings, and ensuring space between individuals when events or activities cannot be modified, postponed, or canceled. Achieving space between individuals of approximately six feet is advisable.

Youth and staff in Probation facilities are practicing social distancing strategies when feasible by limiting groups, assigning beds that can provide additional space between individuals, rearranging scheduled movements to minimize mixing of individuals from different housing areas, and utilizing social distancing during recreation. The Department is exploring moving beds further apart in the Juvenile Camps to better facilitate social distancing.

School for Youth in Juvenile Facilities_

The Los Angeles County Office of Education has provided youth with two weeks’ worth of educational packets. Any youth requiring assistance will be provided tutoring by staff from Operation Read. Probation Education Services will continue to provide online college courses that take place at all DSB and RTSB juvenile facilities. All credit courses are offered through the Los Angeles Community College District and are UC/CSU transferable. Youth are provided support during scheduled college classes and in study groups.

Religious programs_

The following religious services are being explored for DSB and RTSB:

- One on one religious phone counseling with a youth in an emergent situation.
 - Bible study printed material to be provided.
 - Pre-recorded broadcasts of worship services to be viewed via a website link.
-

Health Care Services_

JCHS Nurse Admissions

If a youth has complaints of symptoms on the initial screen done by Probation at the time of admission, a JCHS Nurse is contacted. The youth will be given a surgical mask and the nurse will conduct a more thorough screen including taking their temperature. If the youth has a positive screen, they will be housed in the Medical Housing Unit and a physician will be contacted for further care.

JCHS Clinic visits – Physicians

Physician intake exams will continue to be completed within 96 hours of admission.

For any medical issue a youth may be experiencing, the physicians will review the clinic list and determine which youth should:

- Be physically seen in the clinic: Youth cases that are considered urgent or must be re-checked
- Be rescheduled to a later date: Cases that are routine/non-urgent clinic visits such as acne or obesity check
- Be changed to a phone visit: Cases that require the physician to speak with a youth about post-test counseling for normal lab results.

Suspected Youth with Respiratory Symptoms

If a youth complains of respiratory symptoms, the youth will be given a surgical mask and Probation will contact JCHS for further screening and evaluation. After the nurse's assessment and the youth is thought to have a positive screen, they will be taken to the Medical Housing Unit or another unit separate from the other juvenile population for isolation and further monitoring of signs and symptoms. A physician will also assess the youth and determine further courses of action as necessary.

Specialty Clinic Visit Outside the Halls/Camps

If an outside specialty clinic calls JCHS for a phone visit, a notation will be made on the clinic schedule as to what time the phone visit will be. Probation staff will bring the youth to a designated space in the medical unit to have the phone call with the specialty clinic. Medical staff will also review the list for upcoming appointments during the week to determine which visits are able to be converted to a phone visit and notify the specialty clinic.

Dental Clinics

At this time, JCHS Dental clinics will continue to conduct annual assessment exams and any urgent/essential clinic visits. Only urgent case procedures will be done at the facility if they may be safely done. If further emergency procedures are necessary, arrangements will be made with either the

Emergency Department and/or the Oral-Maxillary-Facial (OMF) Department at LAC+USC Medical Center.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) including masks, gowns, face shields are only to be used with a suspected case of COVID-19 with symptoms and/or fever and do not need to be used with asymptomatic patients. PPE should be donned and doffed correctly and discarded in the appropriate areas. Some PPE may be reused due to the limitation of PPE supply. N95 respirators are limited to 5 uses unless visibly soiled or used. Other situations may be applicable for multiple re-use of PPE depending on availability of supplies and clinical situations.

Testing

Testing for COVID-19 is becoming available at sites other than the Public Health Laboratory including Quest Labs. However, results of the tests vary and may determine locations where lab specimens will be sent. As with the PPE, there currently is a limited supply of specimen collection kits. JCHS is coordinating efforts with the Ambulatory Care Network (ACN) of the Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) regarding guidelines for testing patients.

Mental Health Services_

All in-person non-essential services have been suspended at this time. Non-essential services consist of therapy sessions for Level 1 (general level of supervision) youth, group sessions, activities with Community Based Organizations, and outpatient appointments at Transitional Outpatient Treatment Services (TOTS).

The Department of Mental Health will continue to provide essential or urgent services that include assessments for possible Danger to Self (DTS), Danger to Others (DTO), or Grave Disability (due to mental illness); clients in crisis; and new intake youth (MAYSI).

