
CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Administration of Justice Policy Committee

MAY 20, 2026

Juvenile Justice at a Crossroads: Navigating Reform in Post-DJJ California

JUVENILE JUSTICE CONTINUUM



Prevention/ Diversion

Provide a network of referrals and direct services to assist youth and families with limited involvement of probation.



Formal Supervision

Support youth in the community through supervision and direct services by probation and/or referrals to NGOs.



Foster Care

Support youth ordered into foster care by the court identifying appropriate placements to address needs and participate in family engagement to support reunification and/or permanency plans.



Secure Juvenile Facilities

Responsible for operating secure juvenile facilities for youth and young adults, ensuring compliance with BSCC Title 15 Juvenile Facility Regulations facilities.



Reentry

Guide youth and young adults to successful transition onto probation supervision post commitment terms in secure settings, providing and/or referring to services and treatment and supervising compliance with court orders to prevent future victims and safe communities.,

STATE AND LOCAL ENTITIES INVOLVED IN JUVENILE JUSTICE

Board of State and Community Corrections

OYCR OMBUDSPERSON

Department of Social Services

JJCC SB 823

Local Public Health

Subcommittee

Grand Juries

Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils

State Fire Marshall

Office of Youth and Community Restoration

Department Of Health

Juvenile Justice Commissions

Care Services

Judicial Council of California

2000
19,000 youth
in detention.

2000
Probation supported
Schiff-Cardenas
Crime Prevention
Act signed by
Governor;
Challenge
Grants begin

*State begins
investment in
Probation, leading
to development
services for youth.*

*Probation
targets services
to high-risk youth,
diverting low-risk
youth and
referring them
to interventions
tailored to
their needs.*

2006
Probation
begins Risk
Needs
Responsivity
principles

*Probation
implements
programs to
keep youth
closer to
families while
providing and
connecting
youth to services.*

2007
Juvenile Justice
Realignment
signed with
Probation
support

*Probation
implements
educational,
rehabilitation,
job training,
and other
social service
programs,
and continues
evidence-based
programming
and wrap-around
services for youth.*

2008
Probation
adopts a new
evidence-based
approach for
juveniles

*About 8,000
youth in
juvenile
detention or
camps. More
youth receive
treatment and
supervision
in the
community.*

2012
Probation
increases use
of validated
assessments
and careful
detention
screening
leading to
significant
reductions
in juvenile
detention

*Juvenile felony
arrest rates
down 73%.
Probation
continues
individualized
assessments,
needs-based
case planning,
evidence-based
programming,
and wrap-around
services for youth.*

2016
CPOC
supports
Prop 57
ending direct
filing of
juveniles to
adult court

*Probation
implements
CCR and
works to
find familial
and STRTP
placements
for all
high-needs
youth.*

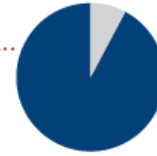
2016
The Continuum
of Care Reform
(CCR) (SB 403)
eliminates
group homes
and creates
short-term
residential
treatment
programs
requiring all
to provide
mental health
treatment

*DJJ
permanently
closed in 2023,
approximately
250 youths
returned to
California
counties.*

2021
SB 823 begins
closure of Division
of Juvenile Justice;
realigns entire
juvenile justice
continuum to
county probation
departments

2023
Juvenile
Detention
at just over
2,877 youth.

2023
Nearly 90%
of youth served in the community.



Probation's Role in the Evolution of Juvenile Justice

How Probation Helped Change a Failing System



Chief Probation Officers of California

SOLANO'S SUCCESS A THOUGHTFUL AND DELIBERATE EFFORT

Data

- Social Climate Scales (2016)
- Uniform Incident Tracking (2018)
- Staffing Needs Analysis (2019)
- JJRBG Data Project (2024)

Staff Training & Development

- Intro to EBP & RNR (2016)
- In-House Instructor Development (2017)
- Foundational Training (2017)
- New Employee Training Program (2018)
- BMS & CBT 2.0 (2019)
- Social Services Worker added (2023)


Policy & Practice

- Updated Booking Criteria (2016)
- Dedicated Programming staff (2018)
- Detention Screening Tool (2018)
- Complete Policy Rewrite ACA influenced (2018)
- Dedicated Program Staff (2019)
- Behavior Management System (2019)
- Body Scanners (2025)

EBP

- Motivational Interviewing & RNR (2016)
- Introduction of Restorative Justice (2017)
- Mentorship Prog. (2019)
- Multi-Disciplinary Team (2019)
- 40 Developmental Assets (2021)
- Family Engagement & Trauma Curriculum (2024)

