

2025-2026



COUNTY *of* **VENTURA**

Civil Grand Jury

Annual Inquiry of Detention Facilities

Part 2: JAIL FACILITIES

June 25, 2026



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SUMMARY

California Penal Code 919(b) mandates that the Civil Grand Jury “inquire into the condition of the public prisons within the county.” As a result of an opinion of the California Attorney General the term “public prisons” in the state penal code is interpreted to include “local detention facilities,” also referred to as jails, where persons are detained by law-enforcement agencies.

Civil Grand Jury jail visits are an important vehicle to obtain such information regarding the conditions under which our fellow citizens are confined. The 2025-2026 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury fulfilled its mandate by visiting all three county jails between January and February 2026.

During these visits, the Civil Grand Jury observed that these facilities were clean, well-managed and maintained. Personnel at each location were knowledgeable and welcoming, providing thorough explanations of policies and full access to all areas of the facilities.

METHODOLOGY

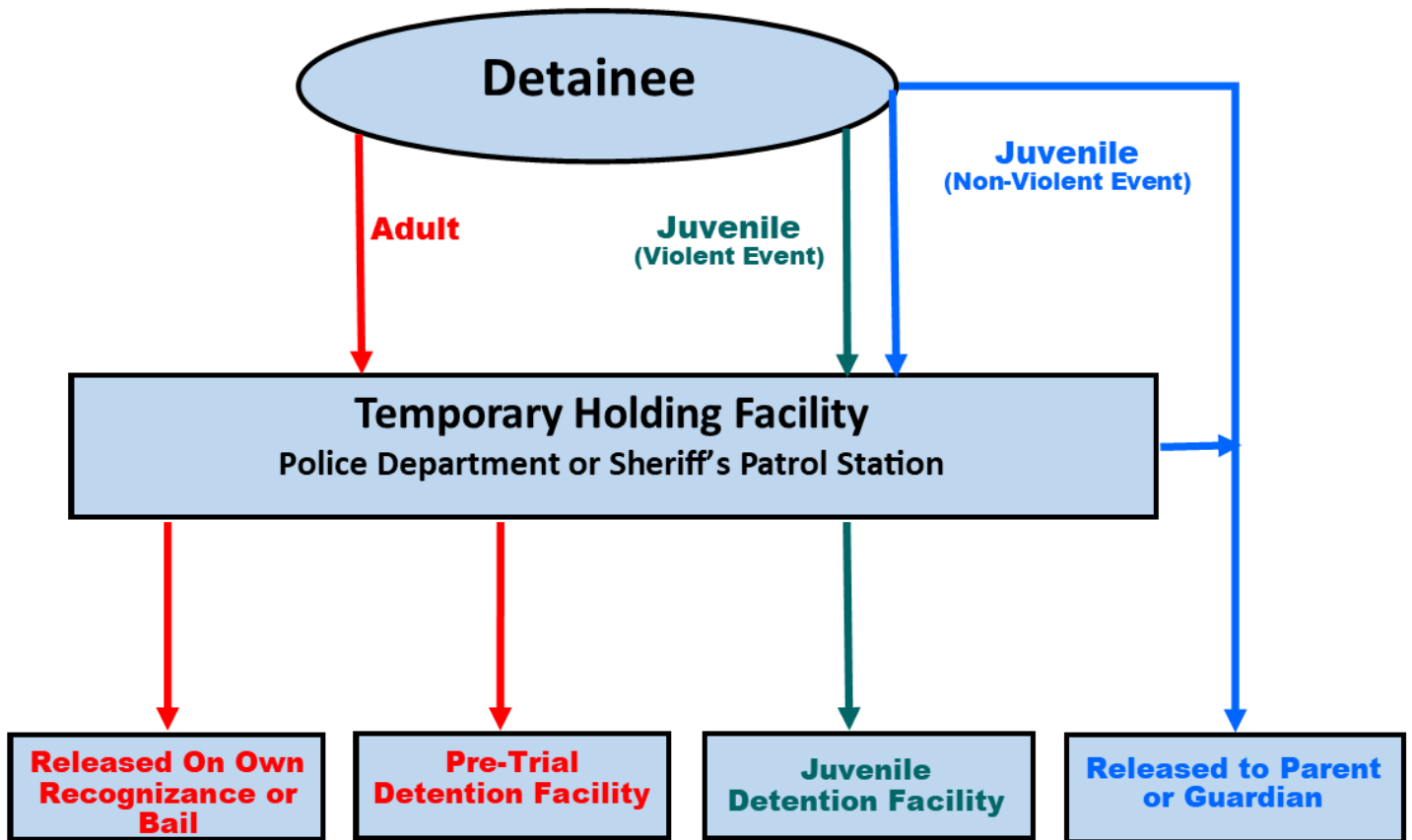
Prior to site visits the 2025-2026 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury reviewed policy manuals, logs, and other documentation, as well as inspection reports from state and local regulatory, fire, and health agencies.

