



# Mendocino County Juvenile Justice Consolidated Plan

March 2020

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## **Executive Summary**

The Mendocino County Juvenile Justice Consolidated Plan articulates the important issues, strengths, and needs for service related to juvenile delinquency in the region. The report also satisfies the State's mandates associated with both the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) and the Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) funding streams, as defined in both Government Code Section 30061(b)(4)(A) and Welfare & Institutions Code Section 1961(a).

Mendocino County's juvenile justice system faces a significant challenge in addressing the needs of those youth and families who are referred in a time of minimal resources. Significant issues such as gang involvement, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental illness afflict certain areas of Mendocino County. Although the primary communities where juvenile delinquency is most concentrated are in Ukiah, Fort Bragg and Willits, there are issues throughout the region. While the total number of juvenile offenders has been reduced considerably since this grant funding became available nearly 20 years ago, the complexity, severity, and need for services of many of them have all increased. This has occurred in a time when the Mendocino County Probation Department has experienced a substantial cut in overall funding that will reduce its ability to deliver the types of services many of these communities require.

In order to ration resources in the most effective and efficient manner possible, the Mendocino County Probation Department has adopted a set of core principles which will be applied to this and all future funding decisions:

- Balance the issues of public safety and the best interests of the children
- Utilize data to drive decision making
- Employ evidence-based programs and practices

The primary issues facing the Mendocino County juvenile justice system are increases in violent crime, disproportionately committed by gang-involved Latino youth, mental health diagnoses and use of drugs and alcohol. In order to address them, the Probation Department has adopted a strategy that emphasizes the following:

- Increase capacity of the juvenile justice system to be able to respond to violation with a range of sanctions
- Ensure a full range of services available to address gang activity
- Provide a continuum of treatment services, including trauma-informed approaches, to addressing issues such as mental illness and drug and alcohol use, in the community and restrict the referral of children outside of the County for treatment services to the bare minimum possible

The Probation Department will support the following programs and services using YOBG funds:

- Mental Health staff at Juvenile Hall
- Drug and alcohol treatment services Juvenile Hall
- “Peaceful Warrior” Aikido program
- PACT risk/needs assessment instrument
- Electronic monitoring program
- The Council for Boys and Young Men
- Rachel Young, LMFT
- Interactive Journaling

The Probation Department will support the following programs and services using JJCPA grant funds:

- Continuum of services for youth on supervised probation
- Youth Impact
- Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT)
- Community-based drug and alcohol treatment



## **State of California Juvenile Justice Grants**

The State of California supports the efforts of its 58 counties to address juvenile delinquency primarily through the funding offered under two non-competitive grants. The history and required process for these two grants, known as the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act and Youthful Offender Block Grant, are explained below.

In 2000, the California Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 1913, also known as the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA). This legislation provided the first source of substantial, non-competitive funding for counties to deliver local services to youth and families either involved in or at risk of involvement, in the juvenile justice system. Eligibility for these funds requires compliance with two important steps. The first is the creation of a “juvenile justice coordinating council,” which has the responsibility to develop, monitor and approve a “comprehensive multi-agency juvenile justice plan” annually. The second is the completion of a report due to the State each year by May 1st. In accordance with 749.22 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) is comprised of a minimum of individuals representing the following agencies:

- Chief Probation Officer as Chair
- Sheriff
- District Attorney
- Public Defender
- City Police Department
- County Office of Education/School District
- Social Services
- Mental Health
- Community-based Drug and Alcohol Treatment Provide
- Board of Supervisors
- Non-profit agency providing services to youth
- At large community member

The JJCC is responsible for developing a “comprehensive multiagency juvenile justice plan,” which shall include the following components, per Government Code Section 30061(b)(4)(A):<sup>1</sup>

i) An assessment of existing law enforcement, probation, education, mental health, health, social services, drug and alcohol, and youth services resources that specifically target at-risk juveniles, juvenile offenders, and their families.

(ii) An identification and prioritization of the neighborhoods, schools, and other areas in the community that face a significant public safety risk from juvenile crime, such as gang activity, daylight burglary, late-night robbery, vandalism, truancy, controlled

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<sup>1</sup>[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=3.&title=3.&part=&chapter=6.7.&article=](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=3.&title=3.&part=&chapter=6.7.&article=)

substances sales, firearm-related violence, and juvenile substance abuse and alcohol use.

(iii) A local juvenile justice action strategy that provides for a continuum of responses to juvenile crime and delinquency and demonstrates a collaborative and integrated approach for implementing a system of swift, certain, and graduated responses for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders.

(iv) A description of the programs, strategies, or system enhancements that are proposed to be funded pursuant to this subparagraph.

JJCPA funds can be “used for programs and approaches that have been demonstrated to be effective in reducing delinquency and addressing juvenile crime for any elements of response to juvenile crime and delinquency, including prevention, intervention, suppression, and incapacitation.”<sup>2</sup>

In 2007, the State enacted Senate Bill 81, also known as Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG). The purpose of this grant was to “realign” services for some youth who had been under the supervision of the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to local probation departments. 1951(b) of the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) states that YOBG funds “...shall be used to enhance the capacity of county probation, mental health, drug and alcohol, and other county departments to provide appropriate rehabilitative and supervision services to youthful offenders...”<sup>3</sup> Unlike JJCPA, programs supported through YOBG funds are not subject to review of the JJCC. Per Welfare & Institutions Code Section 1961(a), the State requires the following to be conducted in order to be in compliance with this funding:

(a) On or before May 1 of each year, each county shall prepare and submit to the Board of State and Community Corrections a Juvenile Justice Development Plan on its proposed programs, strategies, and system enhancements for the next fiscal year from the Youthful Offender Block Grant Fund described in Section 1951. The plan shall include all of the following:

(1) A description of the programs, placements, services, strategies, and system enhancements to be funded by the block grant allocation pursuant to this chapter, including, but not limited to, the programs, tools, and strategies outlined in Section 1960.

(2) A description of how the plan relates to or supports the county's overall strategy for dealing with youthful offenders who have not committed an offense described in

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/JJCPA-YOBG-FAQs\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/JJCPA-YOBG-FAQs_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=1951.&lawCode=WIC](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=1951.&lawCode=WIC)

subdivision (b) of Section 707, and who are no longer eligible for commitment to the Division of Juvenile Facilities under Section 733 as of September 1, 2007.

(3) A description of any regional agreements or arrangements to be supported by the block grant allocation pursuant to this chapter.

(4) A description of how the programs, placements, services, or strategies identified in the plan coordinate with multi-agency juvenile justice plans and programs under paragraph (4) of subdivision (b) of Section 30061 of the Government Code.

In 2016, Assembly Bill 1988 combined the process of submitting these two reports (the “Comprehensive Multi-Agency Juvenile Justice Plan” and the “Juvenile Justice Development Plan”) and allow for a single consolidated plan as long as it meets all of the required components of both grants. This report fulfills the requirements of both of these funding streams.

