



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

PROBATION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

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INSPECTOR REPORT FOR LOS PADRINOS JUVENILE HALL (LPJH)

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INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission (POC), in its mission to oversee and make recommendations to the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation), is completing the 2025 Annual Inspections of all of Probation's detention facilities, marking the fifth year of inspections.

The POC has found it of critical importance to provide substantial feedback to Probation, the Board of Supervisors (Board), and public stakeholders after each inspection of the conditions observed within the facilities. This summary presents the findings of the third facility inspected during this annual cycle: Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (LPJH). While the POC collected a large amount of information at this inspection, takeaways were derived from the most impactful observations and interviews made during the day.

This inspection was conducted on August 28, 2025. The POC understands that changes and some improvements have occurred at the facility since that date and encourages the Department to respond to this inspection explaining those changes.

The following represents the key findings from the inspection of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall:

- ***Continued alarming levels of violence*** – While several findings could be written about staffing challenges, the severity of grievances, unengaged supervision practices observed, safety concerns related to crowding, the continued use of Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray on all youth, including girls and youth with developmental disabilities, and the precarious physical and emotional well-being of youth, Probation Officers and all others working in this facility, almost all concerns relate back to one ultimate issue: violence. The levels of violence, anticipation of violence, and inadequate management of violence in this facility pose a safety risk to all that enter.
- ***Probation must focus on continuity in its core responsibilities – supervision and rehabilitation*** – Two years since its reopening, during which LPJH has been led by six Superintendents, the operation of Probation's largest facility fails to provide a measurable level of rehabilitation to youth, with no practice model in place and no clear path to strength-based and interpersonal approaches that are seen elsewhere in Probation and other child and family serving county departments. Also lacking is planning to implement a small group model and other strategies that center the well-being of human beings and utilize the expertise of youth and the Probation Officers that directly supervise them. The Board should call for the activation of county partners to assume or contract all possible roles within their expertise, including mediators, educators, program providers, child development experts, and case managers, to provide Probation the ability to move all available sworn staff into direct supervision roles to increase focus on legally required tasks. Immediate support is needed to support the facility's operative functioning to disrupt cycles of harm to young people and Probation Officers that generate continued liability for the County of Los Angeles.



BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission (POC) was established in 2021 as a civilian-led oversight commission focused on systemic reform of the Probation Department. The POC advises the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) and the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation) about progress and challenges within Probation. The POC has considerable authority and responsibilities directly related to juvenile institutions. 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 Board 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 Sections 3.80.040(B) and 3.80.050(A)). The POC submits these annual reports to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), a statutory agency that inspects for compliance of standards of detention facilities in California, by December 31st each year and shares the report with the Board and the public. This report marks the fifth round of annual inspections conducted by this body.

METHODS

Details about the inspection of LPJH:

- Five POC Commissioners conducted the inspection, attending in two separate blocks to prevent a quorum of Commissioners from being together at any point. Three POC staff members provided support during the inspection.
- The LPJH inspection was conducted on August 28, 2025, and took nine hours to complete.
- Dates for the inspections were coordinated with Probation's Executive Leadership Team and leaders from the facility were aware in advance of the inspection.
- The BSCC does not have a required template for the inspection report, so the POC previously developed a detailed facility inspection template that was updated this year and reviewed by Probation and the BSCC. Within the inspections template, key themes are included to ensure a thorough inspection of both physical structure and environment. The template also highlights the need to examine practices and the treatment of youth at the facility.

The information below depicts data gathered directly from the LPJH inspection. It should be noted that the data is a "snapshot" of information recorded only on the day of the inspection. The data collected about the "Rated Capacity," "Population," and "Staffing" was provided to the POC staff directly by the facility's Superintendent and support staff; and each of these numbers was directly reported in this report. The findings stated in this report are a compilation of POC Commissioner and staff observations made while conducting the inspections.