The Civil Grand Jury scheduled inquiry visits at Pre-Trial Detention Facility (Main Jail), Todd Road Jail and the Juvenile Facilities (JF).

To ensure a thorough inquiry, jurors worked in focus groups to evaluate each facility's physical structure, building maintenance, staffing, and key operations, including health services, nutrition, grievances, and programming. In addition, they conducted voluntary interviews with select incarcerated individuals.

BACKGROUND

The diagram (Att-001) below featured in the “Annual Inquiry of the Detention Facilities (Temporary Holding Facilities)” section, of the 2025-2026 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury’s Final Consolidated Report, highlights the lawful detention process for individuals.



When adults are taken into custody, police or patrol officers transport them to a city police department or a Sheriff’s patrol station for initial processing and holding, which lasts 24 hours or less. For all but minor offenses, arrestees are then transferred to the Pre-Trial Detention Facility (Main Jail) at the Ventura County Government Center. There, they undergo complete processing which includes fingerprinting, photo, a comprehensive warrant check, full body search, health screening, and a search of their possessions.

Juveniles detained for a minor offense are normally detained in the field by the police or patrol officer and released to the custody of a parent or guardian. On occasion, when the parent or guardian cannot be located or cannot respond to the scene, juveniles are transported to a temporary holding facility, where they are supervised and detained until they can be released to a responsible adult or guardian. Juveniles detained for a serious offense are transported either to the temporary holding facility for pre-booking or directly to the Juvenile Justice Center in Oxnard for booking and further processing.

Booking Process – Adults

At the Temporary Holding Facilities, adults undergo pre-booking, which involves recording personal information, securing evidence and conducting criminal background checks. Following this, individuals are either released for a minor offense or, in most cases, transported to the Main Jail facility at the Ventura County Government Center.

Adults taken to the Main Jail will continue the booking process which include fingerprinting, photo, warrant search, full body search, health screening, search of possessions, classification, and housing placements, bail release is not granted or obtained.

Classification: Incarcerated individuals are classified to determine appropriate housing, ensuring the safety of staff and the incarcerated population. Because this designation is temporary, classification levels may change based on shifts in behavior or circumstances. Unsentenced and sentenced individuals are housed at both Main Jail and Todd Road Jail.

The classification process assesses various factors – including gender, criminal history, gang affiliation, security risk, and special needs – to effectively manage the facility. By identifying these factors, staff can properly allocate resources to ensure a safe environment. Individuals remain in temporary housing until this assessment is complete and they are moved to a regular housing unit.

Amnesty Boxes: To foster a safer environment, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) reinforces its commitment to humane detention (Pillar VI of VCSO's "Seven Pillars" mission statement) through a proactive amnesty initiative. By allowing detainees up to three chances to surrender contraband via designated boxes, the Main Jail reduces dangerous contraband, encourages compliance, and prioritizes safety over immediate punishment.

Body Scanner: Main Jail uses a low-dose stand-up X-ray body scanner which can detect contraband such as controlled substances and weapons. Staff noted the scanner is an improvement over using body cavity searches to achieve the same goal. The scanners are for safety and security screening and adhere to "As Low As Reasonably Achievable" (ALARA) standards.

Medical Screening: Prior to admission into Main Jail, all detainees are given a medical screening by a registered nurse. Detainees are asked medical questions, have vitals taken and are assessed for mental health. Two sobering cells are available, if needed, for 48-hour detox which utilizes biometric bands to monitor withdrawal and medical conditions. Medical evaluations are required within 24 hours of receiving a detainee.

Telephone Access: Detainees can make unlimited local calls to obtain a lawyer, contact family, a bail bondsman, and/or to notify other concerned individuals about their welfare.

Booking Release: Individuals are released from the Ventura County Jail — primarily Main Jail or Todd Road Jail—through posting bail (cash, bails bond, or credit card) or release on own recognizance, upon completing a sentence, or transfer to a different facility/program. Processing often takes six to 10 hours after bail is posted.

Booking Process – Juveniles

As shown in Att-001 above, juveniles detained for a minor offense are normally detained in the field by the police or patrol officer and released to the custody of a parent or guardian. On occasions when the parent or guardian cannot be located or cannot respond to the scene, juveniles are transported to a temporary holding facility, where they are always under adult supervision and detained until they can be released to a responsible adult or guardian.