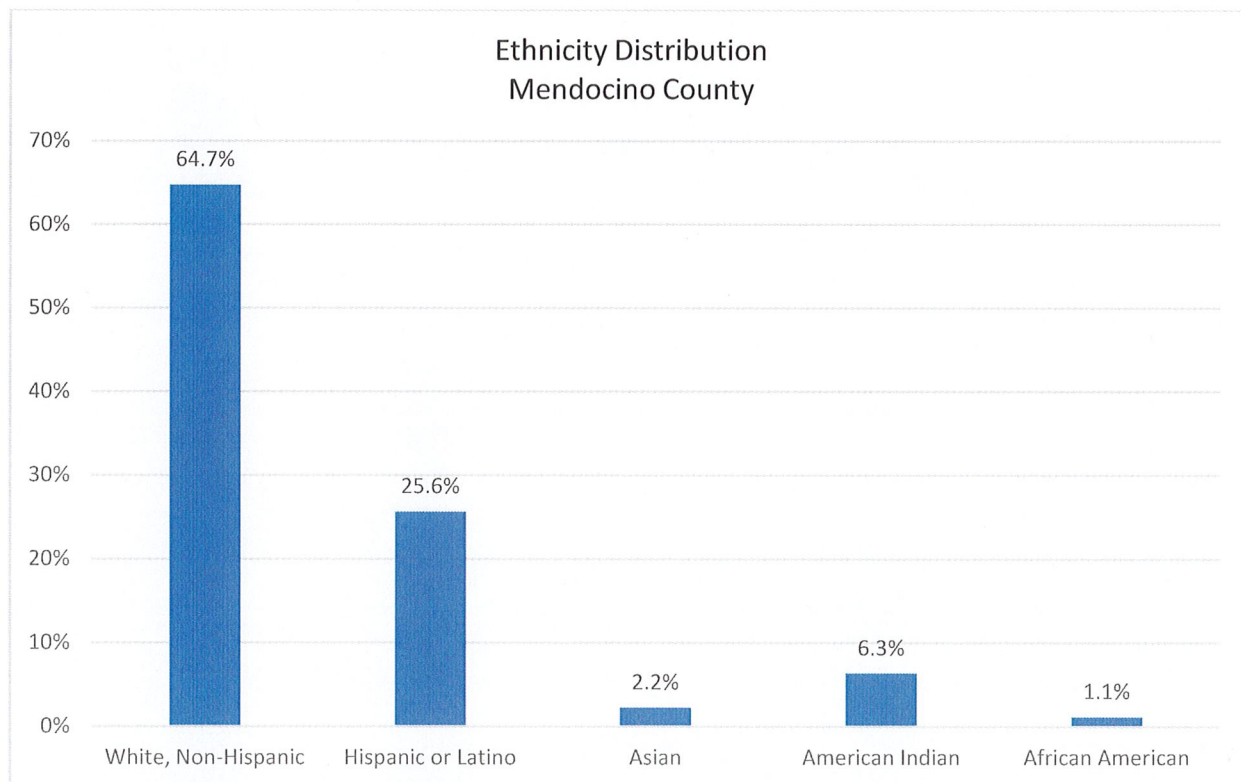
The process for preparing this report involved a review of data associated with Mendocino County juvenile justice and demographics, along with stakeholder interviews. Interview invitations were extended to people associated with all of the agencies mandated under 749.22 WIC to comprise the JJCC. Individuals from the following agencies participated in these interviews:

- Superior Court
- District Attorney
- Probation Department
- Ukiah Police Department
- Sheriff’s Department
- Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission
- Court Appointed Special Advocates
- Mendocino County Youth Project
- County Mental Health
- County Social Services
- Public Defender
- Ukiah Unified School District



## Mendocino County Demographics

Mendocino County is a picturesque region of Northern California that is known for its spectacular scenery. Unforgettable coastline, beautiful rivers, and pristine mountain areas abound in the 3,878 square miles that is Mendocino County. The largest industries in the jurisdiction (measured by the number of people employed) are health care and social assistance (13.7%), retail trade (12.9%), and educational services (9.4%).<sup>4</sup> With a population of 89,009,<sup>5</sup> the County is sparsely populated (approximately 25 people per square mile). The ethnic breakdown of the population in the County is shown in the chart below.



Although it boasts a natural beauty that attracts visitors from all over the world, Mendocino County presents significant challenges for some of its residents in terms of their standard of living. The median income for Mendocino County is \$46,528, which is considerably less than that of the rest of the State of California (\$67,169).<sup>6</sup> The poverty rate for Mendocino County is 19.1%, which is nearly 50% more than the state of California.<sup>7</sup> As is true in almost every

<sup>4</sup> <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/mendocino-county-ca/#economy>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Estimates/e-1/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/mendocino-county-ca/#about>



community, such a high rate of poverty has an impact on the lives of the children who live there. Of the 19,133 minors who live in Mendocino County, 24.4% of them live below the federal poverty level,<sup>8</sup> and nearly 20% live in “food insecure” households.<sup>9</sup> The percentage of public-school students who are homeless (5.7%), and rates of child abuse and neglect reports (96.9 per 1,000 inhabitants) and children in foster care (11.3 per 1,000) are also all higher than the rest of the state.<sup>10</sup> The rate of truant students in Mendocino County exceeds that of California as a whole by nearly 30%.<sup>11</sup> Finally, the use of drugs and alcohol has a significant impact on some residents of Mendocino County. In the period 2015 – 2017, Mendocino experienced 26.2 deaths per 1,000 residents due to drug use.<sup>12</sup> This compares to 12.7 deaths per 1,000 residents State-wide in the same time period.

As described in the preceding paragraph above, Mendocino County presents many of the issues and circumstances commonly associated with youth being determined to be at risk, such as high rates of:

- Poverty
- Truancy
- Family dysfunction
- Drug and alcohol dependency

The term “at-risk youth” has become perhaps overused and certainly often goes without explanation. In some circles, it is perceived as stigmatizing and therefore has taken on a pejorative connotation and fallen out of favor. While there have been some efforts to replace this language with terms such as “at-promise,” that does not accurately capture the idea of a child whose life outcomes are in danger of becoming adverse. Used in this document, an “at-risk” child is one whose potential to achieve a successful transition to adulthood is in jeopardy, and whose likely long-term life outcomes (including life expectancy, mental and physical health, and general standard of living) fall below state-wide averages unless successful interventions and protective factors are in place.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (Dec. 2018)

<sup>9</sup> Webster, D., et al. California Child Welfare Indicators Project Reports. UC Berkeley Center for Social Services Research (Jul. 2019).

<sup>10</sup> Webster, D., et al. California Child Welfare Indicators Project Reports. UC Berkeley Center for Social Services Research (Jul. 2019).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/493/truancy/table#fmt=2392&loc=328,2&tf=84&sortType=asc>

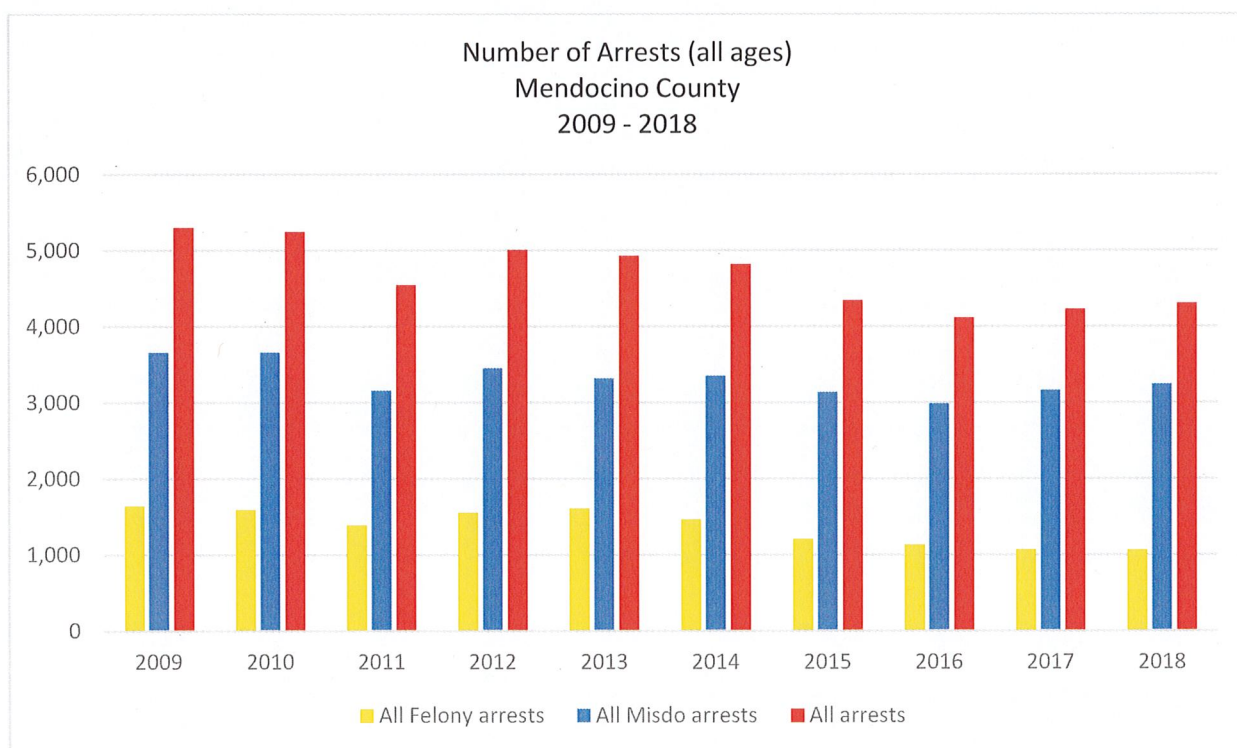
<sup>12</sup> <http://www.healthymendocino.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=102&localeId=260>

The resulting high concentration of at-risk youth in Mendocino County increases the demands on all of the public sectors (law enforcement, social services, education) to support families and offset the circumstances and challenges these young people face.

