



County of Santa Cruz



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
Behavioral Health Division

Salud Mental y
Tratamiento del Uso
de Sustancias

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD
FEBRUARY 19, 2026, 3:00 PM-5:00 PM
1400 EMELINE AVENUE, CONFERENCE ROOMS 206-207, SANTA CRUZ
THE PUBLIC MAY JOIN THE MEETING ON MICROSOFT TEAMS (LINK BELOW) OR
CALL (831)454-2222, CONFERENCE 316 118 950#

Xaloc Cabanes Chair 1 st District	Valerie Webb Member 2 nd District	Michael Neidig Co-Chair 3 rd District	Antonio Rivas Member 4 th District	Vacant Member 5 th District	Natalie Stott Transitional Age Youth
Kaelin Wagnermarsh Member 1 st District	Dean S. Kashino Member 2 nd District	Hugh McCormick Member 3 rd District	Rachel Montoya Member 4 th District	Jeffrey Arlt Secretary 5 th District	Vacant Transitional Age Youth

Kimberly De Serpa Board of Supervisor Member	
Dr. Marni R. Sandoval Behavioral Health Director	Meg Yarnell Behavioral Health Deputy Director

Information regarding participation in the Behavioral Health Advisory Board Meeting

The public may attend the meeting at the Health Services Agency, 1400 Emeline, Conference Rooms 206-207, Santa Cruz. Individuals may click here to [Join the meeting now](#) or may participate by telephone by calling (831)454-2222, Conference ID 316118 950#. All participants are muted upon entry to prevent echoing and minimize any unintended disruption of background sounds. This meeting will be recorded and posted on the Behavioral Health Advisory Board website.

If you are a person with a special need, or if interpreting services (English/Spanish or sign language) are needed, please call 454-4611 (Hearing Impaired TDD/TTY: 711) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting in order to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.

Si usted es una persona con una discapacidad o necesita servicios de interpretación (inglés/español o Lenguaje de señas), por favor llame al (831) 454-4611 (Personas con Discapacidad Auditiva TDD/TTY: 711) con 72 horas de anticipación a la junta para hacer arreglos. Personas con discapacidades pueden pedir una copia de la agenda en una forma alternativa.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA

ID	Time	Regular Business
1	3:00–3:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll Call • Public Comment (No action or discussion will be undertaken today on any item raised during Public Comment period except that Mental Health Board Members may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed. Limited to 3 minutes each) • Board Member Announcements • <i>Approval of January 15, 2026 minutes*</i> • Secretary’s Report
		Standing Reports
2	3:15–3:25	January Patients’ Rights Reports – George Carvalho, Patients’ Rights Advocate for Advocacy, Inc.
3	3:25–3:35	Board of Supervisors Report – Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa
4	3:35–3:50	Behavioral Health Director’s Report – Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health Director
5	3:50–4:00	Site Visit Ad Hoc Committee Update – Kaelin Wagnermarsh and Dean Kashino
		New Agenda Items
6	4:00–4:15	<i>Review revised sections of Jail Packet*</i>
7	4:15–4:25	Discuss response to the BHSA Integrated Plan
8	4:25–4:35	<i>Letter of Recommendation regarding staff training in Generative AI Tools*</i>
9	4:35–4:50	Announcement: Funding Ad Hoc Committee 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>BOS Letter of Recommendation: General Fund for BH increase from 1.3% to be 2% over next 3 years*</i> - <i>BH Letter of Recommendation: Submit proposal for Clubhouse to CBH Innovation committee grant (\$20M available)*</i> - <i>BOS Letter of Recommendation: Mike Beebe’s two priorities: 1) Doubling in-county mental health and substance use treatment capacity in the next 3 years, saving an estimated \$11M/year; 2) Reducing by 50% the time in both the justice system and in custody for those not sentenced within the next five years, estimated \$7.3M/year*</i>
10	4:50–4:55	<i>Thank You Letter –Dr. Jennifer Wells Kaupp*</i>
	4:55–5:00	Future Agenda Items
	5:00	Adjourn

*Italicized items with * indicate action items for board approval.*

**NEXT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING IS ON:
MARCH 19, 2026, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
1400 EMELINE, CONFERENCE ROOMS 206–207, SANTA CRUZ**



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION

MINUTES – Draft



Salud Mental y
Tratamiento del Uso
de Sustancias

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

JANUARY 15, 2026, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY, 1400 EMELINE, ROOMS 206-207, SANTA CRUZ 95060
MICROSOFT TEAMS (831) 454-2222, CONFERENCE ID 812 449 1#

Present: Antonio Rivas, Dean Kashino, Hugh McCormick, Jeffrey Arlt (Remote), Michael Neidig, Natalie Stott, Valerie Webb, Xaloc Cabanes, Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa
Absent: Kaelin Wagnermarsh, Rachel Montoya
Staff: Marni Sandoval, Amy Rhoades, Jane Batoon-Kurovski

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- I. Roll Call – Quorum present. Meeting called to order at 3:09 p.m. by Chair Xaloc Cabanes.
Note: Jeffrey Arlt participated remotely due to Just Cause, Item B.
 - II. Public Comment – 1 addressed the BHAB in the conference room.
 - III. Board Member Announcement
 - Chair provided clarification on the BHAB's powers and duties.
 - IV. Approve November 20, 2025 Minutes
Motion / Second: Mike Neidig / Dean Kashino
Ayes: Kashino, McCormick, Arlt, Neidig, Stott, Webb, Cabanes
Abstain: Rivas
Absent: Wagnermarsh, Montoya, De Serpa
Result: Approved
 - V. Secretary's Report
 - January is Mental Wellness month, focusing on proactive self-care, stress reduction, building healthy habits.
 - Completed 2-hr training requirement: Dean, Xaloc, Jeffrey
 - Training opportunities include January 23rd CalBHBC; Crisis Jam every Wednesday on YouTube; NAMI; Commission for BH quarterly meeting on 01/22 & 1/23
 - BHAB Vacancies: one Transitional Age Youth and District 5
 - Term expirations in April: Antonio, Hugh, and Xaloc
 - VI. Presentation: Overview of Janus Services – Jessica Guiver, Chief Operating Officer, Janus of Santa Cruz
 - Janus of Santa Cruz's withdrawal management program offers 24-hour medically monitored residential care to manage mild to moderate withdrawal symptoms from drugs or alcohol. Withdrawal Management 3.2 Level of Care per ASAM Criteria. Will accommodate 3.7 level of care pending licensing with CA Department of Public Health.

- Sobering Center includes DUI Referral, Case Management, Peer Support, Medical Support (Monitoring Vitals), Police drop offs or self-referrals. Clients are monitored and can have conversations for potentially entering a program or DUI classes.
- Janus Integrated Behavioral Health – person-centered psychotherapy services are offered to folks with mild to moderate behavioral health systems. This program aims to address the interconnected nature of substance abuse and mental health issues by providing integrated, holistic, and individualized care to support clients.
- Residential Services at 7th – offers 24-hour clinically supervised care along with incidental medical services. Residential 3.1 and 3.5 Level of Care per ASAM Criteria.
- Perinatal Program – residential facility that provides treatment to pregnant, post-partum and moms that are parenting children under the age of 18. Children under the age of 6 can live at the facility with the mother. Services offered/Level of Care offered: 3.1 and 3.5. Ribbon cutting of new facility at 150 Pennsylvania to be held September 2026.
- Janus Outpatient and Recovery Residences
 - Outpatient Services: provides intensive outpatient treatment up to 12 clients per group, 9 hours of group per week plus additional individual sessions, peer support and ECM as needed.
 - Recovery Residence: supportive housing in 3 different houses for up to 90 days with concurrent enrollment in outpatient.
- Janus Opioid Treatment Program – offers Outpatient Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder. Licensed capacity for North County is 530 and South County is 230. MNTP vans at north and south expect to launch in late spring/early summer of 2026.