Juveniles detained for a serious offense are transported directly to and are booked into Juvenile Hall following an arrest for serious offenses or probation violations, where they undergo a Detention Risk Assessment to determine if they remain in secure custody or are released. The process includes booking, evaluation, and, if detained, a court hearing within 48 to 72 hours (excluding weekends and holidays).

Key aspects of the booking process for juveniles are:

Assessment: The Ventura County Probation Agency (VCPA) assesses the juvenile to determine if a secure setting is required due to severe risk to the community, themselves, or the high likelihood of non-appearance in court, or if they can be released to a parent/guardian.

Rights and Procedures: If the juvenile is not immediately released, a detention hearing date in Juvenile Court is set within 48 to 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. The process begins when the probation department or district attorney files a petition outlining the allegations.

Telephone Access: Detainees can make unlimited local calls to family, an attorney, and/or to notify other concerned individuals about their welfare.

Intake: If detained, a Juvenile Intake probation officer is assigned to assess the minor, contact parents/guardians, and provide information on the court date. The juvenile is assigned to a housing unit.

Note, during the booking process, a low-dose, stand-up X-ray body scanner detects contraband such as weapons and controlled substances. Use is restricted to safety and security screening, adhering to ALARA standards.

Medical Screening: Within 24 hours, all juveniles meet with behavioral health and medical staff for risk assessment, safety planning, and needs assessment.

Uniforms: Commitment youth (including those in Secure Youth Treatment Facility) are issued a specific, different uniform — khaki pants and a burgundy polo — to distinguish them from those in temporary detention.

Detention Alternatives: As part of the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative, (a grant funded by the Anne E. Casey Foundation) some youth may be placed on home supervision or electronic monitoring.

Services: While in custody, detained juveniles may attend Providence School, run by the Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE).

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Booking Release:

- Release to Parents: If the child meets the criteria for release, parents will be contacted directly by the probation department.
- Timing: If a minor is not released by probation at intake, a detention hearing must occur within 48 to 72 hours (excluding weekends/holidays), where a judge decides on release.
- Pre-Hearing Release: Probation may set home supervision, which acts as a "house arrest" allowing the minor to stay at home under strict conditions, such as electronic monitoring.

Pre-Trial Detention Facility (Main Jail)



Entrance to the Pre-Trial Detention Facility (Main Jail) at the Ventura County Government Center. (Photo courtesy of Ventura County Sheriff Office)

Opened in 1979, the Pre-Trial Detention Facility (Main Jail) is one of two adult correctional facilities operated by VCSO. Its BSCC-rated capacity is 800 beds. Situated adjacent to the Hall of Justice building, the multi-level structure is a part of the larger Ventura County Government Center. Over time, the Main Jail has maximized its footprint by utilizing the rooftop to provide required exercise activities, specifically basketball and handball, in a safe and secure environment.

Recent California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) data from December 2025 shows the jail's average daily population is 623 adults. The demographics is predominately male (611) compared to females (12) and consists primarily of felony (84%) versus 16% misdemeanor arrests. Most of the Main Jail population are unsentenced adults (443) waiting court hearing.

The Main Jail was originally built as a short-term housing facility holding adults for up to one year. However, effective October 2011, the passage of California Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109), the Public Safety Realignment Act, changed the definition of a felony offense in California and shifted housing for lower-level offenders from state prisons to local jails.

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Furthermore, legislation mandated that the county jails take on greater responsibility for providing essential mental and medical services for its population

Facility and Staff Overview

Despite being an older building, the Civil Grand Jury found the Main Jail to be clean, organized and well managed. VCSO has maximized space to fulfill its responsibility in providing a secure and humane facility for incarcerated individuals. The Main Jail interior walls, paint, floors, drains, plumbing fixtures, air vents, and windows meet Title 24 building standards. Cleaning fluids are safely stored, hallways and egress are clear, marked, and doors are closed. Weapons lockers for sworn staff are present. The exterior grounds showed clear signs of being orderly and kept regularly maintained.

The cells for incarcerated individuals all have a sink and a toilet. Cleaning tools and products are available for incarcerated individuals to use and are considered safe and non-toxic. Beds are elevated off the floor, and two no-tear blankets are provided to prevent self-harm. The lighting and the ambient temperature are maintained to acceptable standards. The rooftop provides an outdoor exercise facility for physical activities.

The BSCC sets minimum standards for the construction and operation of local correctional facilities (jails and juvenile detention centers) in California. It inspects these facilities biennially to ensure compliance with Title 15 and Title 24 regulations. The BSCC authorizes the operation of local adult and juvenile detention facilities and conducts annual inspections based on state codes.