## Mendocino County Juvenile Justice Data Trends

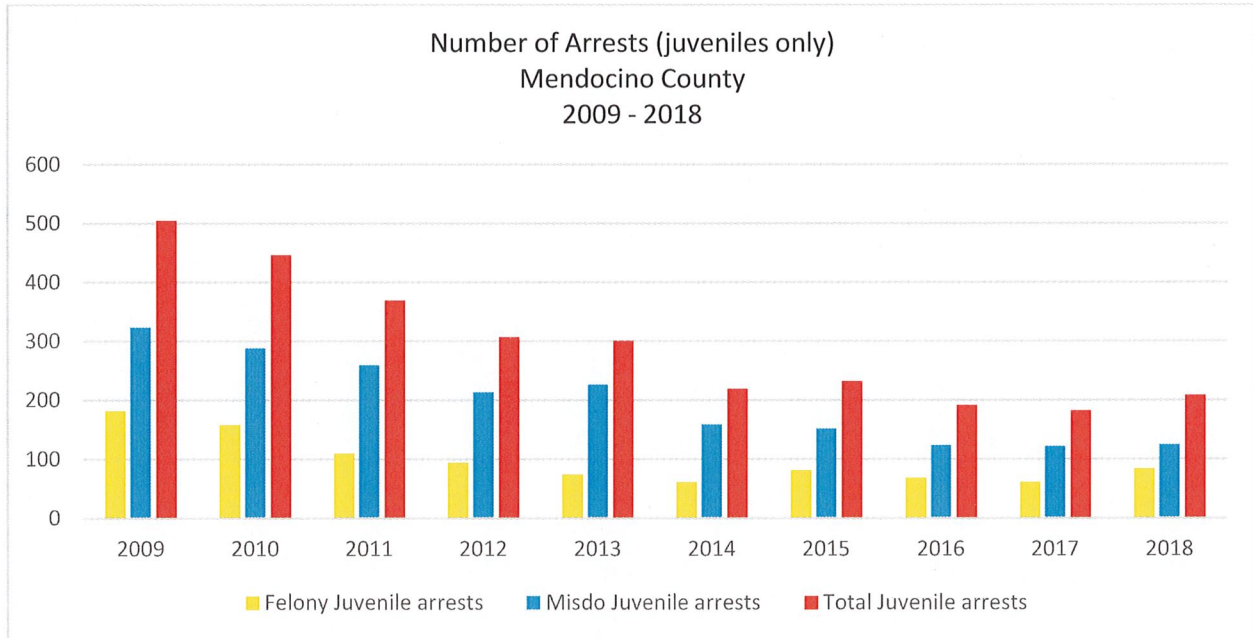
The strong correlation between high rates of poverty and needs for services is clearly evident in Mendocino County. Schools, social services and law enforcement agencies are all “on the front line,” so to speak, as they attempt to deal with the gap between the tremendous need for service and the scant resources available to address them. The juvenile justice system is not exempt from having to face this daunting task.

Before looking at juvenile specific data, it is important to address the context in which the trends are occurring. Since the 1990s, most of the Western world, including the United States, has experienced significant reductions in crime.<sup>13</sup> This is true in Mendocino County as well, where the total number of arrests (all ages of offenders and levels of offenses) dropped 18.9% between 2009 and 2018.



<sup>13</sup> The use of arrests to reflect prevalence of crime is fraught with issues and potential for debate. One example of this is clearly demonstrated in California’s recent re-classification of some crimes under Proposition 47. However, despite the shortcomings it contains, this measure still reflects one of the best ways to capture crime trends, due to the existence and uniformity of data at the local level. Other possible measures include victimization surveys, however that data is not available at the county level. It should be noted that while property crime rates remain low according to this measure, violent crime rates have recently increased nationally according to the most recent victimization survey. This is a trend that bears continued vigilance ([https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv18\\_sum.pdf](https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv18_sum.pdf))

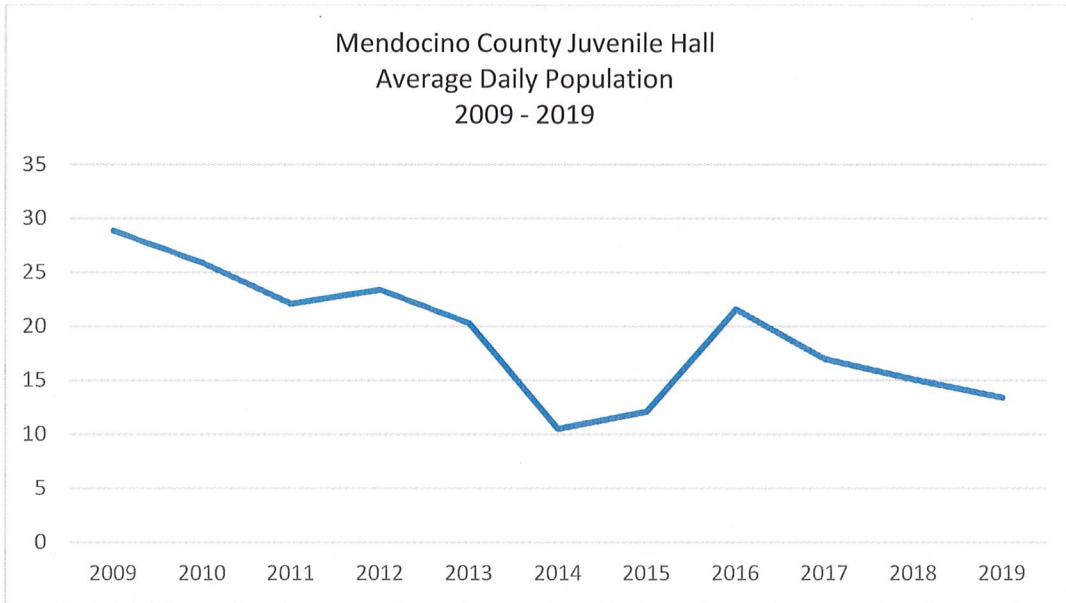
Using arrests as a measure of juvenile crime trends in Mendocino County, the reduction has been even more substantial; the total number of arrests of juveniles dropped 59% between 2009 and 2018.



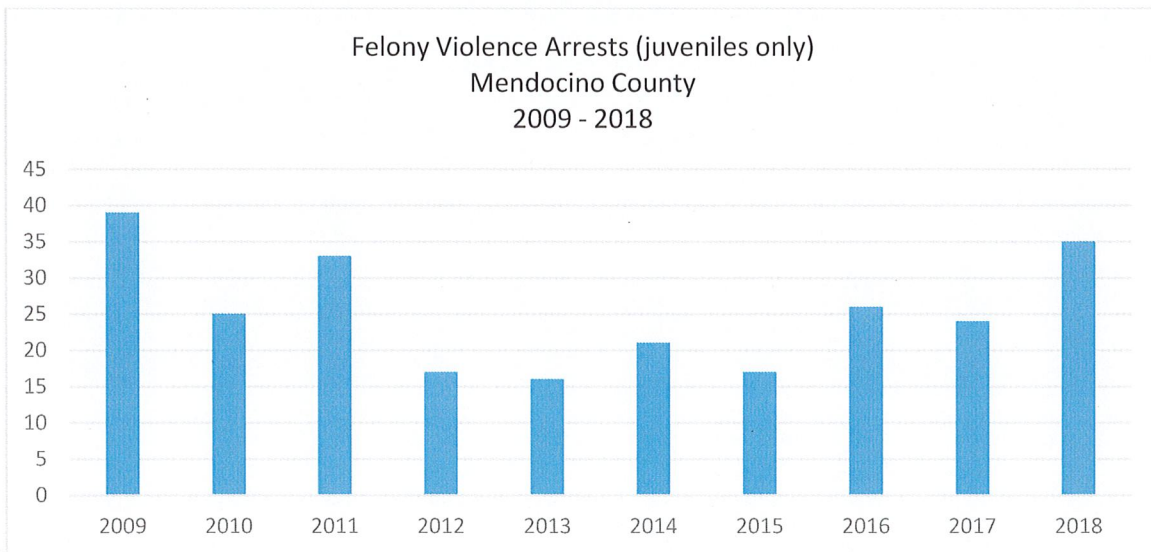
As should be expected with such a significant drop in arrests of juveniles, there has been a corresponding reduction in the average daily population of Mendocino's Juvenile Hall facility.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The reduction in juvenile detention is even greater at the state level, where there was a 60% reduction in average daily population of all detention facilities between 2009 and 2018  
<http://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/JDPS-Population-Trends-Through-Quarter-1-2019-PDF.pdf>

