

FEBRUARY 2024



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

PROBATION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

LPJH

**SUPPLEMENTAL
INSPECTION
REPORT**

02

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission (POC) conducted a supplemental inspection of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (LPJH) in February 2024. During that inspection, the POC found that there have been measurable improvements made in the facility since the POC's Annual Inspection of LPJH in October 2023, but that the facility continues to fail to consistently meet the needs of youth in a number of areas.

Although meeting minimum staffing levels is critical given the myriad needs of youth in detention, meeting the minimum standards should not be the Los Angeles County Probation Department's goal, as those minimum standards do not allow for sufficient staffing to provide the programming, educational, and medical needs required to provide a safe and rehabilitative environment for all youth. The POC continues to recommend that the Probation Department strive to achieve best practices and industry standards by reducing the number of youth confined, employing methods to improve staff training, and reducing staffing shortages in order to rise above the state's minimum requirements and consistently meet the needs of the youth incarcerated in the facility.

BACKGROUND

The POC has authority and responsibilities directly related to oversight of juvenile institutions granted by state law and county ordinance. Specifically, Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations, section 1313 (f), requires the POC to conduct annual inspections of the buildings, grounds, and services delivered to the young people detained in each of the County's juvenile facilities on an annual basis. The POC submits an annual report on these inspections to the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors also granted the POC specific authority to "as permitted by law...conduct unannounced inspections of any facility, and its non-confidential records, where any juvenile probationer can be held or where probationers receive services and "prepare reports on inspection findings" for the Board. (LACC

03

Sections 3.80.040(B) and 3.80.050(A)) These inspections differ from the BSCC's inspections, which are specifically focused on compliance with California law. The POC's inspections are conducted by civilian oversight commissioners whose aim is to provide an educated layperson's perspective on the facility, rather than compliance with individual regulations.

The POC's annual inspection of LPJH was conducted in October 2023 and the report was submitted to the BSCC and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors as part of the POC's 2023 Annual Inspection Report. Since that inspection, the Probation Department was found out of compliance by the BSCC and created and implemented a Corrective Action Plan intended to bring the facility into compliance with the state's minimum standards.

At the February 8, 2024, meeting of the POC, the Commissioners unanimously passed a motion related to the recent inspections and findings by the BSCC at LPJH. The motion created an ad hoc subcommittee charged with inspecting and reporting on staffing issues at LPJH to be completed before February 14, 2024. This report provides the information obtained during those inspections and serves as a follow up to the POC's October 2023 report.

METHODS

Between February 9, 2024, and February 11, 2024, six POC Commissioners and two POC staff conducted unannounced inspections of LPJH and one Commissioner inspected Central Juvenile Hall, which is currently used to provide medical services to youth confined at LPJH. Commissioners inspected LPJH during AM and PM shifts on a weekday (Friday) and weekend days (Saturday and Sunday). Inspectors spent three to four hours in the facility and were accompanied by facility leadership. POC staff created a chart for commissioners to track youth population and staffing numbers. Commissioners visually counted staff in the units they visited and asked staff to confirm how many people were on duty. Commissioners also collected information related to programming, school, and access to medical care from staff and youth.

04

FINDINGS

POC Commissioners and staff members tracked unit staffing during the morning (6:00am - 2:00pm, "AM") and afternoon (2:00pm-10:00pm, "PM") shifts on Friday, February 9, 2024, and on the AM shift on Sunday, February 11, 2024.

As a partial response to the information requested by motion at the POC meeting on February 8, 2024, Probation provided the POC a staffing analysis - a chart that details the minimal staffing numbers per unit. Probation reported that they also provided this chart to the BSCC. It is important to acknowledge that these minimum staffing numbers are based on a staff to youth ratio, thus a change in the population of youth may impact the minimum staffing needed on any given day. Statistics provided daily by the Department to the POC demonstrate that the total population at LPJH was lower on the day of the POC supplemental inspections (~279) than it was during the week of the BSCC inspection (~292-298).

The following chart contains the minimum staffing numbers from Probation's report, the staffing numbers that the POC observed and reported for each living unit for the two days Commissioners collected information, and the variance. The chart Probation provided also lists staffing needs for movement, transportation, and other areas of supervision not assigned directly to the units. The POC did not observe or count the staffing in those positions. Probation's chart also separates out staff on enhanced supervision assignments in the units. Some of the POC numbers may include staff on enhanced supervision assignment, but this had a minimal impact on overall numbers.

