

Decreasing Professional Wait Times at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall

On May 12, 2024, the Los Angeles Daily News published an article¹ detailing challenges with attorneys, social workers, and other experts having timely access to their clients who are detained in Los Angeles County Probation Department’s (Department) Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (Los Padrinos). According to the Los Angeles County Public Defender’s Office and the Juvenile Justice Clinic at Loyola Law School, multiple attorneys and social workers have experienced wait times of two to three hours at Los Padrinos before they were able to meet with their clients. In some instances, other professional experts, like doctors, began refusing to evaluate clients at Los Padrinos because of the excessive wait times. These long wait times can impact the rate and course of case proceedings, and may even have implications on clients’ constitutional rights.

This problem is not new, as the Department has struggled with staffing for years, which impacts the rate at which clients have access to private appointments with

¹ <https://www.dailynews.com/2024/05/12/attorneys-social-workers-endure-long-waits-to-see-la-county-detainees-in-juvenile-hall/>

MOTION

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attorneys and other experts they must meet with in the course of their adjudication. As a response, the Department recently added four privacy booths to the chapel, where juvenile clients meet with their attorneys at Los Padrinos, to accommodate and speed up visits. According to the Department, this has led to a noticeable improvement, with the vast majority of attorney visits happening within 20 minutes of them signing in. They reported that only 11 of 112 attorney-related visits to Los Padrinos experienced wait times between 20 and 70 minutes. There appears to be a discrepancy between the Department's visitor logs and attorney's anecdotal experiences, as multiple attorneys and social workers have reported wait times of two to three hours. While some days may be slower than others, it is essential that the Department is prepared for the busiest days where multiple professional visitors are expecting to meet with their juvenile clients. Timely access to counsel and other experts is imperative for the youth detained in the County's juvenile facilities. It is essential that the Department assess their current data and develop strategies to ensure substantial and lasting improvement in professional visitor wait times.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department to do the following:

1. Report back in writing in four weeks with data on the professional visitor wait times at Los Padrinos in the past three months. The report back should include an analysis of any factors contributing to long wait times and strategies being implemented to reduce wait times and ensure timely access to visits from counsel, social workers, and other experts (e.g. adding more pods to the visitation area,

increasing staff on busy days to bring youth to the visitation area, creating an electronic sign up system, etc.); and

2. Include data on wait times in the regular “Ensuring the Use of Least Restrictive Placements for Young People in the Probation Department’s Care and Custody” quarterly reports to the Board of Supervisors.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department, in consultation with the Executive Director of the Probation Oversight Commission, County Counsel, the Public Defender, and the Alternate Public Defender, to update their “Access to Legal Services” policy (DSB 513) and/or create a procedure to include expected maximum wait times for visitation with legal counsel that are consistent with industry standards and a process for documenting extenuating circumstances when a wait time exceeds the expectation.

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