The Civil Grand Jury analyzed the latest BSCC reports for all Ventura County's jail facilities. The only outstanding deficiency from the 2025-2026 BCSS inspection, highlighted below (Att – 002) is for the Main Jail roof exercise area. The Civil Grand Jury reviewed the corrective action with the Assistant Sheriff, and he affirmed that VCSO Detention Services Division practice remains providing drinking water on the roof and escorting incarcerated individuals to use the bathroom on a lower floor.

Pre-Trial Detention Facility (Main Jail)	
Section/Violation	Corrective Action
§1231.2.10 Exercise Area and §1231.3.1, 1231.3.2, 1231.3.3 re Toilets/Urinals, Wash Basins & Drinking Fountains Facility is out of compliance as these enclosures do not allow free access to toilets, wash basins, and drinking fountains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BSCC regulation was established after building was built; staff will continue to look for best practices for possible solutions to adapt building and BSCC will provide technical support regarding possible options.• When anyone needs to use the bathroom, they are escorted from the secure exercise yard to the rooftop bathroom, and back to the exercise yard.

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At the Main Jail incarcerated individuals are issued a tablet for educational classes, email access, and supervised.

The jail employs over 212 sworn officers and non-sworn support staff. The jail's staff includes deputies, senior deputies, sergeants, captains and commanders, sheriff's service technicians (SSTs), and civilian personnel.

Health Services

Health services include medical, dental, behavioral and mental health care, as well as rehabilitative and restorative justice programs.

An incarcerated Individual shall be considered in behavioral crisis if they appear to be a danger to themselves or others or appear gravely disabled. An evaluation from medical or mental health staff shall be secured within 24 hours of identification.

There is a registered nurse on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year; a physician, nurse practitioner, and licensed vocational nurse are available as needed. Incarcerated individuals fill out a "blue kyte" form to request medical care. Forms are picked up once per day and assessed by a registered nurse. Issues are treated in order of severity.

Incarcerated patients are treated on-site if possible. There is no infirmary at the Main Jail. Patients who are too sick to recover from their cell are taken to Todd Road Jail's medical facility or to the hospital. There is an emergency button in each housing quad. Medication is dispensed in the housing area three times per day by a registered nurse.

Nutrition and Food

Three hot meals are served every day. Two snacks are also provided after lunch service and two hours after dinner service. A sack lunch is provided for those who may have missed a meal for possible reasons like a court proceeding, doctor/dentist appointment, attorney visit, or other scheduled requirements deemed by the court. Title 15 allows a minimum of 15 minutes to consume each meal, but VCSO allows a minimum of 30-plus minutes. Everyone is provided with the same meal unless an incarcerated individual needs a special diet. Meals are served in the holding pods.

Using the National Institutes of Health's Guidelines of Recommended Caloric Intake and Protein Consumption, a dietician/nutritionist plans meals for the facility one month in advance. There are approximately 60 different diet plans available; special diets are planned for incarcerated individuals with health conditions such as diabetes, pregnancy, low blood cell counts, religious meal restrictions, etc. At the time of the Civil Grand Jury visit, there were a total of 193 incarcerated individuals with special diet restrictions.

The kitchen area is clean, organized and stocked with necessary equipment. Kitchen staff is a combination of non-sworn, county employees and incarcerated individuals. All kitchen staff are trained and have necessary medical clearance. Under deputy supervision, incarcerated individuals work as volunteers without pay following instructions given by non-sworn cooking staff.

Programs

Incarcerated individuals are permitted seven hours of recreation and three hours of exercise per week, featuring options such as basketball, handball, static machines, card games, and television. The Civil Grand Jury saw incarcerated individuals exercising either outdoors on the secured roof top area or indoors in designated areas with static machines. Since this is a transitional facility, most exercise programs are limited.

Grievances

A grievance is a written complaint regarding an incarcerated individual's treatment while in custody. It can be a complaint about custody or medical treatment, used to question a policy, rule, procedure or to appeal an incarcerated individual's classification or disciplinary finding.

Grievances cannot be about their court case; a challenge to a conviction or sentencing, formally called a "Writ of Habeas Corpus," is the legal petition from an incarcerated person presented to the judges in criminal case courts. To obtain the necessary papers to file a writ, the incarcerated person submits a complaint form to Inmate Services.