VII. Patient's Rights Report – George Carvalho, Advocate

November and December reports were provided. George did not attend the meeting.

VIII. Board of Supervisors Report – Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa

- Wrote a support letter for \$150M grant that Janus is pursuing in partnership with the County; funding decision expected in April.
- Advocated for a ban on Kratom which is an opioid-like substance sold at gas stations and convenience stores, following 11 deaths in the county over the past year. Drafted an ordinance to prohibit sales in the unincorporated area, which did not pass after the Kratom lobby provided extensive testimony stating it is a miracle drug. The plan is to bring it back to ban the synthetic form.

IX. Behavioral Health Director's Report – Dr. Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health Director

1. Adults Behavioral Health Update

- Currently planning for the opening of the BH Bridge House which will provide a safe, community-based setting for treatment, recovery and transition to long-term housing. Housing Matters will operate 24/7 on-site resident services and the County's Integrated Housing and Recovery Team (IHART) will provide comprehensive behavioral health services. The program is expected to serve 60-80 Santa Cruz County residents annually, with an average stay of six months.

2. Children's Behavioral Health Update

- The Children's BH Management is engaged with Center of Excellence to understand next steps for implementing the following Evidence-Based Psychological Practices (EBPP): Parent-Child Interaction Therapy; Functional

Family Therapy; Multi-Systemic Therapy; and High-Fidelity Wraparound. Numerous contractors expressed interest in becoming providers of one or more of the EBPP.

3. Substance Use Disorder Services Update

- SUDS successfully launched a Request for Qualifications to identify new DUI Program providers. Once approved, services will be launched by April 2026.
- Janus of Santa Cruz will launch new mobile NTP (methadone) services in Spring 2026. Vans will deliver methadone to unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County increasing access for individuals who live long distances from NTP clinics.
- SUDS has partnered with Horizon Services, Inc. in Alameda County to provide Level of Care 3.3 residential treatment services to individuals who meet medical necessity for this level of treatment. LOC 3.3 is for individuals who have cognitive impairments and/or traumatic brain injuries that impact their ability to receive treatment in traditional residential treatment settings.

4. System Quality Improvement Efforts

- Recent improvements include the Integration of Access to Services team into one Integrated Access Program for Children's, Adults, and SUDS services. This improvement will support timely access to initial care for all requests for services; continued optimization of data quality to support non-clinical Performance Improvement Projects related to timely access; and continued efforts toward the "No Wrong Door" approach to behavioral health care.
- Integrated & Timely Services Experience – integration of the Mental Health Plan and the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System into a single plan within the next two years. Efforts continue to improve timely access to services. Currently, 73% of clients receive an appointment within 10 business days of request.

5. General BHSA Updates

- Community Engagement process has been completed – 3 Community Forums, 5 BHSA Educational Sessions, 4 Key Informant Interviews, 4 Informational Meetings, 8 Focus Groups, 1 Community Needs Survey. 229 community members were reached through forums, educational sessions, key informant interviews and the focus groups.
- Currently conducting internal Service System Mapping & Cross walking existing MHSA-funded activities to the new BHSA guidelines. This process will help determine which services will remain allowable under BHSA and how existing services can continue.
- Integrated Plan Development is underway. The integrated plan will report on every single type of revenue source in behavioral health, which will be tracked and reported on.
- Public comment opens on March 19th. More detailed in-depth overview of integrated plan and all findings from community engagement will be provided. Public comment will close on April 16th.

X. Site Visit Committee Update

- Next site visit: 7th Avenue Center on Tuesday, February 10th, 1pm-3pm

XI. Jail Packet Revisions

Two sections, Custody Alternative Program (CAPS) Guide and Criminal Justice Reform and the Case for Collaborative Courts, were provided to the board. This will be discussed at the February meeting.

- XII. Response to the BHSA Integrated Plan – to be discussed at the February meeting.
- XIII. Letter of Recommendation regarding staff training in Generative AI Tools – to be discussed at the February meeting.
- XIV. Announcement: Funding Ad Hoc Committee 2026 – to be announced at the February meeting.
- XV. Thank you letter: Dr. Jennifer Wells Kaupp – to be reviewed at the February meeting.
- XVI. Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.

Summary

This is a January 2026, Patients' Rights Advocate Report from the Patients' Rights Advocacy program. It includes the following: telephone calls, reports, and emails. It includes a breakdown of the number of certified clients, the number of hearings, and the number of contested hearings. It also includes a breakdown of Reise Hearing activity, including the number of Riese Hearings filed, the number of Riese conducted, and the number that was lost.

Patients' Rights Advocate Report
January 2026

Telecare CSP/PHF

On January 5, 2026, This writer received a phone message from a nurse at the Telecare CSP. She informed me that a patient currently on a 5150 hold may be placed on a serial 5150 hold. This writer obtained the name as well as the detention hour. I advised the caller that under the provisions of Assembly Bill 2275 the patient is entitled to a hearing or a writ of habeas corpus. My client was transferred during the evening hours therefore I was able to provide a rights advisement.

On January 6, 2025, this writer received a phone message from a conserved individual receiving treatment at the Telecare Psychiatric Facility. The client requested assistance with her presentation before the superior court judge. After advising my client that I was not an attorney, nor could I duplicate the functions of a Public Defender, this writer agreed to listen to my client's presentation and advised her to focus on the steps that she would be committed to take to treat her symptoms of the diagnosed mental illness as well as describing the role of supportive persons and agencies.

Telecare PHF

On January 11, 2026, this Advocate a phone message from a patient at the Telecare PHF. The client stated calmly but firmly that they would not take the psychiatric medications prescribed by the treating psychiatrist. Any attempt to Inquire about the reasons was met with a firm denial of any mental health symptoms or mental health diagnosis. This writer advised that the caller does have the right to refuse unless determined by a legal process that they lack the capacity to make an informed decision. I also reviewed his right to informed consent.

On January 13, 2026, this advocate received a call from a patient held on 5250 hold for grave disability. She reported that she is harassed by other patients at that staff are doing nothing about the situation. This writer met with the caller on the unit. Client reported that staff only verbally redirected the other patients but believes this to be insufficient. I further Inquired whether staff responded in a timely manner and treated her respectfully. My client affirmed that staff responded to her in a timely manner and treated her respectfully, but the person or persons continued to harass her. I stated that I would report the incidents to the clinical director. When I returned to follow up with the client, she reported her immanent discharge from the facility.