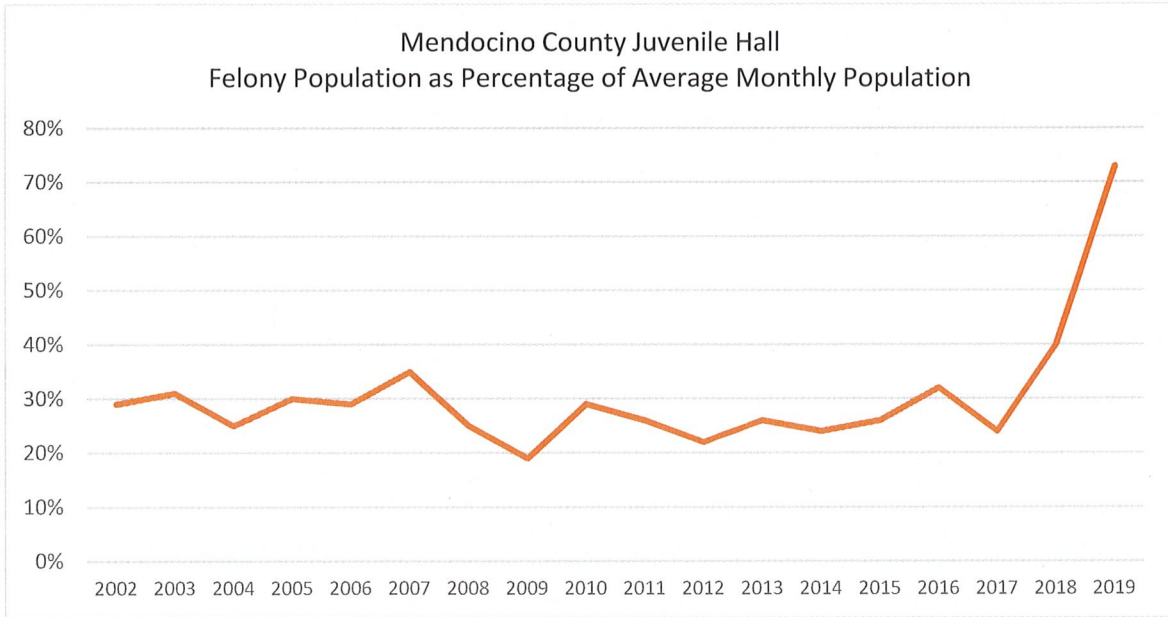




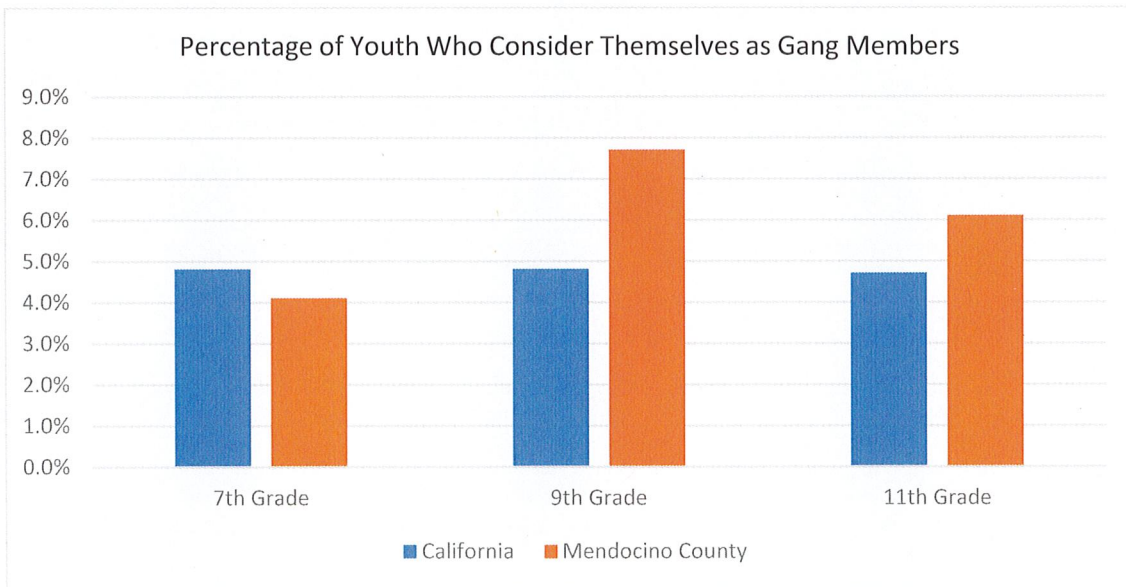
As with most complex issues such as juvenile crime trends, it is dangerous to reach the sweeping conclusion that simply because all arrests for Mendocino County juveniles are lower, the situation is better. A strong argument can be made that while the overall number of cases is lower, the complexity and severity of them are of grave concern. The first data point that reflects that is the recent surge in felony arrests for violent offenses that are “hidden” inside the numbers in the previous charts. The 2018 figure of 35 arrests of juveniles for felony violence is the highest Mendocino has seen since 2009.



This data point is what likely drives the following chart, where the percentage of youth detained in Juvenile Hall for a felony offense spiked considerably in 2019.



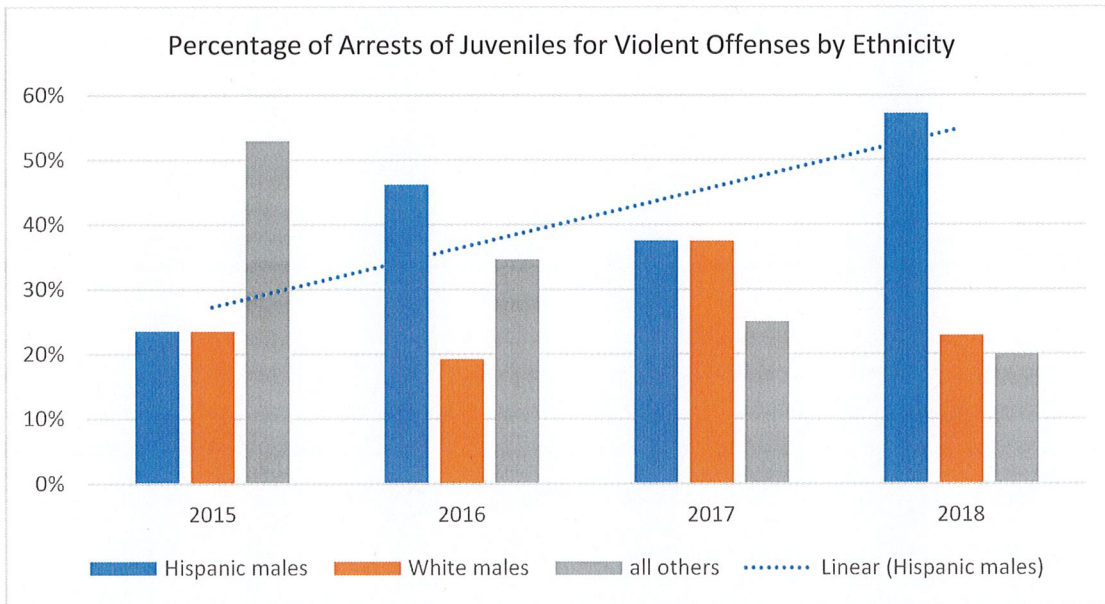
Another area of concern reflecting the complexity and severity of the issues facing juvenile justice in Mendocino County is the prevalence of gang activity. A self-report survey conducted in the period from 2015 to 2017 indicates that a higher percentage of Mendocino County youth consider themselves gang members in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades than the rest of California.<sup>15</sup>



There was concern expressed during interviews within the Mendocino County law enforcement community that Latino gangs from Sonoma County may be extending into this jurisdiction.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.kidsdata.org/region/2/california/results>

Arrest data indicates that Latino male youth represent a disproportionate percentage of arrests for violent offenses in Mendocino.<sup>16</sup>