THEN CAME A POST DJJ WORLD



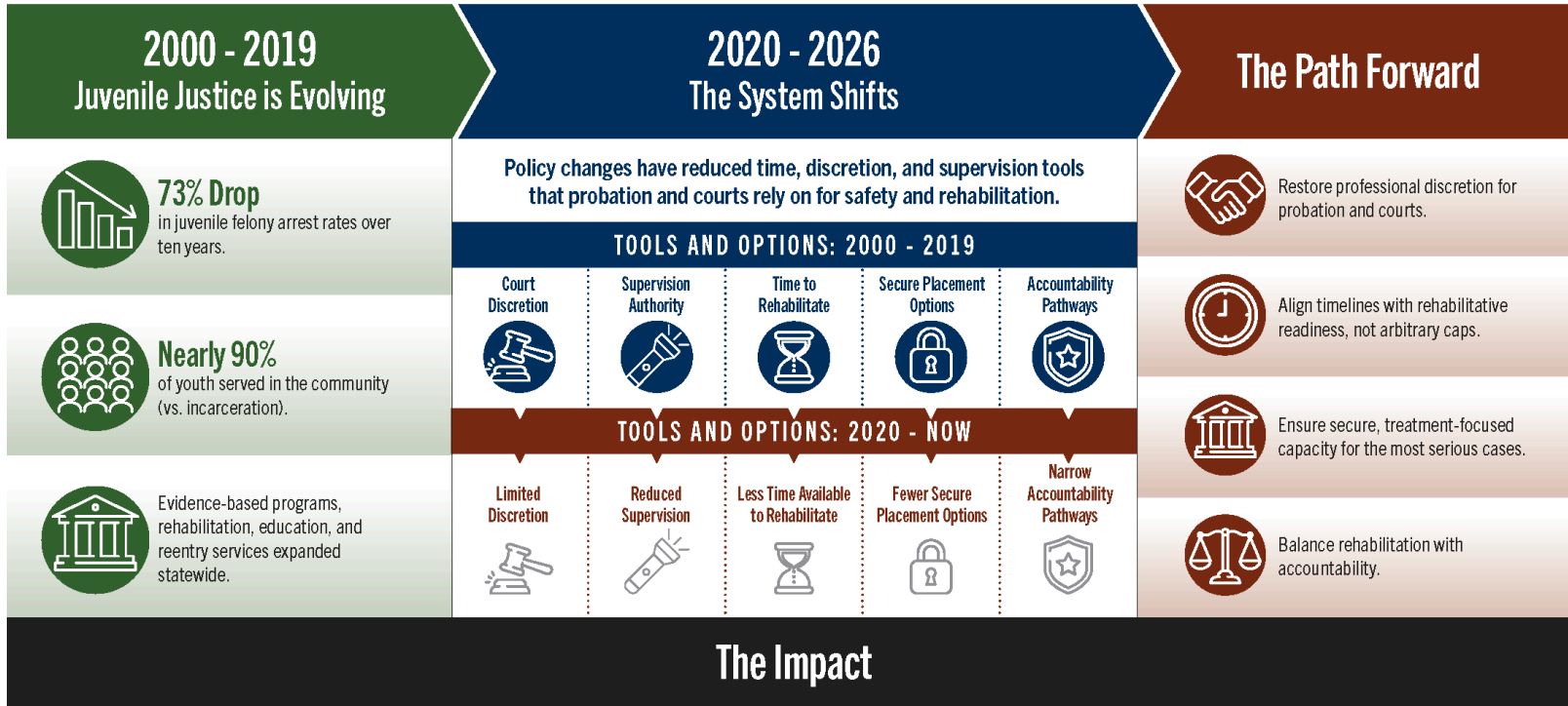
Elimination
of the State's
only long-
term secure
option

Legislative
Changes Have
Weakened
Accountability

Long term
Declines in
Detention &
Crime Rates
Reversing

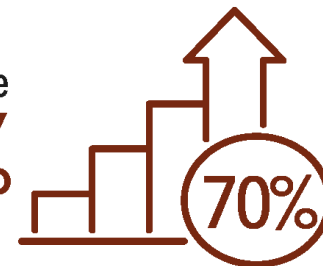
Increase in
State
Bureaucracy

After decades of progress on juvenile justice, recent policy changes have reduced the time, discretion, and tools that got us there.



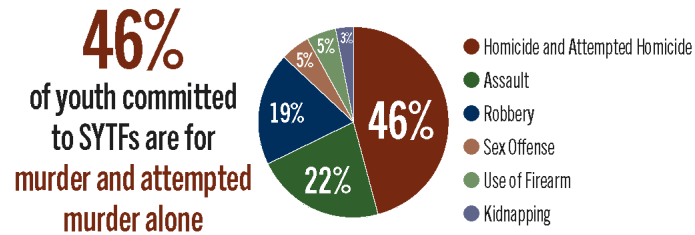
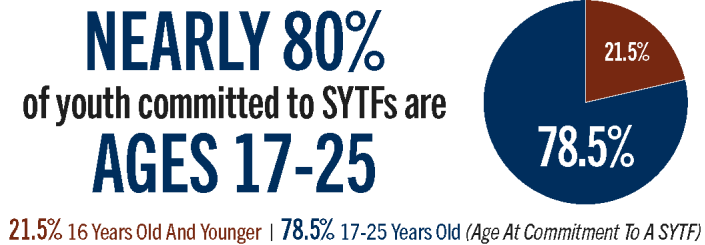
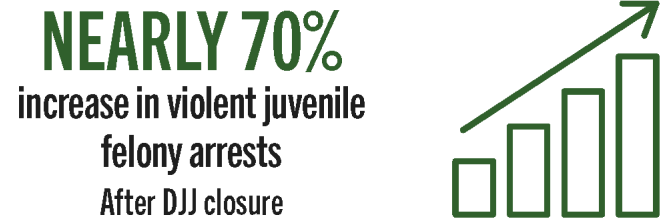
Youth are exiting the system earlier – often before meaningful rehabilitation can take place.