GENERAL DATA FOR LPJH

- **Address:** 7285 Quill Drive, Downey, California 90242
- **Facility Type:** Juvenile Hall
- **Housing:** Single occupancy rooms in unit. Newer units are designed with centralized day rooms with individual rooms surrounding the day room. Older units have a day room or two and offices with the individual rooms in a hallway.
- **Rated Capacity:** 409¹
- **Youth population present at facility:** 258
- **Number of boys:** 222
- **Number of girls:** 35
- **Number of gender expansive youth:** 1
- **Youth with Developmental Disabilities:** 30
- **Youth with Commercial Sexual Exploitation histories:** 3
- **Youth with active Department of Children and Families Services (DCFS):** 30
- **Youth at Court/Medical:** 28
- **Total number of Probation employees assigned to the facility (sworn and non-sworn):** 313
- **Probation Officers on duty at time of inspection²:** 114-AM and 97-PM

FACILITY AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Upon entry, all visitors and staff were required to pass through an airport-style body scanner. The security team was efficient in moving visitors through the screening process and it was observed by Commissioners that everyone appeared subject to the same security procedures. One individual who appeared to be an administrator was not allowed entry to the facility due to having a cellular phone and a black pouch in their clear backpack. One Commissioner interacted with a security officer who, fully unsolicited, engaged the Commissioner in conversation and made disparaging comments about people in the transgender community based on a televised news report about a recent school shooting.

The facility grounds appeared outdated but well-kept. The outdoor pool was reportedly not in use during the summer due to a lack of lifeguards. Many grassy areas were observed around the facility where youth receive recreation time. It was reported that the units use the same areas for recreation each day, which was meant to decrease the movement time to get to recreation and to attempt to keep young people from different units separated to prevent violent incidents. Some youth complained that this led to repetitive activities determined by the space allotted, i.e. basketball courts, volleyball courts, or open space.

¹ [BSCC Rated Capacities of Juvenile Detention Facilities, June 2025](#) was higher than the rated capacity reported by Probation at 389.

² Probation Officers on duty is more than the total number of staff assigned to the facility due to the presence of deployed Probation Officers.



Pop up awnings were observed in various areas of the facility used to conduct weekend visitation outside of units. Some youth interviewed during the inspection reported no issues with visitation, however multiple others posed a myriad of issues including administrative barriers resulting in no visitation for them. One young person had specific complaints about having to have visitation “outside in the hot sun” during the summer. Another young person reported that “[he] don’t get visits because [his] mom has a disability, and they told her she can’t come in with her big knee brace and walker.” He reported that after she was turned away the first time, he and his mother “gave up on visiting.” Another young person shared that “My sibling is at Dorothy Kirby and has visiting at the same time and day as me so I don’t even get visits because I rather they have it [the visit].” He reported that no efforts had been made by Probation to accommodate the overlap. Young people shared that special visits were very challenging to obtain as they had to make several requests in order to have them considered. The young people felt that the “supportive adults” list was too limited, as it excluded non-custodial family members, mentors, and significant others. Young people also mentioned that they were not allowed to hug or eat together during any visits with their parents.

Several units were observed during the inspection. Most units appeared clean, but some older units still had extensive graffiti on the walls and furniture. Probation staff reported that the newly appointed Superintendent³ launched a clean-unit inspection initiative to methodically and systemically paint over graffiti in the units, and use cleanliness inspection results as the basis for youth incentives.

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) posters, Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) Ombudsperson posters, and Youth Bill of Rights posters were clearly visible throughout the facility in areas frequented by youth. Unit décor appeared inconsistent, as some units had beautiful murals on the walls while others were left blank. In one of the girls’ units, the furniture appeared very clean, more comfortable and the paint was colorful with bright lighting. Youth from various units shared issues with units feeling crowded which affected the mood, noise level, and increased tensions leading to fights, specifically in older buildings. The older buildings also had day rooms that appeared to be less than half of the size of newer units. It was also reported that there were ongoing issues with the heating and cooling systems in the buildings at LPJH, with young people reporting that the air conditioning was out for four or five days recently in the middle of summer.