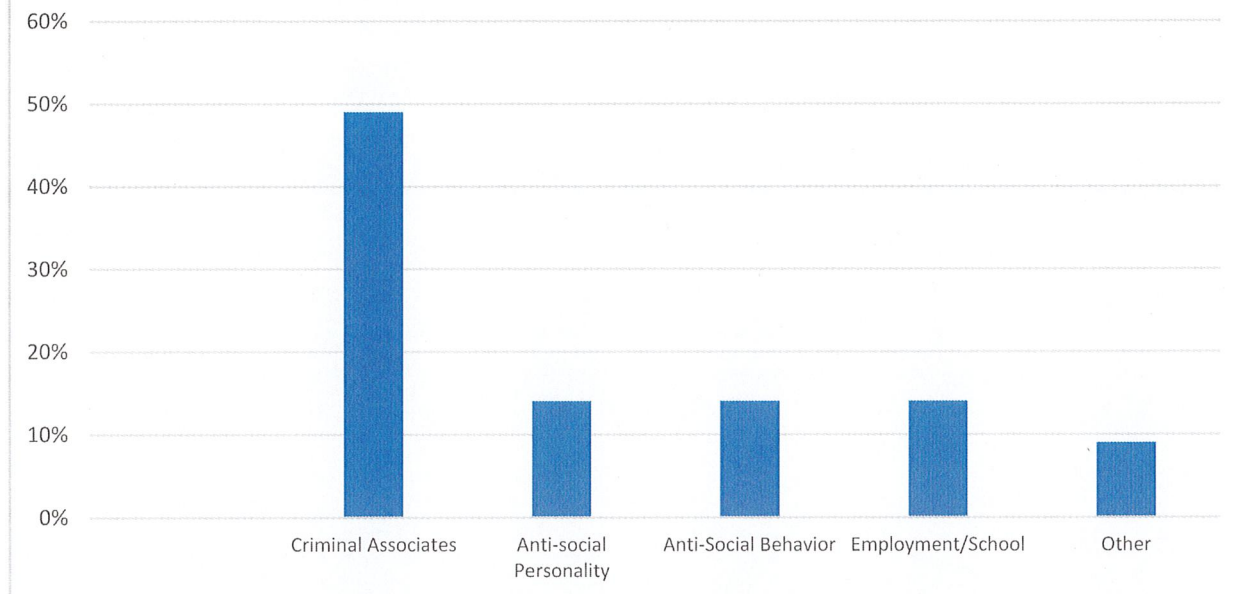
As part of its investigations of youth referred to the Juvenile Division, Mendocino County Probation Department staff assess a probationer’s need for services using the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT). The PACT instrument determines the primary criminogenic needs<sup>17</sup> (among the eight that exist) that require attention in order to reduce the likelihood of recidivism. The following chart reflects the fact that for youth on probation in the Juvenile Division the most frequent primary criminogenic need is “criminal associates,” a factor often connected to significant gang involvement.

<sup>16</sup> <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data> While not all violent offenses are gang related, a significant percentage of them in Mendocino County are.

<sup>17</sup> Criminogenic needs are issues, risk factors, characteristics and/or problems that relate to a person’s likelihood of reoffending or recidivism. See <https://csgjusticecenter.org/jr/in-brief-understanding-risk-and-needs-assessment/> for a further explanation of how instruments such as PACT are utilized in justice systems. See <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44087.pdf> for an explanation of the theories on how to address criminogenic needs



Criminogenic Needs (PACT)  
Mendocino County Probation Department  
Juvenile Division  
December 2019



In addition to concerns about serious delinquency, some youth in the Mendocino juvenile justice system have a significant need for mental health services. In a 2016 report compiled by the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, Mendocino County had the highest “percent of the local juvenile justice population (confined + alternative supervision) that are designated as open mental health cases” in California.<sup>18</sup> According to the report, “this demonstrates the prevalence of mental health needs within the youth offender population.” In addition, the Mendocino County Probation Department screens for adverse childhood experiences (also known as ACE scores) and found a disproportionately high score for many of the youth on supervised caseloads. The average ACE score for 51 such youth was 4.2, and those determined to be at high risk for recidivism had an average ACE score of 5.1. ACE scores of 4 or higher are associated with a host of negative life outcomes:

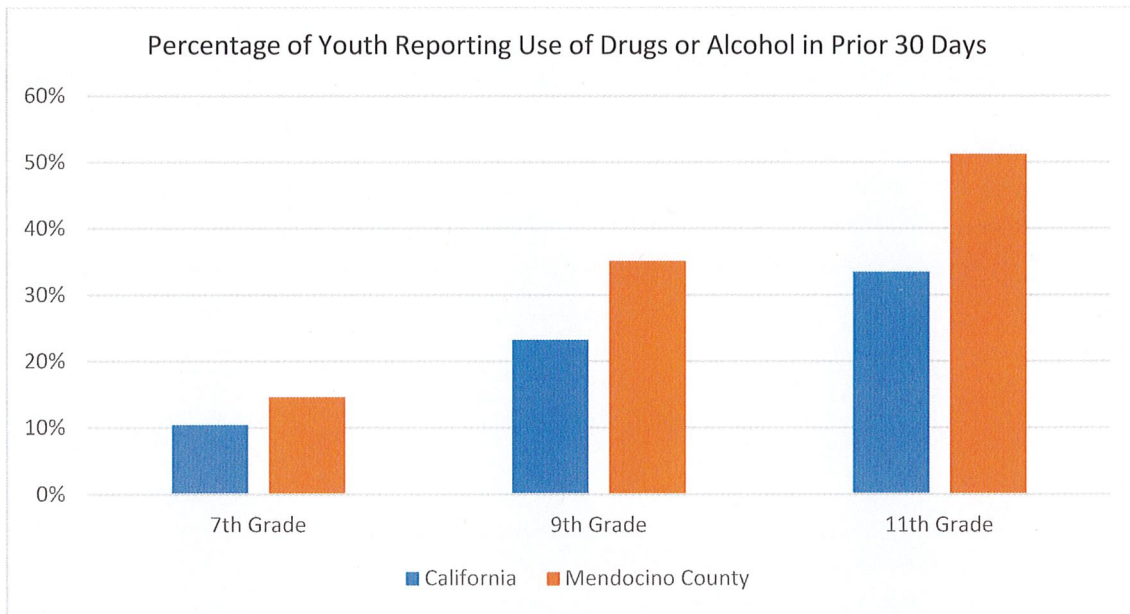
“... people with an ACE score of 4 are twice as likely to be smokers and seven times more likely to be alcoholic. Having an ACE score of 4 increases the risk of emphysema or chronic bronchitis by nearly 400 percent, and attempted suicide by 1200 percent. People with high ACE scores are more likely to be violent, to have more marriages, more broken bones, more drug prescriptions, more depression, and more

<sup>18</sup> <http://casi.ciji.org/Juvenile/2016>



autoimmune diseases. People with an ACE score of 6 or higher are at risk of their lifespan being shortened by 20 years.”<sup>19</sup>

Still another issue within the youth community of Mendocino County is the higher than usual levels of drug and alcohol consumption. The following chart indicates the results of a self-report of students when asked what percentage of them had consumed drugs and/or alcohol in the 30 days prior to the date of the survey.<sup>20</sup>



In summary, while the Mendocino County juvenile justice system is dealing with fewer numbers of youth than it did ten years ago, the severity of both the behaviors and the needs for service are significant. The combination of gang activity, mental health diagnoses and a higher than usual consumption of drugs and alcohol should be alarming and of great concern to all system stakeholders interested in reducing the impact of juvenile delinquency. While there are societal factors, such as poverty, homelessness, and lack of employment opportunities, which lie outside the system’s ability to influence, there are others that can be addressed. Mental health issues, reflected both by the high average ACE scores and number of open mental health cases, are a significant factor affecting many of the young people caught up in juvenile justice. Responding to gang involvement, through both prevention and suppression activities, will be necessary to reduce juvenile crime. Finally, providing support for youth and families dealing with substance abuse is clearly necessary for achieving the goal of mitigating juvenile crime in the region.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.acesconnection.com/blog/aces-101-faqs>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.kidsdata.org/region/2/california/results>. It should be noted that the date of this survey is from 2015, which although not ideal, still represents the most recent source of comparable data on this issue

## Assessment of Services and Needs

While assessing a jurisdiction's juvenile justice system through data is a necessary step in understanding what is occurring in the region, it is not sufficient without also getting viewpoints from stakeholders as well. The following section of this report captures the input of those individuals who work on these issues daily and provides a short description of their agency's capacity to address some of the issues raised above.