All incarcerated individuals have access to a written grievance process. Forms are available throughout the jail or upon request, with a 24-hour acknowledgment turnaround. To improve efficiency, VCSO is considering a new jail management system to enhance the grievance system by transitioning to a digital, tablet-based platform. This new initiative will streamline the submission process, complementing the existing, accessible written grievance process and guarantee acknowledgment within 24 hours or sooner.

Interviews

Two Civil Grand Jurors interviewed an incarcerated man and woman, who agreed to answer questions. A jail guard was present for both interviews and it did not appear to hinder their answers.

The man said access to medical and dental services was easily available and confirmed that religious services based on faith were offered. He said the guidelines for behavior are provided to everyone.

The female didn't speak English, but a translator was present. She said the guards in the main jail allowed her to speak to them in Spanish, but some conversations were lost in translation. The jurors' overall impression was that the female was treated well and had her needs met.

The two individuals interviewed felt the rules and regulations at Main Jail were clear. The grievance procedure was clear with blue forms for medical and white forms for others. Both individuals had tablets for email and monitored entertainment as well as use for educational classes.

Todd Road Jail



The Todd Road Jail in Santa Paula. (Photo courtesy of Ventura County Sheriff Office)

Todd Road Jail is the second jail facility operated by VCSO. The facility, located in Santa Paula, opened in 1995 and sits on approximately 115 acres with the jail facility occupying about five acres. The grounds around the jail are primarily agricultural and feature a large orchard of citrus fruit trees.

After over a decade of planning, obtaining a \$55 million state grant, construction, and interruption due to the pandemic, Todd Road Jail expanded on its five acres with the newer Health and Programming Unit (HPU) hospital building facility (64 beds) in 2023 at a total cost of \$61 million.

This is now the main medical facility for all incarcerated people at both Main Jail and Todd Road Jail. In 2024, VCSO, in partnership with Wellpath to operate the medical facility, earned accreditation from the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) confirming that the facility meets rigorous standards for health services in jails. Wellpath provides medical support staff of 92 full-time and 53 part-time (per diem).

Todd Road Jail has a BSCC-rated capacity of 796 beds. Recent BSCC data from December 2025 shows the jail's average daily population was total 586 adults. The demographics is predominately male (446) compared to females (140). Todd Road Jail houses primarily adjudicated individuals. Like the Main Jail, most of the population at Todd Road are unsentenced adults (423) pending court scheduling, hearing and adjudication.

Facility and Staff

When the Civil Grand Jury visited Todd Road Jail it found the buildings are of recent construction, and appear to be in good physical condition, well painted, and maintained. There are adequate parking spaces for visitors, with good signage directing visitors to the jail entrance, which has a pleasant and informative lobby. The signage, and postings outside the visitor entrance area are in English and Spanish.

The interior walls were clean and painted with no visible peeling except for roof support beams in C Wing, Unit 5. Floors and walls were otherwise well maintained and clean. The Civil Grand Jury observed plumbing fixtures appeared to be working. Weapons lockers were located throughout the facility for sworn personnel.

The facility has climate-controlled heating and cooling and the climate in all areas the Civil Grand Jury visited felt comfortable. A building operations engineer confirmed that the interior temperature was maintained between 68 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit.

Cells for the incarcerated individuals all have a sink and a toilet. Cleaning tools and products are available for incarcerated individuals to use and are considered safe and non-toxic. Beds are either raised on solid platforms or concrete shelves; two no-tear blankets are provided. Lighting in the cells is adequate for reading and other tasks.

A full service industrial-sized laundry supports daily operations for incarcerated individuals' clothing and linens within the VCSO's detention system, which includes Todd Road, the Main Jail, the East County Jail, and Work Furlough program with volunteer incarcerated individuals working in the laundry facility.

Each incarcerated individual is issued clean shirt, pants, undergarments, socks and footwear, a mattress, two blankets, and a towel. Incarcerated individuals can change dirty clothing and bedding on a regular basis.

Todd Road Jail houses Inmate Services Department which provides programs for incarcerated individuals held at all jail facilities. Programs include academic and vocational training, substance use disorder services, additional recovery programs, re-entry planning and spiritual services. All the programs of Inmate Services are geared toward reducing recidivism and supporting rehabilitation for reintegration into the community.

The jail employs over 185 sworn officers and non-sworn support staff. Given the occupational high stress level at Main Jail and Todd Road Jail, VCSO has proactively taken steps to address the mental health of staff at both jails. VCSO is contracted with Counseling Team International, a specialized mental health care provider serving public safety agency personnel and their families.

Health Services - Health Programming Unit

Todd Road Jail Health and Programming Unit (HPU) opened in 2023, has 124 beds and offers services for psychiatric patients, jail-based competency, medical issues, mental crises, and hospital type care. All the incarcerated individuals are assessed upon entering and leaving the HPU by a registered nurse.