- Phone-based or videoconferencing services will be offered to address non-urgent needs, such as follow up therapy appointments or follow up medication management appointments (either in detained youth or youth in the community (TOTS Program). These modes of communication will also be utilized to address as many essential services as possible if feasible.
- All youth will continue to be screened using the MAYSI-2 Screening. Paper MAYSI-2 forms will be used for youth to complete the rating instrument on their own and later scanned into the Probation Electronic Medical Record System (PEMRS). This process will minimize interpersonal contact between staff and youth.
- All youth screened will receive a “bifurcated” Mental Health Assessment where the clinician will evaluate the youth in the living unit in a limited manner from a safe distance (with Probation staff available nearby) to obtain critical information regarding the youth’s history of and current risk of harming self or others, and other observant behavior. The remainder of the

assessment will be completed by the clinician via phone. The youth will be advised of the process by the clinician prior to the start of the evaluation;

- For “Level checks” (i.e., heightened levels of supervision of Level 2 and 3 youth), clinicians will evaluate the youth in the unit in a limited manner and from a safe distance (with Probation staff available nearby) to obtain critical information regarding the youth’s past history of and current risk of harming self or others, and other observant behavior. Telephonic evaluations are encouraged, though may not be feasible in all cases.
- Psychiatrists will be encouraged to follow the same bifurcated assessment process as described above.
- For psychiatric follow up, if youth are stable, psychiatrists may choose to follow up with the youth via phone before making the decision to prescribe or continue psychotropic medications.
- Leadership will work with Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) to extend the maximum prescription length from 30 to 60 days in order to decrease frequency of appointments for youth for whom this is clinically indicated.
- Leadership will work with Program Managers to develop site-specific plans for the provision of telephonic and/or videoconferencing mental health services to youth.

COVID-19 Communications with Youth_

JCHS presented a PowerPoint presentation to educate youth in the halls and camps about COVID-19 and the proper precautions to take while housed in the facility. Probation and medical staff were present to answer any questions or concerns the youth have about the pandemic. Town Hall meetings are being held to remind youth about proactive personal hygiene practices by reinforcing daily frequent hand washing, coughing into the upper sleeve and social distancing. Youth are advised to notify staff if they are not feeling well or are displaying any symptoms associated with COVID-19.

COVID-19 Communications with Parents_

On March 12, 2020 a letter was sent to all parents of youth in our facilities informing them of the COVID-19 pandemic and precautionary measures that are being taken while their child is under our care. Families were informed of the suspension of visiting and the alternatives youth are receiving to maintain contact with their loved ones. Additionally, a team of staff personally called each parent to provide updates to ensure their child is safe and to answer any questions or concerns they may have during this time.

[March 12 letter sent to parents of youth in Juvenile Facilities](#)

[March 12 letter sent to parents of youth in Juvenile Facilities \(Spanish\)](#)

Youth Recreational and Enrichment Activities_

Outdoor programs are continuing to be conducted as weather permits. Programs are being conducted outside as it is feasible to maintain social distancing. Additionally, the Department has taken inventory of each facility needs in terms of books, magazines, board games, TV/movies and sports equipment and are in the process of acquiring extra equipment in addition to reading materials.

Plan for Court Hearings_

On March 18, 2020 a conference call was held between Probation, the Presiding Judge, Public Defender, District Attorney, Defense Panel, and Alternate Public Defender to discuss the court process for detained and non-detained youth. Below is the new process for detained youth:

- All progress reports are being taken off calendar via minute order and will be rescheduled for after April 16, 2020.
- Transfer hearings, trials, dispositions and arraignments will be held on the record. Therefore, youth will continue to be transported to court. Only two support individuals will be allowed in the courtroom.
- Bench will still be hearing 777s and new 602s.
- 778s will be non-appearance.

Visitation of youth_

Visitation at juvenile halls and residential treatment facilities remains temporarily suspended. These visits include after-court, special and weekend visits by family members and/or community-based organizations. Parents and guardians have been notified of the temporary suspension of visiting via phone calls and letters stating alternative forms of contact with their child in light of COVID-19. Required legal visits will be held as scheduled and all court ordered visits will be honored. This is solely a proactive measure developed in conjunction with Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) and the Board of State and Community Corrections. Youth in juvenile facilities have received extended phone privileges to maintain contact with family and loved ones and all internal programming within the facilities will continue. In addition, the Department will explore the feasibility of other options for families to communicate with their youth, such as video conferencing from various community locations. At this time Los Angeles County Probation Department has not identified any staff or youth in its facilities who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Transportation Protocols_

Probation staff remain responsible for youth to and from court hearings and medical appointments. Social distancing efforts have been implemented by limiting transports to three or four youth per 15 passenger van. Suspected COVID-19 youth are to be provided with a gown (coverall) and face mask. Each facility shall designate a small group of staff responsible for youth transport. These designated staff will receive FIT testing by JCHS and receive PPE prior to transport.