### Mendocino County Probation Department

Chief Izen Locatelli

The Mendocino County Probation Department has four full-time equivalent Deputy Probation Officers and a Supervisor assigned to the Juvenile Division. There has been significant turnover in the Department particularly in the upper management positions. In the past 13 years, there have been eight different Chief Probation Officers and at present the Juvenile Division Manager position is vacant (functions of that position are being performed by the Adult Division Manager in addition to his regular duties). The Probation Department has undergone significant budget reductions which have limited its capacity to provide many services beyond its core functions. The Mendocino County Juvenile Hall has a rated capacity of 42 beds but it is presently being operated with a cap of 20 due to budget limitations. The Probation Department provides both general counseling and substance abuse services for youth detained at their Juvenile Hall. The Department utilizes the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) to conduct actuarial risk/needs assessments of youth and to develop case plans designed to reduce recidivism. There are outpatient services for substance abuse, and the Department also offers an electronic monitoring (EM) program to provide an alternative for detention for appropriate youth (the Department recently adopted the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument, or DRAI, to make the determination of what level of detention a child requires).

Chief Locatelli expressed concern about the system's capacity for providing appropriate treatment services to youth and families. He also said that he would like to build a continuum of sanction options, as the present system offers little between detention and no response at all. With so few programs and options to select from, the Mendocino County juvenile justice system is only able to respond to delinquency after it occurs, rather than being able to be in a position to prevent it before it happens. When asked about the strengths of his juvenile justice system, Chief Locatelli reported that the major players all get along well. He also said that many of them are new to their assignment, which has some disadvantages but also is a strength. He believes they will bring new ideas and energy to address the significant challenges they face.

In terms of information sharing and management, the Department utilizes JustWare, a vendor managed management information system that provides both case-level data and aggregate reporting capacity, including the ability to capture the rate of successful completion of probation (completion of restitution and community service work obligations are conducted

manually). The Department also contracts with Noble to provide software to conduct actuarial assessments of criminogenic risks and needs. This system has reporting capabilities that allow the Department to review the criminogenic needs driving the behavior of youthful offenders in their jurisdiction. Both of these systems have safeguards in place to ensure compliance with 827.12 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

Mendocino County Superior Court

Judge Ann Moorman

Judge Ann Moorman is the Presiding Judge of Mendocino County's Superior Court and she leads the County's delinquency and dependency courts. She also presides over a behavioral health court for adults. Judge Moorman outlined some of the significant challenges Mendocino County faces in its efforts to address juvenile delinquency. The region is geographically large, and transportation is difficult. As a result, complying with requirements such as treatment or court obligations can be hard for families without reliable means of transportation. Poverty, lack of good-paying jobs and a housing crisis are also barriers for some families. The prevalence of an underground and illicit economy based on marijuana cultivation attracts crime (often violent crime) and the extensive use of marijuana reduces the motivation to make life changes. Judge Moorman also expressed concern about the limited access to treatment services for youth in the community. She also said that the heads of the different departments all meet regularly which facilitates communication and collaboration.

Mendocino County Sheriff's Department

Sheriff Matthew Kendall

Sheriff Kendall is a Mendocino County native whose family has lived in the area since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so he has strong ties to the community he serves. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Department has approximately 90 deputies on the force (47 serving in custody assignments and 43 on patrol). While they do not have deputies assigned to schools, Sheriff Kendall reported that his Department makes it a regular practice to make visits to local schools, and they create positive relationships with both youth and staff. He also said that he has a good relationship with the Probation Department Chief and his Department. In terms of things that are working well in Mendocino County, Sheriff Kendall expressed his belief that the Adult Drug Court is a very effective intervention. He also said the schools have a wide variety of clubs, teams, and activities that can act as a diversion from gangs, drugs, and delinquency. He also cited the Alex Rorabaugh Recreation Center as an example of the positive programs available for youth in the area.

Sheriff Kendall would like to see more prevention type programs, both for youth and their parents so they have the information they need to stay out of the juvenile justice system. He expressed concern about how many young people are unsupervised and without much parental guidance. He believes these youth are vulnerable to gangs who can act as surrogate families for

young people who are disconnected from their own. He would like to see programming that reaches students in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades to talk about drugs and gangs. He cited drug use as a contributor to the increased incidence of mental illness among youth; Sheriff Kendall expressed frustration at the attitude that marijuana is harmless. He said drugs are stronger than they have been in the past, both more lethal and more addictive. Finally, Sheriff Kendall would like to see that any investments in juvenile justice programming be assessed to be sure they are effective in actually reducing juvenile crime.

Ukiah Police Department

Chief Justin Wyatt

The Ukiah Police Department has a police force of approximately 35 sworn officers, two of which are assigned as School Resource Officers (SRO). Chief Wyatt reported that there is gang activity within their jurisdiction but that it is not as prevalent as in other parts of the County. Chief Wyatt said that the major issues for his jurisdiction related to delinquency are truancy, vandalism and marijuana crimes. He also stressed his concern that any further juvenile justice reforms might have on his police officers' ability to apprehend and detain youth in a secure setting. Chief Wyatt related three recent violent crimes to stress this need. In the past year, there have been several violent crimes, including a murder in early 2019, and two drive-by shootings believed to be gang-related, all involving juvenile suspects. He emphasized the importance of having access to both a local and secure facility to ensure public safety in incidents such as these.

Mendocino County Public Defender

Deputy Public Defender Jessyca Hoagland

Deputy Public Defender Jessyca Hoagland is the sole attorney from her office in Juvenile Court. She has been in this position since 2015. She mentioned the County's strong sense of collaboration as a strength for their juvenile justice system. She was extremely complimentary of the Probation Department. She said that the team of Deputy Probation Officers are very dedicated and that Chief Locatelli is an excellent collaborator. She described him as a problem solver who is open to discussing anything. She also reported that their judge is excellent and that the Probation, Public Defender and District Attorney staff all work well together.

In term of supports necessary to help youth in their system, Ms. Hoagland would like to see a continuum of services that helps to connect young people from their time in custody back into the community. She described wanting to have a position that would act as a social worker for youth in the community, eliminating barriers to receiving services such as transportation and lack of follow-through. She said that there has been an increase in violence connected to gangs, and she believes that is in part due to youth not having pro-social activities as alternatives. She mentioned programs like athletics, martial arts, or ones that connect youth to working with animals, or classes at a community college; anything that might give youth a different



perspective on what is possible in their lives. She would like to see programs to address gang members, but that staff from those programs need to have local connections and they must be people who youth can connect with in order to be effective. She stressed the need for counseling services to be trauma-informed.

Mendocino County District Attorney

Deputy District Attorney Jessica Guest

Deputy District Attorney Jessica Guest represents her office both in Juvenile Court and at the Adult Drug Court. She said that she believes their Juvenile Court has the right focus towards the rehabilitation of the youth who come before it. She also said that all of the parties involved work well together. There is plenty of communication between Probation, Public Defender, the Court, and her office and this helps to facilitate positive outcomes. She also believes that the Court is consistent in that she does not often see vastly different dispositions for youth with similar circumstances. Finally, she commended the Court for being diligent in following the necessary rules and procedures under juvenile law.

Ms. Guest sees the lack of available and accessible services as being a challenge for their juvenile justice system. Even when a necessary treatment service is available, it can be difficult to access for a family that lives far away from where it is offered. She cited Fort Bragg as an example of a remote location that does not have access to all of the services that a child living in the inland section of Mendocino County would have. She also wished that there were more services available for youth who are testing positive for serious drugs such as methamphetamine. Finally, she expressed interest in better understanding the services that exist and are provided to youth on probation.

Mendocino County Behavioral Health

Mental Health Director Dr. Jenine Miller

Dr. Miller oversees the mental health and substance abuse services in Mendocino County. The staff in the County's Substance Abuse Disorder Treatment unit (SUDT) provides clinical services to youth in Juvenile Hall related to drug and alcohol, while the Mendocino County Youth Project provides general counseling. SUDT is available to provide services to youth for both drug and alcohol treatment and co-occurring diagnoses once they are released as well. Dr. Miller remarked that the County has a real commitment to supporting mental health services and housing support for those who need them. The best example of this is the recent passage of Measure B (a local tax measure passed in 2017 that provides funding for both "...the construction of psychiatric and behavioral health facilities, operation costs, and services to treat mental illness and addiction<sup>21</sup>) which she said demonstrates that willingness to help people in

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<sup>21</sup> [https://ballotpedia.org/Mendocino\\_County,\\_California,\\_Mental\\_Health\\_Sales\\_Tax,\\_Measure\\_B\\_\(November\\_2017\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Mendocino_County,_California,_Mental_Health_Sales_Tax,_Measure_B_(November_2017))

need in their community. She said that the County is developing affordable housing options for families and that they are actively seeking grants to address the housing crisis. Finally, Dr. Miller cited the Arbor Youth Resource Center, a drop-in center in Ukiah that provides services and opportunities for youth aged 15-24, as another example of positive developments for youth in Mendocino County.