Young people in many units repeatedly expressed concerns about unit assignments mixing the ages of youth. In one of the girls’ units, two girls reported that they felt it was inappropriate that they as 17-year-olds were being housed, going to school, and sharing bathrooms with girls that were just 13 years old. They reported feeling concerned that the Probation Department was creating an unsafe environment where if a younger person initiated a fight with the 17-year-olds, Probation could bring new charges against the 17-year-olds and keep them detained longer or transfer them to the adult system, which youth reported that some Probation staff prematurely made threats and comments about

³ Since the reopening of LPJH in July 2023, there have been six Superintendents, which was acknowledged by many during the inspection as a detrimental and that consistency in leadership was necessary to stabilize conditions at the facility.



new charges, longer detention periods, and possible transfers to the adult detention systems to the detained youth. Concerns were also expressed in multiple units by older youth for the safety of younger youth, those they perceived as easily influenced or manipulated, and housing assignments which placed youth and staff at risk.

Various young people interviewed throughout the day discussed their experience at the facility as overwhelmingly negative. One girl with a low mood asked during an interview, “What about this is supposed to help me? People are fighting all the time, there’s nothing to do, so we get into trouble. My mental health is way worse now than it was when I came in here. How are we supposed to go out and be normal after this?” Other youth interviewed expressed their experience and treatment received at LPJH as ongoing, daily punishment. In another unit, the POC observed a 12-year-old sitting alone with a single Probation Officer in one of the smallest dayroom spaces to keep him separated from the rest of the older youth in the unit. A 19-year-old in that same unit expressed that he viewed the younger boys in the unit as younger brothers and tried to mentor them, but was concerned for them.

A dedicated baby bonding room was observed in an administrative building. Young people shared that they found the space too small and hot to comfortably accommodate visits, especially with babies beginning to walk. Young people also stated that the room needed more toys and age-appropriate amenities. During the inspection it was reported that the baby bonding room is utilized four times a week. When asked about the number of parenting youth in the facility, the LPJH administrators estimated that two girls and three boys were verified parents and acknowledged that there could potentially be others.

During the inspection it was noted that multiple units housed youth that were monolingual Spanish speakers or early English learners. Other bilingual youth and Probation Officers with strong Spanish skills were tasked with translating for them to monolingual English-speaking professionals.

KITCHEN AND FOOD

Meals in the facility took place in the shared living space of each unit. Kitchen staff rolled heat-controlled carts of pre-cooked meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner to the units where youth ate all meals in the units’ day rooms.

Lunch was observed in several units and consisted of a burger patty, potato salad, corn, milk, and condiments (ketchup and mayonnaise). The hamburger patties shown to Commissioners looked unappetizing, one patty looked undercooked while another looked overcooked. One Commissioner noted that the food was not appetizing because the burger patty was two colors; brown and light brown, and the serving size was not substantial. After observing lunch, a Commissioner observed a food tray that was left out to feed birds, but there were also rat bait stations nearby. Young people complained about the quality of the meals and shared that they did not like the food at the facility in general. One young person was observed “doctoring” their meal or mixing it together to make a new meal because they disliked the original meal. When asking young people about the



breakfast they had been served earlier in the day, they described it as “nasty” as they were given grits and “two ugly sausage links”.

The kitchen appeared clean, and it was reported that new ovens were ordered and expected to replace the outdated ovens, and the HVAC and electric systems were in the process of being worked on to accommodate the new ovens.

It was reported that kitchen staffing was a major challenge for a variety of reasons. The Kitchen Manager reported that five people were in the process of being hired, but there were regular challenges with getting applicants through the background process. It was reported that it would be advantageous to the kitchen operation to be able to temporarily utilize other Morisson employees cleared for other Probation sites to be able to come to LPJH to do overtime or to fill in for brief time periods. It was reported that the kitchen operation was running on significant amounts of overtime by a small number of people, short staffing, undesirable work schedule all leading to high turnover rates. Other concerns about the ability to hire and retain kitchen staff had to do with the rigorous security procedures for employees taking breaks outside of the facility. Employees who smoked tobacco vapes on their breaks found security, including the dogs, to “be too much of a hassle”. This included one employee who reportedly had a dog signal on them after vaping tobacco on a break and was sent home.