The HPU is the primary medical facility for both Todd Road Jail and the Main Jail. The HPU meets California State standards as a hospital, has medical doctors, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and licensed vocational nurses available daily and on call at night. Registered nurses also staff the facility 24 hours a day.

The clinic provides daily medical exams, dental exams two times per week, daily dialysis, tattoo removal and optometry once per week, along with X-rays and ultrasound imaging. Well-woman exams are available once monthly. Detainees who need more complex medical care such as chemotherapy, advanced imaging, or surgery can be transported to a specialist or hospital. Transport to an outside dentist is also available, at the incarcerated individual's own expense.

There is a safety cell for anyone who is actively trying to hurt himself or herself. The cell has spongy surfaces on the floors and walls to limit self-harm. Safety cells are checked at least once every 15 minutes and there is a 1:1 nursing staff to patient ratio.

Mellow Time

K-9 Mellow, a black Labrador, is assigned to the Therapeutic Inmate Management Unit. (TIMU) The unit offers mental health support for incarcerated patients with psychiatric disorders.



(Photo courtesy of VCSO)

TODD ROAD'S HPU PROGRAMS

These programs offered at Todd Road's Health and Programming Unit are designed to enhance an incarcerated individual's ability to successfully re-enter into society:

The Therapeutic Inmate Management Unit is a specialized unit that focuses on treatment of incarcerated individuals with serious mental illness. The unit aims to provide a consistent level of supervision and human interaction among psychiatric incarcerated individuals, fostering a humane and supportive environment. Individual therapies also foster emotional support.

The Early Assess Stabilization Services offers psychiatric stabilization and restoration services to promote stabilization and tailor treatment before an individual is admitted to a Jail Based Competency Treatment program.

Jail Based Competency Treatment (JBCT) is a primary function of the HPU. It is designed to restore incarcerated individuals to a competency level to stand trial. The program is approximately 60 days long and emphasizes classroom instruction on court procedures and socialization.

Nutrition and Food

Todd Road Jail has a 10,000-square-foot kitchen that includes a bakery. The kitchen serves the current population of 650 incarcerated individuals and prepares over 3,900 meals daily. The jail follows Title 15 Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities, Sections 1220-1264.

Three hot meals are served every day. Two snacks are also provided between lunch service and two hours after dinner service. A sack lunch is provided for those who may have missed a meal. Title 15 allows a minimum of 15 minutes to consume each meal; this facility allows 30-plus minutes. Everyone is provided with the same meal unless an incarcerated individual needs a special diet. Meals are served in the holding pods.

Todd Road Jail's warehouse handles deliveries and stores food and supplies for both county jails. The commissary section handles all transactions associated with the delivery of sundries and hygiene items at both jails.

The Civil Grand Jury found the kitchen area clean, organized and stocked with necessary equipment. Kitchen staff is a combination of non-sworn, county employees and incarcerated individuals. All kitchen staff are trained and have necessary medical clearance. Under deputy supervision, incarcerated individuals work as volunteers. Though these volunteers are not monetarily compensated, they are given a few added perks including extra food, a daily change of clothes rather than weekly, and opportunity to be productive outside their cells.

Programs

Because this is a long-term facility, a wide range of educational programs are available to the incarcerated population at Todd Road Jail:

Computer programming: Introduction courses in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint

Online GED: Including classes for English Language Learners (ESL)

Vocational: Training videos in landscaping, including care and maintenance

Custodial training: With a certificate of completion available from the Cleaning Management Institute

Food services: Certification available for learning basic food safety, preparation and serving. A second course in food history, essentials and nutrition is a prerequisite for obtaining work in restaurants, hotels and catering.

Re-entry programs: Resume writing and job Interview techniques are taught, along with the basics of team building, goal setting and making personal action plans.

Atlas Digital Program: This is a new feature that is available on the incarcerated individual's tablet to help teach personal goals. Interactive classes cover substance abuse, health education, and anger management.

College Coursework: College coursework is available exclusively online.

What's for Dinner?

Three hot meals: A dietician/nutritionist plans meals that provide between 2,200 to 2,400 calories per day.

In addition to regular meals, snacks are provided between lunch and dinner, and two hours after dinner service. A sack lunch is provided for those who may have missed a meal.

Meal evaluation: Following the jail tour, several jurors remained to sample the day's standard dinner menu. The meal consisted of a small beef burrito, rice, beans, a side salad, and a piece of cake. Beverage options were limited to water and reconstituted powdered milk.