Dr. Miller cited several concerns for the region. She said that the high level of suicidality for youth in the area, and deaths from opioid use, particularly fentanyl, are alarming. She has been told that there are increasing incidents of youth experiencing significant health issues stemming from the use of highly concentrated THC products. Dr. Miller said that Mendocino County was able to recently allocate funding for a discharge planner in the County Jail facility. She would like to have that same capacity available in the Juvenile Hall in order to ensure a seamless transition from services offered in custody to outpatient programs.

#### Mendocino County Youth Project (MCYP)

Executive Director Joanna Olson

MCYP began in the early 1970s as a program to address the needs of youth in the juvenile probation system. Today, it operates under the fiscal umbrella of Mendocino County Office of Education, with an annual budget of \$3 million, and 35-40 staff. Although they are a small agency, MCYP operates nearly throughout the County (they cannot provide services to the Point Arena community due to the distance and remote location). MCYP provides youth workers who connect with children by providing activities of interest to them (such as music and art) and building trust. They have contracts with both the Probation Department and the local school district, so they are able to provide services at schools and in Juvenile Hall in addition to their offices. Among the services they provide are the following:

- Outpatient health clinic
- Victim services
- 24-hour crisis line
- Prevention and early intervention activities for youth
- Shelter services (both short stay and 22 months)
- Transitional aged youth (TAY) services

Ms. Olson expressed concern about the substantial level of trauma many youths have experienced, as evidenced by the higher than normal ACE scores that her staff sees with their clients. She also cited child abuse, poverty, gang activity (primarily in Fort Bragg) and a housing crisis (exacerbated by recent fires) as concerning. She said that lack of parental support can create dysfunctional families, and it would be ideal to have access to more wrap type services to support families. She reported that the use of heroin, opioids, and marijuana (particularly through vaping) is alarming and that more drug and alcohol education is needed in the schools. There is a high level of suicidality among youth who are detained in Juvenile Hall and Ms. Olson

would like to increase the mental health staffing at the facility, from one half-time person to at least one (but ideally two) full-time staff. Generally, she thinks more investment should be made in prevention efforts, and providing trauma-informed care. She recommends increasing the number of youth workers who can connect with youth. Finally, Ms. Olson said she believes the lack of consequences for youth's behavior will affect them as adults, and that more needs to be done to sanction delinquent behavior with consequences so young people develop this connection before they become adults.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

Executive Director Sheryn Hildebrand  
Case Manager James R. Haggett

CASA is a nation-wide, volunteer-led effort to provide support to youth in the foster care system. Volunteers undergo extensive training and then work with children as advocates for them for as long as they are in the dependency system. Mendocino County's CASA agency has a long history of collaborating with the Probation Department. Ms. Hildebrand and Mr. Haggett recalled when the Juvenile Hall facility was able to provide a full continuum of services for youth who were detained there. They would like to see a return to that level of support for youth. They also cited the lack of willingness to seriously respond to the delinquent behavior of youth from the dependency system as a major issue for their community. They believe that the lack of accountability sends a poor message to everyone. They also expressed concern about the lack of experience of some Probation Department staff who work with youth. When asked about the strengths of the system, they both referenced how the community responded recently to calls to close down the Juvenile Hall facility. The County had seriously considered this option until community members appeared at meetings to object. This indicates the level of community concern and support for the system.

Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJDP)

Commissioner Mel McKinney  
Commissioner John Azzaro

The JJDP is a state-mandated commission that exists in every county of California. The role of the JJDP includes the following:

- Oversee juvenile justice facilities in the county to ensure that juveniles residing at any county institution or publicly operated juvenile institution are treated fairly and are living in conditions that are safe and clean, and provide healthy food, support, and encouragement (this function of the Commission requires yearly inspections of such facilities)
- Support and encourage individuals, organizations, and institutions that further the work of providing effective, evidence-based practices to help youth stay out of the juvenile justice system
- Encourage coordination and integration of services where possible

- Enhance opportunities for youth success at school and in the community

According to the website of the Mendocino County Superior Court, the focus of their JJDPC in 2019 was as follows:

- Maintain focus on mentoring
- Perform inspections in a timely manner
- Recruit new Commissioners
- Work closely with Juvenile Probation, and continue to advocate for youth in whatever setting they find themselves.
- Support Teen Peer Court as a viable deterrent for juvenile crime
- Continue to support youth-led and youth-focused organizations
- Support efforts to curtail truancy and meet with the District Attorney regarding the School Attendance Review Board process.

Commissioner McKinney expressed his interest in having services offered in Mendocino County be trauma-informed and able to assist youth in their struggle to cope with past experiences. He said that the recent report on ACEs clearly demonstrates the need to improve services capable of addressing this issue. He was also very complimentary of Probation Department staff, commenting on their skill and dedication in their work with youth. Commissioner Azzaro said that there are few options for young people to engage in pro-social activities in the area. He indicated his belief that there are people who, if engaged, would be willing to support youth with help, jobs and mentoring. Mr. Azzaro suggested mounting a public campaign to raise awareness about the needs of youth in the juvenile justice system in the hopes of having more community members pitch in to provide support.

#### Mendocino County Social Services

Director Bekkie Emery

Ms. Emery oversees the County's Social Services Department which includes child welfare, employment, adult and aging, and fiscal services. Ms. Emery appreciates Chief Locatelli's willingness to partner with her agency, and she believes they will be able to work together in a cohesive way that will benefit youth and families. She acknowledged the Probation Department for its efforts to provide rehabilitative services and support to youth and families. She commended the Department's efforts in education, citing their efforts in the school which allows students to earn credits quickly and with the School Attendance Review Board (SARB). She also cited the Juvenile Hall facility as being an excellent resource for a rural county; families living in other jurisdictions that do not have their own juvenile hall face barriers to visiting their children once they are detained.

In terms of gaps, Ms. Emery would like to see more resources allocated to both prevention and treatment services. She said that the lack of resources is a challenge and that access to social media has created issues for both parents and service providers that we could not have

imagined only a short while ago. She expressed concern about how the juvenile justice system deals with youth from the dependency system when they violate the law. Ms. Emery hopes that Mendocino County will be able to find a way to hold youth accountable no matter what their legal status is.

Ukiah Unified School District

Director of Student Services Jason Iversen

Mr. Iversen expressed his appreciation for the efforts of both the Ukiah Police and Mendocino County Probation Departments to hire young, compassionate staff, some of whom have local ties. He said that their ability to create relationships with young people has been critical in reducing delinquency. He reflected on one serious incident of violent crime that was solved due to a young person's trusting relationship with an officer. Mr. Iversen also is positive about the new cadre of agency leaders who are young, bright and committed.

In terms of needs for Mendocino County's juvenile justice system, Mr. Iversen would like to see efforts made to deal with gangs, truancy and drug use. He described the history of gangs in the area, and the importance of intervening to stop young people from becoming involved. Although the gang activity is not as intense as it had been some 20 years ago, it is still concerning and he supports the use of the program "Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.)" to address it. He also reported that truancy is a major contributor to young people's delinquency and he wishes there were more efforts to combat that. He pointed out that once a child stops going to school, it is very difficult to get them back on track. While he understands the limitations facing the Probation Department due to budget reductions, he would like to see Deputy Probation Officers be able to be on campus more often in order to encourage school attendance. Finally, Mr. Iversen talked about the importance of addressing drug use in Mendocino County. This is particularly challenging in a rural county where the harvesting of marijuana is so common. Mr. Iversen expressed frustration with the belief espoused by some that marijuana use is not a major problem for young people. One by-product of the marijuana culture that exists in their community is that the use of methamphetamine increases during the trimming season, in order to boost a worker's capacity to work harvesting the plants. This is just one example of how pernicious the marijuana issue can be for Mendocino County youth.



## **Mendocino County Juvenile Justice Principles and Strategies**

The challenge facing the Mendocino County juvenile justice system is considerable. The significant needs of the youth and families who enter the system far exceed the scant resources available to address them. The most rational manner for the County's Probation Department to allocate resources is to first develop, and then apply, a set of principles and strategies in order to prioritize both how cases that appear are addressed and how funding shall be distributed. The core principles discussed below will ideally be applied every year, while the strategies and funding allocations will need to be revisited annually, depending on data trends and developments.