EDUCATION

- **Number of full-time LACOE teachers:**
 - **Assigned:** 7
 - **Day-to-Day (not long-term) Substitutes:** 8
 - **Long-Term Substitutes:** 9
- **High School Students:**
 - **In School:** 213
 - **Suspended:** 1
- **Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs):** 78 (35%)
- **High School Graduates:** 44
- **College Students:** 33
- **Dual enrollment students:** 9
- **College(s) supporting this facility:** Cerritos College

High School Students

Several Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) classrooms were observed during the school day. Wide variations existed between the classrooms related to the engagement of students. In some classrooms nearly all of the class was engaged in the subject matter, and other classrooms demonstrated low levels of student participation and focus. Young people, Probation Officers, and other supportive staff interviewed in the classrooms of highly engaged students reported multiple factors that influenced the environment. Some highlighted factors that contributed to the high classroom engagement were higher numbers of contracted support staff in the classroom working



with students one-on-one or in very small groups and the positive rapport built by LACOE teachers in those classrooms.

It was remarked by adults in one class that while the classroom was calm and functioning at the time of observation, the mood often shifts and verbal and physical altercations between youth are disruptive and commonplace. Another classroom only had two students, and there were several books in the classroom library including bibles, while no other religious texts were noticed, raising concern for religious expectations placed on young people in the facility. In another classroom, Commissioners observed students working in two groups of five on a writing assignment. The engagement was lacking, and little work was being produced while students discussed off topic issues. The students shared that the work was not challenging for them because they found the lessons redundant or repetitive, and that their schoolwork was weighted too heavily when considered in court. It was reported that due to the inadequate number of Special Education teachers, regular LACOE teachers were allowed the ability to structure their classrooms to accommodate diverse learning levels.

LACOE classroom décor also varied with some classrooms displaying youth work and artwork, and other classrooms having very little on the walls. Commissioners noted that there was a need for graffiti removal in some LACOE classrooms. Young people attending LACOE school wore new forest green uniform t-shirts or sweatshirts to school that looked very much like traditional school uniforms. The youth had an opportunity to help design the LACOE uniforms. Probation and LACOE staff noted that the uniforms contributed to the classroom environment and helped staff distinguish between high school students and graduates during the school day. LACOE classrooms had PREA, OYCR Ombudsperson, and Youth Bill of Rights posters at eye level in English and Spanish.

Inspectors interacted with staff from Second Call in the classrooms, noting that their presence was calming and appreciated by the youth and that they reported being able to assist with movement to school in the morning, ensuring that youth got to school on time.

Students in Units During School

During the school-day portion of the inspection, Commissioners also visited units to observe youth present in the units during school hours. In unit Y1, young people were observed watching television, walking around quietly and orderly, or working on college coursework with staff. In unit N/O, two young people were completing college coursework, and another was laying down watching TV in the same small day room. The young person laying down shared that they remained in the unit because they had been suspended from their high school classroom. In another unit, youth reported that they had not been to school in the last week due to the lack of teachers, so they were focusing on completing their schoolwork packets.

High School Graduates

Probation Education Services staff reported there were forty-four high school graduates with thirty-three taking college classes, and no college graduates. All college classes



offered were asynchronous, meaning youth were offered only pre-recorded classes with no live or in person component, and contracted Student Nest tutors assisted students with coursework. It was reported that to cover the 20 open housing units at LPJH, which could potentially house college students, there were ten contracted Student Nest tutors and three Probation Education Services staff covering the units. The laptops used by the college students were issued by LACOE. Staff explained that LACOE's computer monitoring firewall, Imperil, was described as "more secure" than the firewall on the Cerritos College laptops. Young people reported that often the firewall kept them from being able to access content necessary to complete their classes on the LACOE-issued laptops.

It was reported that the LACOE laptops were not only monitored by Probation Education Services staff during use, but also LACOE Risk Management at LACOE headquarters. Reported challenges include:

- **Time restrictions** – College-level learning was limited, as college students were only allowed to use the laptops for two and one-half hours per day (1:15 in the morning and 1:15 in the afternoon).
- **Unit distractions** – Distractions like YouTube in the units created issues with focus and noise.
- **Fundamental education deficits** – Many youths arrived with fundamental education deficits which made service delivery challenging. Most young people needed one-on-one support and only about five out of all the college students could complete their assignments independently.

