

County of Santa Clara

Probation Department

Juvenile Division
840 Guadalupe Parkway
San Jose, California 95110

Administrative Offices
840 Guadalupe Parkway
San Jose, California 95110



Laura Garnette
Chief Probation Officer

DATE: November 17, 2020

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

FROM: Laura Garnette, Chief Probation Officer,

SUBJECT: Off-agenda report under advisement from August 17, 2020 (Item No. 5):
Receive report from the Office of the County Executive, the Office of the Sheriff, and the Probation Department relating to “civilianization” for the Sheriff’s Office and reducing institutional costs for County adult and juvenile criminal justice facilities.

After careful analysis and consideration, the Probation Department has identified two areas where there may be potential to increase use of non-sworn staff and decrease use of sworn staff.

First, there has been considerable illumination, and strong advocacy, related to best practices of providing service intervention to younger youth and youth who have committed low level, non-violent offenses. Serving these youth outside of the traditional justice system, is the first area of exploration for civilianization of Probation staff and includes how to increase the use of community-based alternatives to serve these youth. The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Unit that has traditionally served these youth has seen a decrease in the number of referrals to the department for youth due to various state law changes and the current COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the department has observed similar trends throughout the state, including the creation of Office of Youth Diversion and Development operated through the Department of Health Services in Los Angeles County. Prevention and early intervention is an area where we may be able to civilianize over the coming months and years and shift even more resources and services into the community, or in providing support to youth and families in partnership with other county agencies or departments.

The second area is tied to attrition in the Juvenile Hall. The department recognizes that the census within Juvenile Hall has fallen precipitously over the last few years and has reached an all-time low during the COVID-19 pandemic. As employees within the Probation Department avail themselves of the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP), otherwise separate from the County, or transfer or promote to other County positions, the department can absorb deletions of Group Counselor codes within the Juvenile Hall. Historically, approximately 85% of hires into the Deputy Probation Officer series are from the juvenile institutions. These codes could be deleted through attrition as they are vacated. The Department is hoping to limit the deletion of Probation Officer codes as they become vacated through VSIP due to the extensive work that has been accomplished to align caseloads and supervise adult probationers to best practice dosage standards.

Additionally, the Probation Department has increased the number of non-sworn positions throughout the department over the last several years including increases in the Research and Development Unit, Neighborhood Safety Unit, and administrative units. These staff perform some duties that may have been provided by sworn staff in the past, including providing program development and direct services, respectively.

BACKGROUND

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 20, 2020 (Item No. 28), the Board reviewed the response from the Probation Department related to the civilianization of the Probation Department institutional facilities and directed the Probation Department to report back with further information.

At the Public Safety and Justice Committee (PSJC) on October 1, 2020 (Item No. 6), the Committee reviewed a report on civilianization for the Sheriff's Office and the institutional costs in the adult and juvenile facilities. The report is included below. Supervisor Ellenberg requested that the Sheriff's Office and Probation Department provide their own analysis and recommendations for positions that could be civilianized in advance of the Staffing Study results that will be available in early 2021. During the PSJC meeting, the Sheriff's Office and Probation Department committed to reviewing this request and advising.

Cc:

Chief Board Aides

Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer

James Williams, County Counsel

Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board

Nam Thi, OBA Analyst

Mary Ann Barrous, County Agenda Review Administrator