Should staff display symptoms of the COVID-19 virus after completing such assignment, staff will be provided an Industrial Injury Packet and sent to the nearest authorized medical treatment facility, unless otherwise instructed to return to the facility for quarantine.

Rehabilitative Programs and Volunteers_

The Department is placing all volunteer applications on hold as they are not entering Probation facilities. The volunteer orientation scheduled for April 17th has been cancelled and the Department will notify of a rescheduled date.

During this time, Probation Education Services staff continue to provide the following services:

- Youth Work Program: In collaboration with Workforce Development and Aging Community Services (WDACS), youth will continue to gain work experience and earn a paycheck in the Camps and Halls. Youth work for an average of 120 hours which includes 20 hours of paid Personal Enrichment Training (PET) facilitated by trained Probation Education Services Staff. Each participant receives an employment transition plan upon their release from the camp or hall.
- Book Clubs: Education services staff facilitate multiple book clubs throughout the camps and halls.
- R.I.S.E (Resilience and Intergroup Solidarity Education) RISE consists of 25 small group sessions that reinforce team building, coping skills and provides conflict resolution techniques among other skills.
- Careersafe Certification: This program provides on-demand training courses in the area of OSHA designed to improve workplace safety, compliance and risk management. Youth are able to enroll in various 10-hour courses that lead to valuable training certificates.

All programming facilitated accounts for social distancing and small group settings.

Communications to Clients and Families about COVID-19_

Juvenile Institutional Managers are provided with daily COVID-19 updates. In addition, they participate in weekly conference calls hosted by Emergency Management to share information and obtain COVID-19 updates from partner agencies. Other efforts to provide youth and families with COVID-19 information include:

- Posting of Department of Public Health (DPH) signage outside each facility and inside the living units, restrooms, kitchen, staff sleeping quarters.
- Interagency town hall meetings with Juvenile Health Services (JCHS) nurses to address concerns, answer questions and provide plan
- Contacting parents, and community-based organizations and advising on the cancelation of all normal visitations.
- Mailing of COVID-19 information flyers for parents and community

Emergency Staffing Plan_

The Department ensures that all critical security and safety posts are manned as required by the Board and State Community Standards and in accordance with the Department’s Emergency Operations Plan. Contingency plans have been developed and put in place if facilities are not adequately staffed. Juvenile and Adult Field Operations have been designated to assist and report to the facilities per operational response.

Number of Juvenile Field Staff Temporarily Re-allocated to Juvenile Institutions_

Facility	No. of Staff Reported 3/23/20	No. of Staff Reported 3/24/20
BJNJH	31	31
CJH	53	50
CBA	11	12
CGR	9	10
CJP	14	16
CJS	3	5
CVK	8	17
DKC	16	14
EAST CAMPS	1	
TOTAL	146	155

Field Probation COVID-19 Precautions and related activities_

Following the guidance of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles County Probation Department closed all offices to the public on Monday, March 16, 2020 until further notice. Public safety is a priority and the Department will continue to maintain frequent contact with clients. Deputy Probation Officers are reaching out to their clients by phone, focusing on the highest-risk offenders. Probation is also asking clients to proactively reach out to their probation officer.

Adult Services Division_

The Adult Services Division is committed to the safety of the community, staff and those in its care. Given the increased risk associated with the use of mass/public transportation and those under probation supervision who make up the higher-risk population (serious offenders, older adults and those with known serious medical or mental health conditions), Adult Services has initiated various operational changes to support both staff and the individuals under their care and supervision, including suspending lobby traffic and facilitating communication via telephone and email as necessary and appropriate. We will continue to provide support for probationers with serious medical and mental health conditions as well as those experiencing serious emergent situations.

In addition to the foregoing, many of our Adult Field Probation Officers are being deployed to our juvenile halls and residential treatment services facilities to provide additional support to the youth housed there.

All probationers' conditions of probation will remain in place. Probation Department administrators and supervisors will continually assess all measures being implemented and adjust, modify, or suspend required conditions as necessary and appropriate, consistent with this emergent situation while placing public safety at the forefront of our decisions.

If probationers, advocates or family members have any questions regarding these temporary operational adjustments, they may call the probationer's specific area office noted on the business cards provided to the probationer. While the area offices are closed to the public, Probation Officers and Supervisory staff will be in the offices and available via telephone to answer questions, provide guidance and facilitate client needs as necessary. In addition to the foregoing, members of the public and law enforcement may call the Probation Information Center at (866) 931-2222 to obtain information, assistance and guidance.

To keep members of our population informed, we have posted fact sheets regarding office closures and also posted information in both English and Spanish that provide education on COVID-19 at entry areas to our area offices.