Most college students shared that they were content with their academic work but wanted more session courses and scheduling options. They reported that they were only offered the ability to take one course per session. One young person shared that graduating from high school three months prior meant that they lost status and activities they had in high school having reached the role of youth ambassador. The young person shared that they were currently taking psychology in college and emphasized that they participated in whatever programs they could to keep busy as they attempted to do something productive with an anticipated lengthy stay at the facility. Young people also reported needing more interaction with their professors, and one youth stated that the professors "don't reply" to their messages or requests for assistance.

GRIEVANCES

- **Total Grievances⁴:** Approximately 600
- **Grievance system:** Paper only
- **Emergency grievances:** Yes

⁴ The POC generally requests all the grievances from the current calendar year, unless that number is deemed too small to get a reasonable sense of common grievance themes for the facility. The grievances provided and reviewed were from January 2025 onward. Since the number of grievances at LPJH was too large to count by hand, it was reported by the Grievance Officer that there were approximately 600 grievances recorded for January 1, 2025 to July 30, 2025.



The majority of grievances reviewed related to the safety and treatment of youth. This caused alarm for POC Commissioners and staff as the severity of concerns related to violence and potential abuses of youth was remarkably greater than observed in grievances at other Probation facilities and in those reviewed during the previous two years at this facility⁵. Many grievances reviewed included young people expressing fear for their safety amid threats of violence made directly toward them, reflected the level of violence they witnessed in their living units, and observations of not being kept safe by Probation staff when violence occurred. Multiple grievances included explicit requests from youth to be moved to different units due to fights, fear, and complaints of “pack-outs”- a term referring to a fight where one victim is attacked by a group of individuals all at the same time, and expressions of mental distress and the development of mental health symptoms. One grievance reviewed included a young person’s plea to be moved into the medical unit because he reported that due to an existing traumatic brain injury and the level of violence in his unit, he was fearful of sustaining further brain damage.

Some of the grievances indicating mental distress included allegations that were PREA-related such as fear of sexual violence, verbal threats of rape, being called homophobic slurs, and other bullying based upon perceived sexual orientation. This included a grievance where it was reported that a Probation Officer was watching while a youth “played with himself,” but the Grievance Officer wrote that “the youth did not want to follow up” with no indication of further efforts to ensure safety for that youth or others potentially at risk when investigating this grievance.

Several grievances were related to staff concerns, where young people felt aggrieved by Probation Officers or LACOE staff’s behaviors toward them. The grievances related to Probation Officers noted that there was an “abuse of power”, Probation Officers were “acting racist” as access to programming was restricted including the Behavior Management Program (BMP) and scheduled Community Based Organization (CBO) programming, and room confinement was used as a disciplinary method against youth. In some grievances, young people named LACOE staff as the malefactors and alleged that young people were punished arbitrarily, as they did not understand why their daily points were deducted since they had completed their assignments.

Commissioners reviewing grievances noted that grievances came from a variety of units over the course of the year, indicating that these events took place across different points in time, different young people, different Probation Officers and other staff. The severity of grievances was not an anomaly, but an indicator of a facility culture entrenched in violence without the ability to provide physical or emotional safety to multiple youth.

Commissioners noted that the Grievance Officer needed additional staffing support. One Grievance Officer was handling approximately 60 to 100 grievances per month. As a result of this understaffing, the POC expressed serious concern while reviewing the grievances that follow-up documentation was not included with grievances, particularly for those grievances that warranted calls to law enforcement, the County’s Suspected

⁵ [Probation Oversight Commission 2024 Annual Inspection Report](#)



Child Abuse Hotline, and/or Probation's PREA Coordinator. It remained unclear to Commissioners whether these emergency grievances were addressed in a sufficient manner due to a change in process from years past and a lack of documentation about follow-up attached to the grievance form. It was noted that the response time for many grievances was not in compliance with Probation's policy.