7th Avenue center

On January 6, 2026, this writer received a call from the unit coordinator of the 7th Avenue Center facility reported an incident of unprovoked resident to resident assault. The reported victim, a monolingual Vietnamese person refused to meet with this writer and translator and became irate when I attempted speak with her. This writer ended any attempts to meet with the client but placed a call to the person’s conservator who returned my call the next day. The conservator informed that she is pleased with the treatment provided to the conservatee and that the resident herself does not want to leave the facility

**Reise and Certification Review Hearings
January 2026**

1. TOTAL NUMBER CERTIFIED	21
2. TOTAL NUMBER OF HEARINGS	21
3. TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTESTED HEARINGS	4
4. NO CONTEST PROBABLE CAUSE	17
5. CONTESTED NO PROBABLE CAUSE	0
6. VOLUNTARY BEFORE CERTIFICATION HEARING	0
7. DISCHARGED BEFORE HEARING	0
8. WRITS	0
9. CONTESTED PROBABLE CAUSE	
10. NON-REGULARLY SCHEDULED HEARINGS	0

Ombudsman Program & Patient Advocate Program shared 0 clients in this month (shared = skilled nursing resident (dementia) sent to behavioral health unit or mental health client placed in skilled at Telecare (Santa Cruz Psychiatric Health Facility))

Reise Hearings. /Capacity Hearings

Total number of Reise petitions filed by the Telecare treating psychiatrist:
Total number of Reise Hearings conducted: 3
Total number of Reise Hearings lost: 3
Total number of Reise Hearings won: 0
Total number of Reise Hearings withdrawn: 0
Hours spent on conducted hearing representation:
Hours spent on hearings not conducted: 0
Hours spent on all Reise hearings: 1.75
Reise appeal: 0

**Respectfully Submitted: Davi Schill, PRA
George Carvalho, PRA**



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Behavioral Health Director's Report

Dr. Marni R. Sandoval

Behavioral Health Advisory Board Meeting – February 19, 2026

Adults Behavioral Health Update



- We are continuing to excitedly prepare for the opening of the Bridge House, low barrier navigation center. We have toured the site on Soquel which is really coming together. We are identifying clients who will be eligible to move in and starting to plan with clients. We have been building the team with Housing Matters that will be onsite to support residents.
- AMH is preparing to contract and then implement the LOCUS (Level of Care Utilization System). This will strengthen the AMH systems ability to work with clients, ensuring clients are receiving the right level of care at the right time.
- AMH is engaging with the Centers for Excellence through DHCS to begin planning for implementation for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) for First Episode Psychosis (FEP) and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment.
- AMH is also supporting the update to the county Behavioral Health website.

Children's Behavioral Health Update



Children's Behavioral Health (CBH) conducts Mid-Year Contractor Check-In Meetings annually from mid-January through mid-February. These meetings provide a structured forum for CBH and contract agency leadership to review:

- service delivery performance
- year-to-date actuals in comparison to projections
- service quality indicators informed by clinical trends identified through Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) data
- key learnings, highlight successes, and identify barriers requiring attention or collaborative problem-solving.

Substance Use Disorder Services Update

RENEWPath Launch

RENEWPath supports justice involved adults with care coordination, referral to services and Recovery Residences.

Program Goal: reducing recidivism, improving individual and community wellness and improving care coordination efforts for justice involved individuals.

Program Updates:

- launched in early February and began enrolling participants
- Successfully completed our first site visit from the Board of State of Community Corrections (BSCC), the funding entity for Prop 47, Cohort IV funds (RENEWPath)
- BSCC was impressed by the level of detail in our program launch and workflows and were excited that that we have gender specific Recovery Residence programs for both male identifying and female identifying services in our community.
- The BSCC analyst reports that we're the first community that's she's known to support women in this way through this funding.

DUI Program Update

- County SUDS branch successfully completed a Request for Qualifications process to identify new DUI program providers.
- Sobriety Works and Alert Driving, Inc were both selected as vendors and will be launching their programs in *April 2026*.

County SUDS Outpatient Program

BH SUD Data as of January 2026

Client Capacity & Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 35 clients in Outpatient 1.0• 39 clients in Recovery Support Services• 8 clients engaged in the Recovery Incentives program• Capacity to serve 84 clients	
Weekly Assessments & Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completing 10-15 DMC in-custody assessments per week• Completing 8 AB109 in-custody assessments per week• Completing 2 FCS assessments and referrals to treatment	
Weekly Group Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitating 10 groups (across North and South County)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• * 2 of which are held at board and care facilities for individuals with co-occurring conditions	

Accessing Care

Medi-Cal Members



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Mild – Moderate Level of Care Managed Care Plan (MCP)

Central California Alliance for Health
(CCAH)



How Members Access BH Care

Member in need of BH Services

- Member can self-refer by calling Alliance directly
- Member can call contracted BH provider directly for services and bypass Alliance
- Member can call/walk into local MHP access for screening and assessment
- PCP can access referral forms online at Behavioral Health - Central California Alliance for Health (will be updated for internal processes come 7/1/25)



MCP or MHP completes DHCS Screening Tool

- If member is referred to Alliance or the Mental Health Plan (MHP), a BH CM staff member will screen member for correct system of care and need and provide appropriate referrals within timely access requirement. The Alliance and our 5 MHPs coordinate daily on these referrals

Member Connected to Care

- Member will be offered appointment assistance and to be connected to a provider with an appointment within timely access requirements

Members can call 800-700-3874
All members will be getting new CCAH ID cards



Mild – Moderate Level of Care Managed Care Plan (MCP)

Central California Alliance for Health
(CCHAH)

Behavioral Health CM Referral



Providers can call the alliance case management line 800-700-3874 X5512



Providers can submit a care management referral form directly through the Alliance website. [Care Management Referral Form - Central California Alliance for Health](#) or Referrals via fax to (831)430-5850.



Referral via e-mail to list CM behavioral health team
ListBHCmintakecoordinators@thealliance.health



***CCHAH's website is not current for referral pathways until 7/1/25. Current CM referral is on our Provider Care Management landing page [Behavioral Health - Central California Alliance for Health](#)*



Specialty Mental Health & Substance Use

Level of Care Behavioral Health Plan (BHP)

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health
(SCCBH)

**Member can call for screening and assessment/referral anytime Monday-Friday 8:00-5:00
800-952-2335**

Member can self-refer by walking into our offices:

1400 Emeline Ave., Santa Cruz

1430 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville

Monday -Friday 8:00-4:00

Member will talk to a clinician who will offer a screening to determine appropriate level of care

Will be referred to CCAH if screened mild to moderate

Will be scheduled for an assessment with a licensed clinician if screened severe

Will be offered ongoing behavioral health services at the appropriate level of care

Substance Use Services will be screened for and services offered depending on level of care determined



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Easy Referral to Care

Mild-Moderate

Managed Care Plan -
CCAH

Online Portal
<https://thealliance.health/for-providers/care-management-referral-form/>

800-700-3874 x5512



Severe

County Behavioral Health
Plan

Access Line

800-952-2335
(24 hour line)



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Crisis



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Santa Cruz County Mobile Crisis Response Team

1-800-952-2335

santacruzhealth.org/CrisisResponse

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available.