While access to our Probation Department offices remains limited to reduce potential exposure of probationers and staff to COVID-19, the Probation Department continues to provide critically needed services to probationers, the community, the courts, local law enforcement agencies, and pretrial individuals recently arrested and seeking either release from jail or a reduction in bail. The programs and services that are being fully supported by Adult Field Services during this emergent situation include, but are not limited to the following:

- Providing criminal court related services, including investigative and other reports on high-profile defendants and other matters as requested by the Court;
- Conducting in-custody interviews of clients via video-conferencing;
- Providing reports to the courts regarding Proposition 63 mandates related to felons and certain misdemeanants in possession of prohibited firearms;
- Supervising high needs adult clients who are part of the mental health housing program and other at-risk adult clients via face to face contacts, telephone contacts, emails and mailers;
- Providing court officers to assist the various adult courts providing emergency and time-sensitive services to clients;
- Monitoring all sex offender registrants who are considered to be high-risk as well as other high-risk adult clients utilizing GPS tracking devices;
- Transporting medically fragile adult clients to and from medical appointments and other locations as needed;
- Assessing adult clients and making referrals to services including:
 - Housing – Referring homeless clients to CES Services or HealthRIGHT 360;
 - Substance Abuse Services;
 - Mental Health;
 - Medical Services, including referrals to DPH for COVID-19 Symptoms;
 - Other Supportive Social Services
- Continuing the collaborative efforts of our Probation Officers who remain embedded with local law enforcement agencies or specialized State, County and/or Federal task forces;
- Providing resources and staff support to the County’s Emergency Operations Center;
- Managing the Probation Department’s Operations Center and coordinating/documenting the Probation Department’s efforts to address COVID-19 issues

Pretrial Services_

The Pretrial Services Bureau remains fully engaged in its mission to facilitate “own-recognition” release opportunities and/or reduced bail opportunities for defendants housed in the various jail facilities throughout the County. The social-spacing requirements imposed in our collective responses to the COVID-19 emergency are limiting our ability to facilitate in-person interviews. As necessary and appropriate, Pretrial Services is developing workarounds which involve telephonic and/or video conferencing when possible.

Bail Reform Pilot Project: On March 23, 2020, the Probation Department, in collaboration with the Superior Court and other justice partners, initiated a Bail Reform Pilot Project designed to facilitate the expedited release of pretrial defendants utilizing a static-risk assessment tool. All persons booking in a Los Angeles County Jail facility are assessed. It is anticipated that the utilization of this tool and its attendant supportive processes will result in increased numbers of defendants being released from jail facilities in Los Angeles County.

Training and Academies_

The Staff Training Office (STO) has suspended all in person training classes with the exception of the Juvenile Corrections Officer Core Academy. These recruits will be deployed to work in the Juvenile Halls as the Department continues to seek staffing ratios that will facilitate more comprehensive service delivery to detained youth.

STO continues to provide training through the County's Learning Management System and is utilizing other resources to provide remote training options to staff who are in the office or teleworking. A large portion of the online training is focused on emergency preparedness and coordinated response.

Communication and Guidance to Staff_

We have worked continuously to keep staff informed of the evolving situation, including creating internal and external webpages with health-related information from CDC and L.A. County Public Health on how they can protect themselves against COVID-19. Managers and supervisors are conducting staff meetings in conjunction with JCHS to update staff on the pandemic and answer any questions or concerns. Several emails have also been disseminated by the Department informing staff of updated information. We have a dedicated page for employees on our intranet, this page provides messages from our Chief regarding COVID-19, telework information, and telework time codes. There is also information from L.A. County Public Health, such as updates on personnel and work-related questions specific to the COVID-19 issue.

Probation cares for the health and wellness of its workforce and have been working to accommodate those who have been impacted by this evolving situation. We will continue to work diligently with DHR and labor organizations on how we can best keep our workforce protected and provide for the safety and security of our institutions.

Communication and Guidance to Public_

For information or services, clients and members of the community may call the juvenile facilities. For general questions, please contact the Probation Information Center at 866-931-2222 Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Department's website has a COVID-19 section with FAQ's, letters to parents, facility updates, program closures, and press releases. The page is continuously being updated as new

information becomes available. The Department has been utilizing social media platforms by posting press releases, safer at home messages, Public Health information on hygiene, social distancing, flattening the curve and other public safety posts.

[L.A. County Probation Closes Facilities To Public Amid COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[L.A. County Probation Temporarily Suspends Visitations at Juvenile Facilities as Precautionary Measure for COVID-19 Transmission](#)

For more information contact:

Prob-News@probation.lacounty.gov

<https://probation.lacounty.gov/>



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