DISCIPLINE/POSITIVE BEHAVIOR REINFORCEMENT

LPJH uses a Behavior Management Program (BMP), or points-based reward system, where youth are assigned points throughout the day based on their participation in various activities and prosocial behaviors like getting ready for school and avoiding fights and verbal altercations. With the points earned through the BMP, youth are able to "purchase" snack foods and name brand personal care items that youth find highly desirable in the BMP "store". In addition to these tangible rewards, youth with the highest points are occasionally invited to participate in a movie screening within the BMP store, replete with popcorn and sport drinks. LACOE participated in the system by allowing students to accrue points during the school day from their Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system.

As reported in previous inspection reports of LPJH, over the last two years, Probation leadership referenced the installation of a "behavioral model" for their facilities, including LPJH. Questions were posed throughout the day to various Probation Officers and facility leadership regarding information they may have about a plan to install a practice model, what that model is called, or what it might entail. It was reported by facility leadership that there have been unit by unit trainings of Proactive Youth Supervision, though Probation Officers interviewed during the day were not able to elaborate on a plan, its name, or information about the installation of a new behavioral/practice model beyond BMP. Previous years' discussions about dividing the facility into smaller, focused communities had not been implemented.

As noted in previous years' inspections, interviews conducted with Probation Officers and youth indicated that Probation Officers demonstrate a wide range of behaviors when it comes to interactions with youth. Most youth interviewed had at least one Probation employee they found positively impactful, with a few young people referencing the Probation Officers as people they related to "like family" and had strong bonds with because of the ways they felt supported by those Probation Officers. During those discussions, many young people reported that they found most Probation Officers to be "okay", meaning having neither a positive or negative effect on their well-being, but that there were consistently "one or two staff that just want to make life hard". When asked what that looked like, youth on various units explained that some Probation Officers over-threaten write ups and new charges, speak to youth in a demeaning way, or antagonize them.

In an interview with one girl, two other girls encouraged her to disclose her interactions with a particular Probation Officer. They shared: "I don't know why she doesn't want to tell. This staff treats her so mean for no reason like every day. It's not right." It remained



clear that individual Probation Officers providing direct supervision continue to approach interactions with young people from a diversity of approaches and not a cohesive, Department-wide, implemented strategy as noted in previous inspections of the facility.

ACCESS TO MEDICAL/MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Department of Health Services-Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) reported 24-hour coverage at LPJH. The hours of operation are 8:00am-5:00pm, seven days per week including holidays. JCHS occupied two areas of LPJH, a medical unit in the administrative building and medical module located in a regular housing unit in the facility which is used to house incoming, sick, or medically fragile youth. It was reported by JCHS that although transportation services availability was improved for appointments and other incidents requiring transport outside of the facility, 35% of internal medical appointments were missed as a direct result of inadequate Probation staffing to adequately supervise the number of youth detained in the facility. JCHS reported no pregnant girls at the facility on the date of the inspection.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) reported hours of operation from 8:00am-8:00pm, seven days per week, with access to a 24-hour on-call psychiatrist for psychiatric emergencies after-hours. The DMH leadership shared that clinicians meet with young people depending on their level of supervision. Multiple sessions occur each week for young people assigned to an elevated supervision level, and for young people not on a level, the session will typically occur once a week. It was reported that there were six youth on level three, meaning that a mental health clinician placed the youth on one-on-one supervision due to risk of harm to self, others, or expressed suicidal ideation. It was reported that an additional three youth were currently on level two supervision, requiring them to be re-evaluated every 72 hours in order to eventually be released from having additional supervision. It was reported that in response to issues of alleged physical and sexual abuse in Probation settings, the DMH was supporting their clinicians to identify and report inappropriate behaviors by sending them to trainings for grooming and boundary setting in addition to the regular mandated County trainings about mandated reporting. Young people interviewed during the day generally knew who their unit clinician was and reported that they were able to see someone from mental health when they needed to.

AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

DMH reported continued improvement in the relationships of clinicians and Probation Officers over the previous year. It was reported that while changes in facility leadership had posed difficulty in establishing rapport and having continuity, leadership changes were seen as necessary for improving conditions at the facility. It was also shared that clinician turnover had decreased over the last year and that some units with more stable Probation staffing helped facilitate better relationships between Probation and DMH employees.