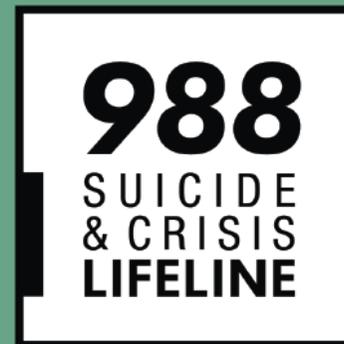
Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org, or reach out to a mental health professional.



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**YOU
MATTER**

Text.
Call.
Chat.



PEP23-08-03-012

Questions?

Thank You



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Jail 101 Guide: Criminal Justice Reform and the Case for Collaborative Courts

In recent years (especially) – despite a tumultuous political environment fraught with bitterness and animosity - Democrats and Republicans across the nation have joined together in a collective push and demand for criminal justice reform. The bipartisan, nationwide support that criminal justice reform (and associated initiatives) has garnered in just the past decade has resulted in the birth and establishment of a wide array of important programs and reforms at all levels of the criminal justice system – from community policing, sentencing in court, and incarceration. Here in California, voters from all sides of the aisle recently aligned to push forth a series of instantly impactful state-wide initiatives- including marijuana decriminalization (and ultimate legalization), a sweeping public safety realignment, and bail reforms (to name a few). Many of the most common (new) criminal justice reform practices revolve around what’s known as “diversion” – diverting some of those (defendants) charged with a crime or criminal offense from traditional or “normal” criminal justice proceedings (settings) to alternative (or collaborative) out-of-custody programs that offer social (or rehabilitative) services- to focus on and/or address underlying drivers, foundations, and circumstances of criminal justice system involvement, and zero in on and treat patterns of potentially destructive behavior. The foundation of these reforms and criminal justice “diversion programs” rests upon the identification and (yes) diversion of eligible criminal defendants who might (are determined to) be better served and/or rehabilitated through programs and services outside of the “normal” sphere (jail, court, prison, probation e.g.) of a municipality’s criminal justice system. In Santa Cruz County, the largest and most impactful (jail) diversion programs are (collectively) known as the **“Collaborative Courts.”**

Those with no previous criminal justice system involvement and/or experience probably wouldn’t understand the true size, scope, intricacies, and rehabilitative potential of Santa Cruz County’s Collaborative Courts (alternative court system and associated programs). Under the direction of the Superior Court of California, the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts operates as a group of smaller, specialized, (unique, but integrated) alternative courts that allow select criminal defendants to be removed or “diverted” from the county’s “normal” or usual court (and jail/custody) process and procedures. This diversion, available in certain circumstances and cases, is designed to allow eligible defendants to avoid new convictions and damaging blemishes on their criminal records, address unmet needs (such as mental/behavioral health challenges, drug and substance abuse disorders, unemployment or houselessness e.g.) that contributed to past or immediate criminal behavior – and ultimately foster desistance from future contact with law enforcement and the justice system. According to the Superior Court of California County of Santa Cruz own website, the municipality’s Collaborative Courts programs are meant to improve treatment outcomes, reduce recidivism, and address public safety and victims’ rights concerns while efficiently utilizing public resources. The mission is to enhance the quality of life for participants by providing a supportive environment that adopts recovery and rehabilitation. This is achieved through a collaborative, team-based approach involving multiple agencies and community partners.”

In the legal and criminal justice space, Collaborative Courts are also known as “alternative courts,” “specialized courts,” “collaborative justice courts,” or “problem solving courts.” Whatever their exact name, design, structure, or eligibility requirements, these courts promote (defendant) accountability by combining judicial supervision with intensive and closely monitored treatment and (community based) rehabilitative services in lieu of detention (in a jail or prison). Each collaborative court (most municipalities offer multiple programs) has a dedicated judge and calendar for specific type of (eligible) defendant and criminal offender. Somewhat obviously, drug courts are designated rehabilitative and (normal) justice system alternative spaces for offenders with substance abuse issues and challenges. And collaborative “mental health courts” provide judicial stomping grounds for defendants and those living with mental illness and/or behavioral health challenges. All of the collaborative courts established in the state of California (at least in theory) follow a model based on the “Ten Key Components of Drug Courts” – but each and every specialized or alternative court tends to function and operate in a slightly different way. Each court – and each municipality’s unique version or interpretation of the specific court (categorically) – carries with it varying requirements (legal and otherwise), length of required time, eligibility criteria, programs and services offered, types of incentives or sanctions inherent to the court process, and eventual graduation criteria. Most collaborative courts exist as, at least typically, alternative judicial avenues for high risk/high needs criminal

defendants – and utilize recovery-focused, evidence-based practices to further rehabilitative efforts and effective community reentry.

There are a number of different – and completely unique - alternative courts operating under the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts legal umbrella – including the **Behavioral Health Court, Intensive Support Court, Veterans Court, the Family Preservation Court, and Truancy Court**. We will provide important details and information regarding the structure, eligibility factors, potential legal impact, and policies endemic to each specific court below – but, here we'll go deeper into the Collaborative Courts as a whole (operation, issues, and impact). It might not be shocking, but each of Santa Cruz County's distinct Collaborative Courts are centered around one thing: "Collaboration!" Following an evidence-based drug court model, the local alternative courts offer clients (defendants) supportive services through a fairly comprehensive team-based approach involving the Court, Public Defender, Probation, Parole, County Behavioral Health, the County Substance Use Department, Family and Children's Services, and the District Attorney. For complete information regarding team structure, scope, and involvement in each of the County's collaborative courts, click on the following link to quickly review and reference: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/collaborative-courts-flyer.pdf>

A defendant's eligibility for any one of Santa Cruz County's collaborative (alternative) court settings is determined on a case-by-case basis. Entrance and participation in the "candy courts" (an affectionate name awarded for their more-relaxed atmosphere and sugary incentives/handouts) is strictly voluntary – an option awarded by the judiciary – but most defendants jump at the opportunity to avoid the often-traumatic "real" court system instead. Local collaborative courts are mostly for lower-level non-violent offenders, and all involved individuals must be amenable and responsive to programs and associated rehabilitative treatment. In order for defendants to participate (in any type of alternative court) there must be a nexus and established causality between a defendant's condition (underlying issue like mental illness, substance use disorder e.g.) and his/her charge, crime, or offense. Ultimate eligibility for any of the local Collaborative Courts is at least partially determined by the details of a defendant's filed charge, but the overall charge-based eligibility factors don't exactly tend to be excessively strict or limiting. There can be some degree of leeway.

Presiding judges have the de facto authority to admit or deny criminal defendants, exceptions can be made by criminal prosecutors, and defense attorneys can advocate for his or her client's program placement even if they don't satisfy official eligibility criteria. Of course, defendants (in the know) can ask for their own legal counsel to push and press for a specific collaborative court placement during any time in their legal proceedings. Whether or not the judiciary feels like that setting is ultimately appropriate, beneficial, or rehabilitative is another matter entirely. Defendants in Santa Cruz County can receive a direct referral (and admission) to a diversionary collaborative court at (pretty much) any point of their case and criminal justice system involvement. But collaborative court referrals are usually made during a defendant's first arraignment in a county court, after the local Santa Cruz County District Attorney's has filed criminal charges. Collaborative court referrals are truly collaborative in nature – again, that buzz word – and a defendant's final involvement in either the **Behavioral Health Court, Intensive Support Court, Veterans Court, Truancy Court, and the Family Preservation Court** is determined by a joint decree by a presiding judge, the defense team, prosecutors, program staff, and other involved parties. .