Violent Felony Arrests Rose
NEARLY 70%
After DJJ Closure



AFTER DECADES OF PROGRESS, A TROUBLING TRAJECTORY

Today's juvenile justice population is older, more serious, and more complex.



What this means for the system

- Older & More Complex Population**
Probation now works with older, more sophisticated, serious & violent young people.
- Higher Treatment Needs**
These youth have more acute needs and require intensive, evidence-based treatment and structure.
- Longer Rehabilitation Timelines**
Meaningful change takes time. Shortened timelines increase the risk of failure and reoffending.
- Professional Discretion Matters**
Probation and courts need the ability to make individualized decisions based of readiness and risk.

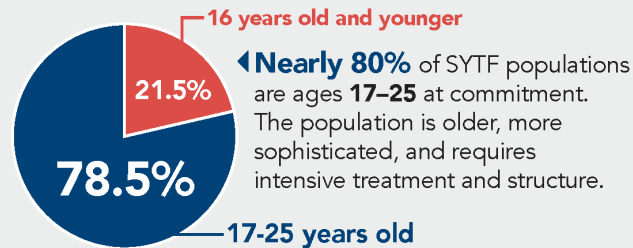
Sources: California Dept. of Justice, Crime Statistics: Arrests (Jan. 2025); OYCR AB 102 Report, 2025; Probation Data (FY 2021/22 - FY 2023/24).

LESS RESTRICTIVE PROGRAMS - GAPS IN OVERSIGHT ARE PUTTING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES AT RISK

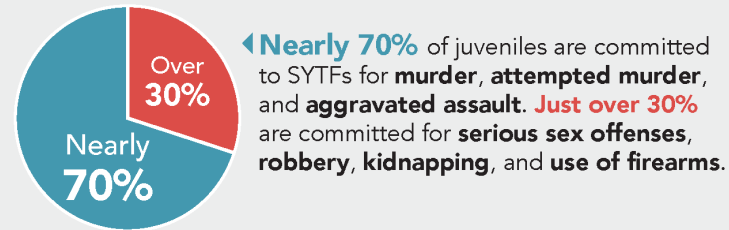
The Juvenile Justice System Today: More Serious and Complex

Secure Youth Treatment Facilities (SYTFs), operated by county probation departments, now house youth and young adults (up to 25 years old) adjudicated for the most serious violent offenses.

Age at Commitment to SYTF



High Rates of Serious Violent Offenses



A Framework for Safety and Rehabilitation



Youth and communities in California deserve a structured framework that protects youth, supports public safety, and strengthens rehabilitation outcomes. This includes:

- ✓ Clear statewide standards for LRPs
- ✓ Defined rate structures and fiscal guardrails
- ✓ Strong safety and treatment standards
- ✓ Court confidence in LRP placements
- ✓ A continuum that prepares youth for safe community return



A System Built Without Safeguards

LRPs were created as step-down placements, but without the foundational safeguards typically required for high-need, high-risk populations. This creates risk for youth safety, program quality, fiscal responsibility, and community safety.

- ✗ No licensing or inspection protocols
- ✗ No statewide regulatory framework
- ✗ No rate structure or cost controls
- ✗ No consistent safety or program standards
- ✗ No oversight for nongovernmental providers

IN SPITE OF THE UNCERTAINTY SOLANO, LIKE OTHER COUNTIES, HAS DEVELOPED GREAT PROGRAMS.

Education

- College access
- Certificated Tutor
- Vocational Training
- Certifications
- Apprenticeships
- Academic Partnerships

Personal Growth

- Restorative Justice
- Mentorship
- Wellness & Mental Health
- Creative Therapy
- Skills Groups (CBT 2.0, Life Skills, EI)

Reentry Preparation

- Reentry Programming
- Transitional Supports
- Family Reunification
- Less Restrictive Program

Employment & Workforce Development

- Paid Internships
- Trades Pathways
- Barbering School
- Food Handling
- Fitness/Physical Training Cert.

Family Engagement

- Reunification Support
- Social Services Worker
- Family Days
- H.O.P.E. Workshops

SOLUTION FRAMEWORK – CORRECTING COURSE, BEND SO WE DON'T BREAK



Adjust

Adjust Long Term Capacity
Needs to Address
Economies of Scale
Realities



Restore

Restore Professional
Judgement & Clear
Governance



Align

Align Accountability with
Time for Rehabilitation



Balance

Balance Needs of Youth
with Protecting Victims &
Public Safety



Reestablish

Reestablish State and
Local Partnership to
Support a Robust
Continuum