A CBO programming provider shared that their relationship with the Probation Department had been smooth, and they expressed appreciation for the Department embedding the organization into the unit.

LACOE reported that regular interagency meetings, including all co-located departments, were the most helpful aspect in maintaining partnerships. It was reported that there were also weekly workgroup meetings for planning the depopulation of LPJH. Various co-located department employees emphasized that communication challenges were ongoing, including being provided with last-minute information with little time to prepare for changes, but many felt that communication was somewhat improving with the newly installed Superintendent.

STAFFING

- **Supervision Staff on Leave(s) (AM and PM Shifts Combined):** 187
- **Deployed Staff Providing Supervision (AM and PM Shifts Combined):** 56
- **Supervision Staff on Holdovers and Overtime (AM and PM Shifts Combined):** 22
- **Callouts by Supervision Staff:** 12-AM, 11-PM

Staffing levels at LPJH continued to be a major challenge as staff attrition, both of retiring Probation Officers and those new to the Department, were reported by remaining Probation Officers. The Probation Officers who were interviewed reported anecdotally that the new hires often leave within a few months of starting at LPJH. Probation Officers from one unit shared that consistent staffing was key to having daily operations work appropriately. All Probation Officers from that unit were deployed from the field to assist in the juvenile halls on an agreed rotation schedule but had not been rotated since March. One Probation Officer expressed his frustration about not being able to tend to his field caseload, understanding the Department's staffing issues, but having no desire to continue working at LPJH. A Probation Officer in a different unit mentioned that he had been at LPJH for five years and was able to build relationships with the young people. He exemplified a positive rapport with the youth by speaking to them with kindness and firmness, actively listening to them, and acknowledging their strengths as well as areas for growth.

It was shared that communication among Probation Officers related to grievances was poor. During the review of grievances, numerous grievances which were resolved by other Probation Officers, not the Grievance Officer, appeared to have resolution documentation missing.

PROGRAMMING

With the single exception of one provider arriving late, programming occurred as stated on the programming schedule. Credible messenger programs were scheduled and made available to both boys and girls in the facility. A specialized credible messenger program for youth with developmental disabilities was highly regarded in one unit and was reported



by youth and Probation Officers to have a positive effect to help manage violence in that unit through relationship and skill building. The program was limited to one unit despite youth with developmental disabilities being housed in a variety of units within the LPJH.

Young people shared their appreciation of one sports program which they described as having a positive impact on their lives and functioning. Youth said that the program providers were helping with their social, emotional, career, life skills, and spiritual development. In another unit, Commissioners observed a music program taking place with six young people participating. All participants were engaged by the providers and were actively answering questions. The program facilitator played the young people music beats and then paired them with lyrics about resilience, self-esteem, leadership, and skill sets. In another unit, an art program took place using minimal supplies as the provider was not allowed to bring in paints and markers due to ongoing concerns of illicit substances entering the facility despite increased security measures or ability of Probation to provide and store the appropriate supplies. A few young people participated intently while others were unengaged by the simplicity and repetitive nature of using transfer paper to trace printed images onto blank white canvasses.

Young people relayed requests and wishes related to programming. They missed a weight-lifting program that abruptly ended and asked for its return. Youth repeatedly shared that they wanted more concurrently ran programs since many popular programs can only engage a few youth at a time, stating that it always leaves someone out if there is only one program going on at a time. Youth asked for hands-on, skill building vocational activities like cosmetology, barbering, hair braiding, construction related training, with a mindfulness of wanting to be able to transfer those skills to gainful employment opportunities to reduce their chances of recidivism. They reportedly wanted fewer programs based upon talking and listening and more interactive opportunities to do things, learn, and to create. Young people in most units repeated that they felt bored and relied heavily on screentime in the dayrooms to occupy themselves. Young people and Probation Officers alike indicated that more activity-based programming with consistent providers would help support the need to engage young people, which they believed would help occupy youth and serve as motivation to prevent fights or other serious incidents.