The important process of matching (eligible) defendants with an appropriate diversion program (or exact alternative court) can be difficult and potentially problematic – a portion of all defendants referred to diversion programs are referred to more than one (as time progresses). After a first collaborative court referral, as necessary, admitted defendants can move to another court (or diversion) program to more adequately support and address their issues and needs, or has a different set of inherent participation requirements. Movements between programs, in the majority of cases, tend to be from a less intense program or setting to a more intensive and involved one. Though each one of Santa Cruz County's collection of Collaborative Courts exist as separate entities - with different protocols and program requirements - they are in fact collaborative and cooperative amongst themselves too. The overall intention and overarching goal of the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court system is to prioritize the social service and rehabilitative needs of enrolled individuals – with a complete understanding that all criminal defendants referred to diversion can (and often do) have multiple, often-complicated co-existing needs.

Each of Santa Cruz County's Collaborative Courts has specific eligibility requirements (which we'll detail in depth below), but on the whole, are designed to work individuals (and families) in both the criminal justice and child welfare systems who have faced challenges and serious issues with mental/behavioral health, substance use/abuse, and a list of other social welfare issues. Defendants granted access into any one of the county's alternative/collaborative court programs are supported, guided, and (yes) monitored in a true team and collaborative effort (by parties involved at all levels of the criminal justice system and community). Judicial officers supervise and oversee clients' treatment and rehabilitation progress through regular court hearings (typically held in a small annex of the Santa Cruz County Main Jail) – which can include the assignment of immediate sanctions or (more-common) incentives (candy!). The system-to-community partnerships and multi-level collaborations established in local diversionary programs (courts) provide defendants (and their families and support networks) with vital access to essential substance abuse and mental health treatment programs – along with a myriad of other community-based academic, vocational, and social service programs and resources to keep them healthy and stable as they continue in their rehabilitative, recovery, and community-reentry efforts. Here are the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts sacrosanct goals, and what the designers and architects of the local court diversionary program hope to achieve through its ongoing effective operation and implementation:

Goals of the Collaborative Justice System:

- **Reduce Jail Bed Days:** Minimize the need for incarceration by providing alternative solutions that address the root causes of criminal behavior.
- **Decrease Recidivism:** Lower the likelihood of repeat offenses and probation/parole violations through effective treatment and support.
- **Reduce Psychiatric Inpatient Bed Days:** Decrease the need for inpatient psychiatric care by providing community-based mental health services.
- **Lower Homelessness:** Address factors contributing to homelessness and help participants secure stable housing.
- **Increase Treatment Compliance:** Ensure participants adhere to treatment plans, contributing to their overall recovery and stability.
- **Promote Pro-Social Activities:** Encourage engagement in positive, constructive activities that support personal growth and community integration.
- **Achieve Sobriety:** Support participants in maintaining sobriety when substance use is a factor.
- **Resolve Legal Issues:** Assist in resolving outstanding fines, fees, and other legal matters.
- **Reduce Harmful Behaviors:** Address and reduce behaviors that negatively impact participants and their communities.
- **Enhance Safety:** Improve safety for families and the public through effective supervision and support.
- **Boost Overall Wellbeing:** Enhance the physical, mental, and emotional health of participants, leading to improved quality of life.

As mentioned earlier, most criminal defendants will jump at the opportunity to enroll and officially participate in any one of Santa Cruz County's alternative, collaborative, and 100% voluntary courts if given the opportunity. Systemic design dictates (or proves) that men and women who enroll in a collaborative court diversion program experience lower rates of criminal conviction (on initial case and charges) than non-diverted cases. That being said, it's important to highlight that participation in a diversion program or time in a collaborative court doesn't necessarily guarantee a quick and easy resolution of a defendant's criminal case or resolution of charges. It's actually the opposite. Yes, those in Santa Cruz County diversionary courts and associated programs do in fact complete criminal sentences and mandated responsibilities in far less-restrictive settings (than those in "normal" courts and custody) but their average length of time to disposition (ultimate case resolution) is actually (typically) longer compared to non-diverted individuals. Does this sound bad on the surface? Well, it really might not be. Successful participation and completion of a diversion program (collaborative court) can also mark the total closure of a defendant's criminal case and eradication of any involvement with the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system and associated supervision. To put things in a bit of contrast, cases for non-diverted defendants in typical or "normal" courts are frequently resolved with terms of probation or even periods of incarceration (that can continue for months, even years, after resolution of their respective cases). Many Collaborative Court participants who eventually complete their court-ordered program can expect to have all records of their contact with the criminal justice system erased and entirely expunged. This ability to effectively clean a defendant's slate makes participation in collaborative courts like those in Santa Cruz County an enticing and desirable prospect for those arrested and charged with a crime, locally.

The completion of a court-ordered diversionary program (in a Collaborative Court) is usually a boisterous and entirely positive affair – for all parties involved (program staff, attorneys on both sides, and even the presiding judge). Some of the terms, conditions, and requirements set forth and established in alternative courts and diversion programs can require immense strength, resiliency, and courage for defendants embarking in a journey towards recovery, rehabilitation, and ultimate community reentry. Collaborative Court graduation ceremonies are designed and meant to reflect and honor this prodigious work and effort from a criminal defendant – who receives genuine respect and approval from multiple parties instrumental in helping he or she through the laborious process. Successful justice system diversions are marked by a program graduation, when the court record reflects a program/framework completion, or the outright dismissal of a criminal case. Of course, program completion is the chief marker of a successful jail and justice system diversion, but even those with unsuccessful, non-diversionary efforts can experience successful (process) outcomes. Sometimes, a failure or systemic termination from one collaborative court (diversion program) can lead to a quick (at times) referral to another program deemed a more cohesive fit for a defendant. If and when an individual can't shoulder his weight of a bargain and fails to meet the requirements and provisions laid out at the beginning of his or her diversion program, they can be effectively terminated from the respective program and reenter regular legal and justice processing and proceedings. In some cases, though, this point marks the time in which some parties may be referred to a different (usually more intensive) program that may meet their needs in a more enhanced or complete way. Because participation in any one of Santa Cruz County's Collaborative Courts is always entirely voluntary, self-determination at the behest of individual defendants – those who after consideration opt out of a program at any point in the process to return to regular systemic processing – is always a viable option (though infrequently utilized).

UNDERSTANDING THE SIZE AND SCOPE OF CALIFORNIA'S COLLABORATIVE (ALTERNATIVE) COURT AND JUSTICE SYSTEM

Throughout the state of California there are over 400 collaborative courts – providing criminal justice system alternatives to tens of thousands of residents each year. All but two (diminutive) jurisdictions (Alpine and Calusa) have collaborative court programs, with many larger municipalities boasting ten or more distinct judicial units. The widespread establishment, adoption, and systemic integration to alternative, specialized, or "Collaborative Courts" is part of an increasingly powerful statewide bipartisan push for broad criminal justice reforms – at all levels of the justice system (from community policing to the judicial and probation systems, sentencing processes, and eventual conditions of incarceration). The general public has grown increasingly boisterous in its demand for reforms focused on identifying and diverting (eligible; especially low-level) criminal defendants – who might be better served and rehabilitated by programs and services outside of the standard or "regular" criminal justice system – into alternative and collaborative court environments. In most California counties, there are distinct (but at times deeply integrated and intertwined) diversionary and "collaborative" court systems available to divert defendants from the typical judicial and trial process, and instead provide them with potentially life-changing rehabilitative (non-punitive) programming designed to help them to address the factors and circumstances that led to (or have led to in the past) their criminal activity and justice system involvement.