Grievances

See previous discussion about the grievance process under Main Jail subsection above.

Interviews

Two Civil Grand Jurors interviewed an incarcerated man and woman, who agreed to answer questions. A jail guard was present for both interviews, which did not appear to hinder their answers.

Both individuals worked in the food prep and laundry services. Comments from each person indicated they were treated fairly and equally.

Juvenile Facility



Ventura County's Juvenile Facility is part of the Juvenile Justice Center in Oxnard. (Photo courtesy of Ventura County Probation Agency)

The Juvenile Justice Center complex consists of a six-courtroom juvenile courthouse and the county's single secure detention and commitment facility for juveniles known as the Juvenile Facility (JF). Opening in 2003, after almost eight years of planning and construction, the \$65-million complex was funded in part by a \$40.5-million state grant. It replaced a 1940 detention-only facility built to house 84 youths, but which regularly housed 120 to 130 youths.

Operated and maintained by Ventura County Probation Agency (VCPA), the JF has a total housing capacity for 420 male and female youths ages 12 to 18. This includes capacity for up to 180 adjudicated resident youths ages (i.e., commitment component capacity) and 240 additional short-term resident youths who are waiting for a court hearing or placement (i.e., detention component capacity).

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At the end of 2025, there were 89 committed youths (60 males and 29 females) at the JF. Five of these males are classified as Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) youth. These individuals have been adjudicated for a serious or violent offense. Their cases, prior to the closure of the state-run juvenile correctional camps like Ventura Youth Correctional Facility in Camarillo, would have been eligible for commitment to the state Division of Juvenile Justice.

SYTF was created by California Senate Bills 823 (2020) and SB 92 (2021), which closed the state Division of Juvenile Justice. These and subsequent regulations shifted responsibilities for high-need youths from the state to counties to establish secure placement for youths aged 14 and older up until age 21, 23 or 25 that emphasized rehabilitation, treatment, and community safety over incarceration.

Facilities and Staff Overview

The Civil Grand Jury found the facility to be clean, quiet and undergoing renovations. Staff showed enthusiasm about these improvements and pride in their work, while showing concern for the safety and well-being of young people in their custody.

The facility is well maintained, and the layout of buildings gives the impression that you are on a high school campus. There is a well-equipped music studio with separate rehearsal spaces as well as a new indoor basketball facility and rooms with tools to learn how to build things like dog houses and planter boxes. The Civil Grand Jury saw the youths' finished projects throughout the facility.

Residence cells are single occupancy, small and basic. Other than sleeping, youths spend about two hours per day in their cell with the rest of the day spent in engaged activities. Residence cells are located within a residential wing, and each wing has a common area in which to gather. One residential wing is nearing completion of a remodel.

In addition to the housing components, the facility includes outdoor recreation areas, a multipurpose gymnasium/technology training center, a visiting center, medical offices and examination rooms, an intake/community, confinement/booking area, classrooms, program and facility administration offices, kitchen and laundry services. The staff has locker rooms with showers, as well as a dining room.

Outside, there is an adjacent parcel being transitioned into a multi-acre gardening/horticulture site. A newly dedicated library space recently opened.

As of the date of the Civil Grand Jury's visit in 2026, the facility had 91 probation officers and support staff positions, with 81 filled. In addition to operating the JF, VCPA oversees probation services for

approximately 4,000 adults and 800 youths. The VCPA staff do a variety of assessments (vocational, educational, etc.) and prioritize high risk cases. The focus is on rehabilitation and accountability.

During management interviews the Civil Grand Jury learned that new hires for the VCPA complete the 168 to 225 hours of mandated entry-level probation officer training within the first year of employment. The training and certification are overseen by the BSCC and the Standards and Training for Corrections (STC). Also, VCPA has recently implemented a new course for officer training to detect and avoid juvenile manipulation to supplement the training.

Health Services

The medical facility was clean and functional. There were two private exam rooms, along with a fully equipped dental exam room. There were no infirmary beds. Youth convalesce in their assigned sleeping rooms.

The facility has a registered nurse onsite 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There is a medical director who is always on call, and present about 20 hours per week. There is also a nurse practitioner who is present throughout the week. Additionally, there is a dentist on site two times per week. There was no indication that staffing was insufficient.

Every youth resident is given a health screening upon arrival. The medical facility provides comprehensive care, and it is equipped to use outside resources as needed. On an ongoing basis, the medical facility offers exams, X-rays, minor procedures, vaccines, and tattoo removal. Medication is dispensed in the housing areas by a registered nurse with the assistance of probation department staff.