HARM REDUCTION

Interviews with Probation Officers and youth indicated that illicit substances related contraband had recently decreased at the facility since a major event occurred in April 2025. In a single morning in July 2025, multiple youth and staff members were suspected to have come into contact with a substance suspected to be an opioid, and multiple Naloxone doses were reportedly deployed on each affected individual. Reports indicated that contraband issues are uneven across the living units. It was shared anecdotally throughout the day by Probation Officers and youth that contraband items such as vape pens and chargers are the more common contraband items related to illicit substances.



It was reported by facility leadership that since the last formal inspection in June 2024, 16 doses of Narcan, a life-saving opioid overdose reversal medication, were deployed in various incidents. Narcan was seen in each living unit and in areas of the facility that youth visit including the Medical Unit and chapel.

During the inspection, three of eight Probation Officers were asked about Narcan being carried on their person. Most Probation Officers indicated that the nearest Narcan supply was available in the lock box with the unit defibrillator or in a drawer in the locked office. Youth at LPJH do not have access to Narcan, nor receive education to recognize signs of opioid intoxication or overdose. A couple of young people who were at the facility for an extensive time period reported that they had a training on how to deploy Narcan about a year ago, but no other youth indicated having such training.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's-Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (DPH-SAPC) Provider facilitated most of substance abuse and prevention services while DMH clinicians continued to integrate the work into mental health sessions as needed. DMH psychiatrists and JCHS pediatricians at the facility have the ability to prescribe medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid addiction. There was a defibrillator in every living unit, and cut down equipment was found in the centralized Probation Office in each of the living units. It was reported that there were seven attempted suicides and four suicide incidents⁶ since the POC's previous Annual Inspection.

OC SPRAY

LPJH reopened in July 2023 with a pledge from Probation Chief Viera Rosa that Oleoresin Capsicum spray ("OC spray" or "pepper spray") would not be introduced at the facility. Just weeks after the reopening and a major disturbance, OC spray was made available as a use of force option for all units and populations within the facility. This included the use of spray on units housing girls and gender-expansive (GGE) youth, those with documented histories of commercial sexual exploitation, and youth formally diagnosed with developmental disabilities despite the 2022 Board Motion⁷ requiring the Department to end all use of OC spray.

Most Probation Officers interviewed throughout the day reported that there was no known plan to eliminate the spray or to implement strategies to reduce the use or prevent the need for OC spray. Probation Officers reported that OC spray was a critical intervention tool needed to operate given the current staff to youth ratios and regular occurrences of violence in the facility. It was reported by Probation's facility leadership that there was a phase out plan in draft for this facility, which included training staff in proactive supervision

⁶ Probation defined a "suicide incident" as when a youth with a history of suicide attempts engages in self-harm behaviors, for example scratching the skin, that the Department does not deem to constitute a suicide attempt.

⁷ [December 20, 2022 Motion: Phase Out of Oleoresin Capsicum \(OC\) Spray at Central Juvenile Hall](#)



and Gracie Jiu-Jitsu. It was reported that part of the phase out plan⁸ was already in effect, as there were Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) assigned to each unit, and in a moment of crisis, the teams assemble and assist unit staff.

While conducting the inspection, POC staff observed a verbal altercation taking place between two girls outside of a unit wherein one youth was walking upstairs with her unit to enter an upstairs unit and a youth walking on the path dozens of feet away. As the girls cursed and threatened each other, the girl on the path continued her approach and multiple Probation Officers began to yell over the girls to stop. The girl on the path was more than 20 feet from the stairwell, yet a Probation Officer ran towards her holding up and shaking their OC spray canister and readying to deploy despite the lack of physical violence between the girls (as the girls were nowhere near one another). Another Probation Officer was able to engage the youth by not yelling and successfully de-escalated the situation before deployment occurred.

⁸ Weekly OC Spray Deployment Reports provided by Probation contradict the information received from Probation facility leadership at the inspection of an existing or partially implemented OC phase out plan. Weekly reports, including the report from the week of the inspection, indicate that LPJH is currently in a phase out stage of "Non-Applicable (N/A): Period of time prior to implementation of the phase out stages".