The exact (legal and judicial) names of collaborative courts established in the state of California can vary considerably - but may be grouped, associated and separated into a number of different types and categories: "Adult Drug Courts" are the most numerous collaborative court offerings throughout the state -with 84 counties providing such programs (criminal justice system alternatives for eligible participants). 55 California counties have established "Adult Mental Health Courts," (programs) and 47 jurisdictions offer specialized "Veteran's Courts." "Dependency Drug Courts" are offered to eligible participants in 35 counties, and "Juvenile Drug Courts" are established in 24 large and small California counties. Rounding out the list of established collaborative court programs are "DUI Courts" (offered in 22 locations), "Reentry Courts" (offered in 20 jurisdictions), "Homeless Courts" (offered by 18 counties), "Community Courts" (12 counties), and "Juvenile Mental Health Courts" (in 12 California counties). There is really no limit or imaginary cap on the types, categories or endemic structures of the

alternative, specialized, and collaborative court offerings that California counties can establish and provide to (qualified and eligible) residents and criminal defendants in their respective jurisdictions. A new, and slightly edgy movement for “Girls Courts” and alternative “SCEC” courts (for commercially exploited sexually exploited children) is growing stronger. And collaborative courts providing diversionary, reentry, and rehabilitation programs for defendants with dual diagnosis issues (co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders), “Truancy Courts,” and “Family Law Drug Courts” are evolving and in increasing use throughout the state as well.

For a county of its size, Santa Cruz is sort of middle of the proverbial pack in-regards-to the expansiveness and scope of the (justice system) diversionary and Collaborative Courts programs (and associated) services it provides (offers) to eligible criminal defendants. But as diversionary avenues, existing in concert, the five distinct Collaborative Courts established here in Santa Cruz County - **Behavioral Health Court, Intensive Support Court, Veterans Court, the Family Preservation Court, and Truancy Court** - provide life-altering, potentially life-saving criminal justice system alternatives to hundreds of eligible local residents (defendants) each and every year. Before going into too much depth regarding each specific Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts (program) further below – including each court’s functioning, eligibility factors, defendant responsibilities, team/program structure ect. – feel free to explore the true size, scope, and overall availability of Collaborative Courts throughout the state of California. It’s fascinating stuff: who has what, and where. Attached to this section of the Jail 101 Guide is a data compilation and assessment from the California Association of Collaborative Courts (CACC) that captures the true extent of California’s important Collaborative Court system.

<u>Superior Court of California, County of</u>	<u>COMMUNITY</u>	<u>DRUG-ADULT</u>	<u>DRUG-JUVENILE</u>	<u>DRUG-DEPENDENCY</u>	<u>DUI</u>	<u>ELDER ABUSE</u>	<u>GIRLS/CSEC</u>	<u>HOMELESS</u>	<u>MENTAL HEALTH- ADULT</u>	<u>MENTAL HEALTH- JUVENILE</u>	<u>REENTRY - ADULT & JUVENILE</u>	<u>TRUANCY</u>	<u>VETERANS</u>
Number of Courts by Case Type	12	84	23	32	20	3	10	19	63	12	19	10	46
Alameda		X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alpine													
Amador													X
Butte		X			X								X
Calaveras													X
Colusa													
Contra Costa								X	X				X
Del Norte		X											X
El Dorado					X				X				X
Fresno		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Glenn		X	X						X				
Humboldt		X						X		X			
Imperial		X							X				X
Inyo		X									X		
Kern		X						X	X				X
Kings		X							X				X
Lake			X	X									X
Lassen		X											
Los Angeles	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X		X
Madera		X							X				X
Marin	X	X	X						X				
Mariposa		X							X				
Mendocino		X		X					X				
Merced		X		X				X	X	X			X
Modoc		X	X						X				
Mono		X											
Monterey		X	X		X				X	X		X	X
Napa		X		X					X				
Nevada		X	X		X				X				
Orange	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X

COLLABORATIVE COURTS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY – EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

*** Behavioral Health Court *** Intensive Support Court *** Veterans Court ***
*** Family Preservation Court ***

The Superior Court of Santa Cruz Collaborative Courts



Under the direction of the Superior Court of California, the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts operates as a group of smaller, specialized, (unique, but integrated) alternative courts that allow select criminal defendants to be removed or “diverted” from the county’s “normal” or usual court (and jail/custody) process and procedures. This diversion, available in certain circumstances and cases, is designed to allow eligible defendants to avoid new convictions and damaging blemishes on their criminal records, address unmet needs (such as mental/behavioral health challenges, drug and substance abuse disorders, unemployment or houselessness e.g.) that contributed to past or immediate criminal behavior – and ultimately foster desistance from future contact with law enforcement and the justice system.

Each of Santa Cruz County’s Collaborative Courts has specific eligibility requirements (which we’ll detail in depth below), but on the whole, are designed to work individuals (and families) in both the criminal justice and child welfare systems who have faced challenges and serious issues with mental/behavioral health, substance use/abuse, and a list of other social welfare issues. Defendants granted access into any one of the county’s alternative/collaborative court programs are supported, guided, and (yes) monitored in a true team and collaborative effort (by parties involved at all levels of the criminal justice system and community). Judicial officers supervise and oversee clients’ treatment and rehabilitation progress through regular court hearings (typically held in a small annex of the Santa Cruz County Main Jail) – which can include the assignment of immediate sanctions or (more-common) incentives (candy!). The system-to-community partnerships and multi-level collaborations established in local diversionary programs (courts) provide defendants (and their families and support networks) with vital access to essential substance abuse and mental health treatment programs – along with a myriad of other community-based academic, vocational, and social service programs and resources to keep them healthy and stable as they continue in their rehabilitative, recovery, and community-reentry efforts.

In this important section of the Jail 101 Collaborative Courts we’ll dive as deeply as possible into the structures and operations of the various alternative, specialized, collaborative court programs available to (eligible) defendants in the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system. We’ll start with the **Behavioral Health Court**, and then investigate and explore the **Intensive Support Court**, **Veterans Court**, and finally, **Family Preservation Court**. We hope that as many people as possible find this in-depth compilation useful – especially families and friends of incarcerated individuals who could (potentially) benefit (legally, financially, and emotionally) from involvement (and ultimate enrollment) in these ground-breaking alternatives to the “normal” and often quite traumatic, Santa Cruz County criminal justice system and associated processes. ☺

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COURT

Time: Behavioral Health Court takes place every Monday at 10:30 AM - In Department 4 of the Santa Cruz County Court House.