### **Principles**

#### *Balance community safety with addressing the best interests of children*

Section 202(a) of California's Welfare and Institutions Code describes the mandate of probation departments to ensure both the "protection and safety of the public" and the best interests of the children under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court. While this delicate balancing act can be daunting, particularly when resources are scarce, it needs to be a critical aspect of any deliberations or discussion of the disposition for a given case, and for funding programs and services.

#### *Utilize data to drive decision making*

Data-driven decision making is a second core principle that will be employed in the allocation of resources in the juvenile justice system. Opinions, beliefs, and biases, when unsupported by facts, statistics or data, cannot be the basis for determining how decisions are made.

#### *Employ evidence-based practices whenever possible*

Research on the effectiveness of interventions in juvenile justice is plentiful and irrefutable. The application of actuarial risk assessment instruments, reserving scarce resources to only high-risk youth, and employing targeted interventions with scientific evidence to demonstrate effectiveness are only a few of the most obvious examples. Failing to utilize this core principle would amount to a form of malpractice in the profession of juvenile justice.

### **Strategies**

#### *Increase options for a range of sanctions*

The use of graduated sanctions is a best practice in juvenile corrections and it assumes a continuum of options is available to respond to incidents of delinquency. It holds that, for example, secure detention is not always the best recourse, particularly for first-time offenders at low risk of re-offending and whose behavior does not represent a threat to public safety. Indeed, detaining such youth in a secure facility with more sophisticated, higher-risk peers, can actually increase the likelihood of recidivism. In addition, not all sanctions must be a form of

punishment; it may make sense to use a referral for treatment services as a response to a violation of some kind in lieu of detention. Consequences are necessary for a given violation, but that consequence does not necessarily have to be a punishment. Mendocino County shall ensure that alternatives are available when responding to a child's delinquency and that the response is proportional and appropriate for a given behavior.

*Ensure a full range of services available to address gang activity*

Gang activity in Mendocino County is sufficiently concerning that it requires the coordination of a variety of agencies and disciplines to address. The underlying causes for a child to consider participating in a gang are complex and variable; a system's response has to be multi-disciplinary in order to be successful. Activities must be performed at both the prevention and suppression ends of the spectrum. Mendocino County has a "Multi-Agency Gang Suppression Unit (MAGSU)" which is a collaborative effort of law enforcement agencies that respond to criminal behavior deemed to be gang-related. The County shall also provide prevention services to reduce the number of youth who are interested in becoming gang involved.

*Provide a continuum of treatment services, including trauma-informed approaches, to addressing issues such as mental illness and drug and alcohol use, in the community and restrict the referral of children outside of the County for treatment services to the bare minimum possible*

This report has clearly demonstrated the significant need for services that exists in Mendocino County. The juvenile justice system needs to have treatment services available for youth and families in order to address the root causes of delinquent behavior. These treatment services need to be coordinated, accessible, and effective. Given the higher than normal levels of trauma that youth in Mendocino County experience, it is important that such services be trauma-informed, and that the practitioners have a firm understanding and capacity for addressing behaviors that are the product of adverse childhood experiences. Given the limited options for out of home care, and the difficult transition that often comes with reunification of these youth, it is also critical that these services be made available near where the family resides whenever feasible.

## Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) Funding

The Mendocino County Probation Department is allocating its YOBG funds to the following programs:

Intervention/Service	Notes
Juvenile Hall Mental Health staff	This funding supports a .50 FTE Mental Health Counselor for residents of Juvenile Hall. The counselor provides treatment to help them change negative behaviors, and in turn, to not re-offend. These services are provided via a contract with a community-based organization (CBO), Mendocino County Youth Project.
Martial Arts	The Peaceful Warrior Aikido program will work with youth referred from the juvenile justice system who are in need of a pro-social activity. This program has experience working with youth who have experienced trauma and will provide them with coping skills to navigate challenges.
Drug and Alcohol Treatment	Funds from YOBG and/or CSOC support staff from the County's Substance Abuse Disorder Treatment unit (SUDT) to provide drug and alcohol treatment services to youth while they are detained in Juvenile Hall.
Electronic Monitoring (EM)	The Probation Department will use Electronic Monitoring as an evidence-based graduated sanction and/or detention alternative for a carefully selected group of youth identified by our evidence-based assessment tool as either: (1) high-risk-to-re-offend; (b) moderate-risk-to-re-offend; and (c) placement risk. The program will allow for the youth's placement in his or her home, if appropriate, or placement with a family member or foster home within their community. Thus, placement disruption will be minimal and continuity of care can be maintained. It will also be used as a court-ordered release condition.

Intervention/Service	Notes
Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT)	<p>The Probation Department implemented the PACT assessment in 2009-10. An assessment is completed at disposition for all probationers. During the first year of using the PACT, it became apparent that data collection and data entry related to the assessment is very time consuming and the Probation Officers were spending many hours on these tasks that would otherwise have been spent delivering direct services to juvenile probationers. This funding will be used to fund one .25 FTE Legal Secretary to assist with data collection, data entry, case plans, and other clerical assistance related to the assessment process, cost of Deputy Probation Officers to perform risk assessments, our annual license fee, support and training costs for the PACT assessment tool.</p>
Rachel Young, LMFT	<p>Rachel Young will provide anger management techniques by utilizing evidence-based practice centered skills and tools, as well as neuro-somatic reprogramming, in order to assist youth in gaining the necessary skills to reduce violence in their own lives. She will also provide important cultural services to indigenous youth.</p>
The Council for Boys and Young Men	<p>DPO staff will be trained and then deliver The Council, which is a strength-based group approach to promote healthy masculinity development for boys and young men ages 9-18 years old.</p>
Interactive Journaling	<p>This is an evidence-based practice that assists young people in the process of making lasting and positive changes in their lives. The Change Companies' program utilizes motivational interviewing, structured expressive writing and cognitive behavioral therapy in its approach.</p>



## Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) Funding

The Mendocino County Probation Department, with support from the JJCC, shall utilize the allocation of JJCPA funds in the following manner:

Intervention/Service	Notes
Supervised Probation Continuum of Services	<p>Youth placed on intensive supervision will be able to access a continuum of services which will include the following*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Behavioral Change Plan</li> <li>• Individual Cognitive Behavioral Therapy</li> <li>• Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT)<sup>22</sup></li> <li>• Journaling</li> <li>• Anger Management</li> <li>• Aftercare Services</li> </ul>
Youth Impact	<p>Youth Impact is a diversion program managed by the Probation Department that seeks to provide youth with an opportunity to consider their behavior and choices, to learn to set and achieve goals and to promote positive development. In addition to those components, there is a physical conditioning element of the program. In addition, Youth Impact participants will also take part in the MRT curriculum as part of their completing the program.</p>

\*these services will be available to youth while detained in Juvenile Hall. When those services are provided while a child is in custody, it will be funded through the YOBG rather than JJCPA grant

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<sup>22</sup> MRT is a cognitive-behavioral group process that is based on the theory that thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes are the primary determinants of behaviors. MRT is designed to “facilitate a change in the client’s process of conscious decision-making” and “enhance appropriate behavior through the development of higher moral reasoning.” Cognitive-behavioral approaches such as MRT have been determined through research to be one of the most effective interventions for youth who engage in delinquency.

Intervention/Service	Notes
<p style="text-align: center;">Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) is an evidence-based and effective gang and violence prevention program built around school-based, law enforcement officer-instructed classroom curricula. The Program is intended as an immunization against delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership for children in the years immediately before the prime ages for introduction into gangs and delinquent behavior.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Community-based Drug and Alcohol treatment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The grant will support two out-patient, community-based programs to address substance abuse. The Foundations Program provides early intervention services to youth with low-level drug and alcohol offenses and juvenile probationers with drug or alcohol-related probation violations. The Passages Program will provide treatment to youth on probation who have a dual diagnosis (mental health and substance abuse). This funding will allow schools to direct refer their students for services.</p>

This allocation of YOBG and JJCPA funds articulates the County’s overall principles and strategies as described in this report. It supports both the best interests of youth on probation by providing treatment services and public safety by ensuring adequate supervision of detained youth. It provides a range of consequences of possible responses to violations in which detention is a consideration (rather than simply the binary choice of detaining in a secure facility or not). It utilizes evidence-based practices by giving the Probation Department the capacity to conduct actuarial assessments of a child’s likelihood to re-offend (and thus the level of service and supervision they require). This combination of services and programs supported by the JJCPA and YOBG funding will complete the Mendocino County Probation Department’s vision of a robust, balanced, effective and compassionate juvenile justice system.