The facility maintains a medical transport team in the event outside medical services, including hospitalization, are needed. Youth are transported to orthopedic clinics, OB clinics, and other specialists as needed. They are always accompanied by transport team staff, including 24-hour monitoring during hospital stays. The medical facility will call 911 if needed, and transport staff will accompany the youth.

Nutrition and Food

The Civil Grand Jury's inquiry visit happened between lunch and dinner, so very little food prep activity was going on. The food area was clean and free of debris and clutter. The Civil Grand Jury saw the food service employees had proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and attire. No youth are allowed to work in the food prep area due to security concerns.

A dietician/nutritionist plans meals one month in advance. The focus of attention is the amount of protein provided in daily consumption, a daily minimum of 42 grams per Title 15. This facility strives to provide 60 grams of protein each day. Supplemental food and special diets are available upon special request for religious, diabetic, pregnancy, etc. In addition, a high concentration of dairy products is available for pregnant incarcerated individuals. Currently, no pregnant female youth resides in the facility.

Three meals are served in a 24-hour period (8 AM, Noon, and 5 PM). Per Title 15, the minimum standard is to have one of these meals to be a hot meal, however, this facility serves two to three hot meals in a 24-hour period. Additionally, the standard is a minimum of 15 minutes to consume each meal, however, this facility allows 30 minutes for meals. All youth eat at the same time within their holding pod.

A sack meal is provided for those youth who miss the normal distribution of meals. In addition, the facility provides snacks three times a day (10 AM, 2 PM and 7 PM). Youth can also purchase food items from the commissary or through a merit-based points system.

Programs

A wide range of programs is available, from interactive mental health, life skills, growth and development programs to re-entry support, individual and group therapy programming, religious services and daily recreation.

Youth are enrolled in school and have access to Chromebooks during class. High school education is through Providence School, operating under the Ventura County Office of Education, and complies with California Department of Education (CDE) requirements. Coursework leading to associate in arts degrees is also available through Oxnard College. A Boys & Girls Club is chaptered inside the facility. There's a construction trade program, equine therapy, screen printing and other training opportunities.

The Civil Grand Jury saw several occupational learning spaces and a well-equipped music studio with separate rehearsal spaces. Programming and activities are constantly evolving.

Interviews

Two Civil Grand Jurors interviewed a male and female youth in a secure interview room with a glass partition and a push-button intercom. There were technical difficulties communicating with both youth through the intercom, so the interview was difficult to complete.

Both youths indicated they participate in educational training five days a week and physical or outside activities about one hour per day. The male youth indicated he is also taking advantage of educational offerings and activities by taking an art class and participating in a class that covers gang violence and the psychology behind it. Both youths indicated the juvenile correction counselors are "pretty nice."

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GLOSSARY

AB 109	State Assembly Bill 109 (Public Safety Realignment Act)
Adjudicated	When a judicial authority has made a formal decision or judgment on a case. This term often replaces “sentenced” to provide more person-first, humane language.
ALARA	As low as reasonably achievable
Blue kyte forms	Forms used by incarcerated individuals for filing grievances and requesting medical services
BSCC	Board of State and Community Corrections
CDE	California Department of Education
Committed	Refers to youths housed at the Juvenile Facility who have been adjudicated and are serving a commitment or the equivalent of a sentence in adult court
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	General Education Development Test
HPU	Health and Programming Unit
Incarcerated Individual	An incarcerated individual is a person confined against their will in a correctional facility—such as a prison, jail, or juvenile detention center—typically due to a criminal conviction, pending charges, or a court-ordered sentence. This term often replaces “inmate” to provide more person-first, humane language.
JBCT	Jail Based Competency Treatment
JF	Juvenile Facility
Main Jail	Pre-Trial Detention Facility
NCCHC	National Commission on Correction Health Care
OB	Obstetrics, a medical specialty for pregnant and post-partum women
PPE	Personal protection equipment
Recidivism	Tendency of an incarcerated individual to relapse into criminal behavior, resulting in rearrest or return to incarceration after release
SB 823	
SB 92	Senate Bills 823 and 92 established the legal framework for Secure Youth Treatment Facilities in California and facilitated the closure of the state’s Division of Juvenile Justice by June 30, 2023.
STC	Standards and Training for Corrections
SST	Sheriff Service Technician
SYTF	Secure Youth Treatment Facility
TIMU	Therapeutic Inmate Management Unit
Title 15	California Code of Regulations – Title 15 Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities (operation standards)
Title 24	California Code of Regulations – Title 24 Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities (building standards)
VCPA	Ventura County Probation Agency
VCSO	Ventura County Sheriff’s Office