Presiding Judge: The Honorable Leila Sayar

Address: 701 Ocean Street, Room C-1122352, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Phone: 831-420-2360

Email: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org

Website and Online Presence: www.santacruzcourt.org

BHC "Official" Brochure: https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/bhc-brochure_0.pdf

		Team Members:
BHC	Behavioral Health Court offers: Comprehensive support with a strong focus on treatment, recovery, and community reintegration. to ensure participants receive the services and supervision they need to succeed.	BHC Team: The Collaborative Courts, County Behavioral Health, and Probation. Primary Court Staff: Shanee Martin
	Eligibility Criteria for BHC: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Eligible for Santa Cruz County Medi-Cal➤ On Formal Probation with Mental Health Terms➤ Diagnosed with significant and persistent mental illness➤ Significant impairment in functioning because of mental health➤ Under MOST Team Probation Supervision or assigned to Specified Formal Mental Health Probation Caseload➤ Amenable to participation in BHC	

Behavioral Health Court Background:

Collaborative or "problem solving" courts like Santa Cruz County's Behavioral Health Court (BHC) are specifically designed to "divert" eligible participants (defendants) from the "normal," and often-traumatizing criminal justice process (including incarceration) into alternative, recovery-focused and rehabilitative programs and settings. The Behavioral Health Court addresses the complex needs of criminal defendants living with severe mental illness and/or co-occurring substance use disorders – utilizing collaborative principles to provide comprehensive support in a multi-disciplinary team-based approach: with the Court, Probation Department, Behavioral Health Department, District Attorney, Public Defender, and Law Enforcement officers working in concert during the entirety of any person's participation in order to guide and help them reach their personal and legal goals and aspirations. During their time in the Superior Court of the County of Santa Cruz's Behavioral Health Court, program participants (eligible defendants) are encouraged to maintain and expand their community-based support networks and avoid the unhealthy or destructive habits, patterns, and behaviors that led to their recent arrest and/or criminal behavior. The Behavioral Health Court is designed to foster a more understanding, supportive, compassionate, and collaborative environment than most defendants (many repeat offenders) typically experience in the "normal" criminal justice system- especially for program participants whose previous relationships with the jail and court system negative or adversarial.

Behavioral Health Court: Eligibility and Participation Standards

Participation in the collaborative Behavioral Health Court (BHC) is strictly voluntary. And all individuals navigating through the various stages and internal programs (and conditions) inherent to the BHC must first, be eligible for Santa Cruz County Medi-Cal. The Behavioral Health Court is designed and intended to serve and provide justice system alternatives to individuals (criminal defendants) on formal probation (with Santa Cruz County's "MOST Team" or "mental health diversion" program) - who are living or dealing with serious mental health conditions that

are significantly impairing their mental and/or physical health, and daily functioning. All Behavioral Health Court defendants (participants) must be connected with the County's MOST team in some way, be eligible for (and ultimately accept) for a county case coordinator assignment based on an in-depth "access assessment," be amenable to fully engaging in various psychiatric treatments (and taking psychiatric medications as prescribed or necessary), and maintain regular communication with the Collaborative Courts (and Coordinator) to ensure proper court and (internal and external) program scheduling. In their journeys towards eventual BHC program completion and "graduation," defendants are expected to follow established probationary terms and conditions, attend all court dates as directed, and to work with and closely collaborate with an assigned case manager – and all members of the BHC "team" – to develop and follow individualized, tailored "case plans" to meet their specific needs. Each Behavioral Health Court participant's unique case plan (let's call it a legal "road map") will include a considerable amount of foundational structure, terms, conditions, and requirements that must be strictly adhered to. BHC enrollees may need to attend pro-social activities such as participation in AA, NA, or DRA meetings (really any "anonymous program), and if appropriate be subjected to random drug and alcohol (urinalysis) testing during the maintenance of regular appointments with case coordinators, psychiatric providers or probation officers. Some defendants' case plans may require them to maintain (permanent) residence at specific approved housing – and outpatient or residential treatment programs. Through all of this, the key word is "structure" – in addition to, of course "collaboration."

Behavioral Health Court Graduation and Program Completion

The exact length of time that participants actually spend in (and navigating the programs and requirements of) the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court can vary considerably – based upon an individual's (defendant's) terms of probation and unique ongoing needs and requirements. Participants become eligible to graduate or leave the BHC if they fully adhere to established probationary terms for a designated, decided-upon time period and reach their individualized rehabilitative goals. Graduation ceremonies can be special, enthusiastic, and often emotional affairs for those who complete established case and legal goals – and those helping them through the often long and laborious rehabilitative process. Judges and assembled Behavioral Health Court teams may consider an early (non-contracted) termination of probation based on a defendant's ongoing positive behavior, and unwavering commitment and adherence to court-mandated conditions requirements, achievement of recovery-based goals, and overall success of treatment efforts (psychiatric and otherwise). At the end, graduation from the Behavioral health Court, and potential early termination of charges (and BHC program release) is at the discretion of the presiding Judge – in the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court's case, Leila Sayar. Designers, architects, and those involved in the collaborative Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court boast that potential benefits to program participants can include fewer days in the hospital (psychiatric and otherwise), fewer days in incarceration or jail, protracted periods of homelessness, and increase in days of sobriety and effective work days, and increase in medication compliance (and stability).

Those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court should contact their attorney or legal representative and request, or express interest in a "Collaborative Court Referral Packet." Once received, a Behavioral Health Court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis. Here are the links to the Behavioral Health Court's official, internally published "Brochure" and the aforementioned "Collaborative Court Referral Packet" for your review and perusal.

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court Brochure: https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/bhc-brochure_0.pdf

Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court Participant Packet: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

VETERANS COURT

Time: Veterans Court takes place on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 10:30 AM in Department 7 of the Santa Cruz County Court House.

Presiding Judge: The Honorable Stephen Siegel

Address: 701 Ocean Street, Room C-112, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Phone: 831-420-2352

Email: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org

Website and Online Presence: www.santacruzcourt.org

VC "Official" Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/veterans-brochure-2025-new.pdf>

VC Veterans Court offers: VC connects participants with treatment and support services to improve their quality of life. Each participant receives individualized treatment plans and a peer advocate.	Veterans Court Team: The Collaborative Courts, pre-trial/probation, CAFES, Veterans Justice Outreach Program, County Veteran Services, and their volunteer peers. Primary Court Staff: Shanee Martin
Veterans Court Eligibility Criteria : <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Served in the U.S. Military, regardless of length of service, combat experience, or characterization of discharge➤ Struggles with a diagnosis of PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), substance use, or other mental health symptoms directly related to military service➤ Able to participate in VC and voluntarily agree to all conditions, including treatment for their qualifying conditions	

Veterans Court: Background and Purpose

Santa Cruz County's collaborative **Veterans Court** provides alternatives to typical sentencing (and criminal justice processes) for eligible and qualified veterans with service-related mental and behavioral health issues and challenges. The overarching mission, and collective goal of this innovative peer-support based collaborative court environment is to connect justice involved American veterans (and their families and community-based support systems) with opportunities, and necessary support and structure, to maintain and improve their quality of life and access rehabilitative treatments to address mental, emotional, and physical health concerns. In a true collaborative effort and structured team-based approach – among justice system partners (judge, district attorney, public defender, probation department, veteran peer support), community-based organizations, and local and national veteran's service providers – the Veterans Court is designed to provide sentencing alternatives, structure, and invaluable guidance support to individuals (veterans) who have a desire to engage in treatment and utilize (available) programs and/or services - but have been largely unsuccessful in doing so on their own.