The POC notes that the calculation of minimum staffing requirements is complex and that Commissioners are not experts on Title 15 requirements or on calculating staffing ratios. The numbers noted below are the result of careful observations during the inspections but may not represent whether minimum staffing requirements were met on the days of the inspection.

Friday, February 9, 2024

Combined Minimal Unit Staffing Total			
24-Hour/7-Day Living Units Posts	Minimum Staffing Need	POC Inspection Result	Net Difference
Combined Total per Shift			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	63	53	-10
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	63	70	+7
Housing Unit A/B			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	6	6	0
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	6	7	+1
Housing Unit C/D			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	5	3	-2
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	5	7	+2
Housing Unit E/F			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	5	4	-1
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	5	6	+1
Housing Unit L/M			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	7	5	-2
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	7	6	-1
Housing Unit N/O			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	7	5	-2
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	7	7	0
Housing Unit P/Q - Girls ESU, CARE			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	7	8	+1
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	7	8	+1
Housing Unit R			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	6	4	-2
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	6	7	+1
Housing Unit S			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	6	5	-1
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	6	6	0
Housing Unit X			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	6	6	0
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	6	8	+2
Housing Unit Y- Boys ESU, CARE, DD			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	8	7	-1
<i>PM SHIFT</i>	8	8	0

06

In order to achieve this level of staffing on the AM shift, it was reported that seven Probation officers were held over from working a previous shift or doing voluntary overtime, and three officers were working in the units as a result of deployment from their regular work assignment at another location. These 10 officers comprised 19% of the unit workforce on this shift.

In order to achieve this level of staffing on the PM shift, it was reported that eight Probation officers were held over from working a previous shift or doing voluntary overtime, and two additional officers were working in the units as a result of deployment from their regular work assignment at another location. These 10 officers made up 15% of the unit workforce on this shift.

Sunday, February 11, 2024

Combined Minimal Unit Staffing Total			
24-Hour/7-Day Living Units Posts	Minimum Staffing Need	POC Inspection Result	Net Difference
Combined Total per Shift			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	63	60	-3
Housing Unit A/B			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	6	9	+3
Housing Unit C/D			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	5	4	-1
Housing Unit E/F			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	5	5	0
Housing Unit L/M			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	7	5	-2
Housing Unit N/O			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	7	6	-1
Housing Unit P/Q - Girls ESU, CARE			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	7	6	-1
Housing Unit R			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	6	5	-1

Housing Unit S			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	6	7	+1
Housing Unit X			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	6	5	-1
Housing Unit Y- Boys ESU, CARE, DD			
<i>AM SHIFT</i>	8	8	0

To achieve this level of staffing on the AM shift, it was reported that 17 Probation officers were held over from a previous shift or working voluntary overtime, and two additional officers were working in the units because of deployment from their regular work assignment. These 19 officers comprised 32% of the workforce on this shift.

PRESENCE OF STAFF IN UNITS

During the February supplemental inspections, Commissioners found that on L/M's AM shift, staffing was short by two and included one officer on light duty. There were reportedly three fights that morning on one side of the building. Another near fight was observed in unit X which met the minimum where a supervisor and two Group Supervisor Nights (GSNs) were filling in on holdovers.

Probation officers on all units were seen engaging and responding to the needs of youth present, while also observed attempting to manage other duties, like doing room checks and searches. One officer who was particularly optimistic about his shift despite his many responsibilities discussed the role of positive rapport and consistency of his presence as two key factors to maintaining order and a level of safety on the unit.

During the February inspections, it was reported to commissioners that multiple units had youth on 1:1 supervision, in which a youth must be in the line of sight of a Probation staff member at all times. This level of supervision can be triggered when youth express suicidal or homicidal ideation, or a desire and plan to hurt another person. The need to provide this level of care is not uncommon following detention and other stressful life events that may occur during detention. Probation has taken steps to plan for and accommodate this occurrence in the staffing plan.

08

Commissioners observed at least seven officers in the units over the weekend who reported to be serving on temporary deployment from the field or other assignments.

MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

The POC's Annual Inspection Report noted that "young people reported that they often waited in pain for days . . . [because] staffing of [Los Padrinos] was insufficient to get young people to their scheduled [medical] appointments." Many of these appointments take place at the medical center at Central Juvenile Hall, where youth confined to LPJH who need x-rays or optometrist visits are transported to receive care.

During a February 9, 2024, inspection of the medical facility at Central Juvenile Hall, medical staff reported slight improvements in timely transportation of youth to the medical facility. Juvenile Court Health Services staff reported that based on intake logs and schedules, 19 youth were scheduled for transport but only between 3 and 6 were seen at the facility. The previous week there were 30 scheduled visits and 15 youth were seen. A review of similar data from October and November showed similar numbers, with about one half of the youth scheduled for transport to the medical facility arriving. Both medical and probation staff ascribed the missed visits to lack of staff to safely transport youth.

PROGRAMMING AND SCHOOL

During the POC's official inspection in October 2023 and subsequent unofficial inspections specifically to observe and inventory program offerings, POC Commissioners and staff regularly noted discrepancies between the programs and services listed on the monthly calendar and the programs and services offered. Similarly, the POC has monitored school attendance and shared concerns about staff shortages contributing to missed in-classroom education.

09

During the February 2024 supplemental inspection, staffing challenges contributed to one side of Unit N/O not being transported to their Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) classroom to receive live school instruction. The boys were all in the unit when visited by a POC commissioner and staff member at 10:35am. The staff shortage was the stated reason why the youth were not taken to class. A Probation officer in the unit explained that LACOE dropped off work packets for the young people. The officer reportedly had requested that LACOE send a teacher to the unit to provide live instruction but was told that LACOE was also experiencing insufficient staffing and could not honor the request. Young people were observed repeatedly asking when they would be taken to school and stating that they wanted to go to school. Commissioners who visited the unit on Friday evening learned that the youth were able to go to class in their classroom after lunch.

Strain was also placed on the Probation officers in unit L/M when LACOE suspended a class of nine students from school on Friday morning and returned them to the unit due to fighting between two students while the rest of the class reportedly instigated the conflict. Probation reported to Commissioners during the Friday evening inspection that LACOE did not allow the nine students to return to class in the afternoon.

Officers expressed concerns about out-of-school suspensions and how suspensions play into the insecurities some young people have about their worthiness to receive education. Officers also listed these issues as factors that interfere with their ability to complete other administrative, safety oriented, and direct care duties.

Commissioners also observed and asked youth and staff about programming in the units during their visits, comparing those offerings to the monthly program calendar that Probation provided to the POC. During the Friday AM shift, Commissioners witnessed that there was no programming in the units. This was likely due to the inspection taking place during hours that high school students are in school. High school graduates and other young people that did not attend school for various reasons were observed sleeping, watching television, or playing video games in their respective units. During the PM shift, Commissioners observed two program

10

providers, Hoops4Justice and Jail Guitar Doors, and spoke to youth and staff in various units who reported that they had received programming from Anti-Recidivism Coalition's Credible Messengers, the ADVOT program, and Probation's life skills program that day. On Sunday, only one program was listed on the calendar (SWAN, a dance program) but the program did not occur at the time scheduled.

SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

In the POC's October 2023 inspection, several youth complained about the Special Enforcement Officers ("SEO's") hostility towards youth and purposely escalating violence. SEOs are deployed to LPJH to supplement staffing, support movement, and conduct searches, among other safety-related duties. SEOs are the Department's armed unit in the field, normally assigned to high-risk field operations but SEOs are not armed when deployed to LPJH. Youth and Los Padrinos-assigned Probation staff expressed concerns about SEO attitudes and behaviors. Commissioners have noted that their presence is contrary to the facility's goal of creating a rehabilitative environment.

During the POC's supplemental inspection, commissioners continued to observe SEOs in the facility. One commissioner observed a group of 8-10 SEOs walking outside around 8:00 pm in all-black military-style gear. When the commissioner asked one of the SEOs about their activities, the SEO replied that they were attempting to be "visible."

CONCLUSION

“The POC continues to recommend implementation of drastic methods to reduce the number of youth confined, improve staff training, and enhance human resources strategies to reduce staffing shortages as the only pathways to meet and exceed state requirements and to meet the needs of the youth incarcerated in the facility.”