Potential participants in Santa Cruz County's innovative Veterans Court process and legal framework may be dealing with mental/behavioral illnesses and/or disorders, substance use challenges/disorders, or other physical (or emotional) health-related issues in direct (or indirect) correlation to their military service (that created or contributed to their instability, charges, and eventual justice system involvement). Just like the invaluable, heroic, and potentially traumatizing service for their country, potential participants must "volunteer" for the Veterans Court program (and alternative legal process) and express a willingness and desire to make necessary and instrumental changes. Most service veterans will jump at the opportunity to participate in the collaborative Veterans Court when given the chance – and enter the less-punitive, more-supportive, and recovery focused sentencing alternative (approach, plan, and program) in lieu of incarceration. The typical Veterans Court process and team-based rehabilitative approach is far from easy – and takes considerable time, effort, *and courage* to

actually complete – but for many struggling veterans, the end results can be lifechanging – and potentially lifesaving.

Veterans Court: Design and Functioning

Ex-American service veterans who agree (or request) to participate in Santa Cruz County's collaborative (diversionary) Veterans Court are supported by a varied and comprehensive team throughout their court-ordered program (and eventual completion of alternative criminal sentence). Upon acceptance, eligible veterans collaborate with a Collaborative Courts Representative or Veteran Justice Outreach representative to develop a structured, comprehensive, individualized (personalized) **treatment plan**. All program participants are assigned a highly trained Peer Support worker (or program volunteer – usually a veteran themselves) to guide and advise them in reaching established goals and metrics in their journey towards eventual program graduation. This one-on-one empathetic, compassionate, and invaluable support is an important component of Veterans Court – and for many veterans struggling with substance use or behavioral health challenges, who also may mistrust or fear the legal and criminal justice system (and associated processes), can become an important resource, close relationship and programmatic rock they can turn to and rely upon to complete their daily affairs. Defendants involved with the Veterans Court are required to attend regular court sessions – held on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 10:30 AM in Department 7 of the Santa Cruz County Court House – for judicial reviews of their treatment plans, team updates, reviews, and coordination, and for encouragement and ongoing support.

The foundational, comprehensive, and highly-structured personalized treatment plans developed (in a team-based approach and framework) for all eligible Veterans Court participants serve as systematic roadmaps to allow and help them achieve stability, improve their emotional and physical health and wellbeing, develop positive habits to avoid future incarceration and recidivism, and to successfully reintegrate into the community. Typical treatment plans (developed and guided by a team of passionate court and community-based parties and organizations) drive the plans, actions and decision making processes of Veterans Court participants on a daily basis – providing the necessary structure and support to allow them to access important substance abuse and/or mental health treatments, obtain medical care, connect to Veterans Administration services and valuable community-based resources, and receive job training and/or assistance in securing gainful employment. Each Veterans Court enrollee is tasked with setting goals for (eventual) recovery and systematic personal growth and are given the ability and legal opportunity to rebuild and form new, healthier relationships with friends and family, and the community at large. Each and every highly-tailored treatment plan developed by-and-for participants in Santa Cruz County's Veterans Court can and will differ considerably – and there is no set time limit or required/mandated duration of participation – and eventual graduation – endemic to the innovative alternative court setting. Each Veterans Court case centers around participant's ongoing goals and needs, and their ability to adhere to and make progress on their respective treatment plans. Treatment plans are identified and revisited regularly as defendants' progress through the Veterans Court program – and are monitored in a relatively strict and structured environment that allows program enrollees to receive the ongoing foundational support, services, and legal and community resources necessary to achieve their personal goals and aspirations, and graduate from the Veterans Court and finally leave the legal and criminal justice system.

It takes tremendous courage, honor and strength for individuals to make the life-altering decision to sign up for American military service - to defend their (and your) country from threats foreign and domestic. And it can take an equal dose of strength and courage for those men and women to attempt to deal with the often traumatizing physical and psychological after-effects – and brutal social, legal, and financial implications – of the service itself. Ex-American soldiers and United States military deserve collective societal respect – and ongoing support – when their heroic service ends, their military duties are officially relieved, and they attempt to reintegrate (back) into “normal life” and reenter their communities. In many cases though, American veterans – for whatever reason – are overlooked, neglected, and/or systemically blamed or forgotten about. Many are demonized and/or pushed to societal margins as they struggle to cope and deal with serious substance abuse challenges, and mental behavioral

health challenges and illnesses such as PTSD, military sexual trauma, and traumatic brain injury – directly related to their military service (for us all). Partners and team members at all levels of Santa Cruz County’s collaborative Veterans Court understand this dynamic to well – many have volunteered for their own military service.

Veterans Court: Rewards, Sanctions, and Program Completion

One of the chief goals of the entire Veterans Court team is to provide guidance, reassurance and support while celebrating and applauding the strength and courageous efforts and accomplishments of participants – every step of the way. Perks and rewards are handed out when Veterans Court enrollees are “doing well – adhering to their case and treatment plan, meeting the conditions of the court-ordered supervision, staying clean and sober, looking for (or eventually securing) employment, engaging in pro-social community activities or educational pursuits, and simply remaining violation and arrest-free. Many veterans, and Veterans Court participants in particular, valiantly struggle to maintain their basic needs on a daily basis; so the judge and court-awarded bonuses (and kudos) such as free bus passes and cash (or gift cards) for community-based programs and pro-social activities/pursuits can prove instrumental in maintaining happiness, direction, and overall health. Other rewards for “jobs well done” in the collaborative Veterans Court include less-restrictive treatment environments (and recommendations), less-frequent mandated court appearances, and converting veteran defendants’ court ordered (at times considerable) fines and fees to more-manageable service hours. Even the strongest and most-driven veteran participant in the alternative court can (and often does) get off track though, and judges and Veterans Court team members often must levy penalties or sanctions to ensure further program compliance (and eventual alternative sentencing completion). When Veterans Court defendants are failing to meet the expectations of or mandated obligations to the court; not following their established case or treatment plan, incurring violations or citations while released, or not fulfilling the recommendations or decrees of their appointed case manager or parole agent, they can be legally and criminally chastised in multiple ways. Some judge-levied sanctions may include an increase in required court appearances, an increased frequency of drug and alcohol testing (and random urinalysis), or in some sad cases, an outright termination from the Veterans Court and return to the “regular” legal and criminal justice system. The support, compassion, and empathetic professionalism of the entire collaborative Veterans Court team cannot be understated though – and the diversion program is really geared around and designed to ensure overall program completion, success, and graduation for all involved American veteran participants.

Those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Veterans Court should contact their attorney or legal representative and request, or express interest in a “Collaborative Court Referral Packet.” Once received, a Veterans Court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis. Here are the links to the Veterans Court’s official, internally published “Brochure” and the aforementioned “Collaborative Court Referral Packet” for your review and perusal.

Santa Cruz County Veterans Court Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/veterans-brochure-2025-new.pdf>

Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court Participant Packet: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

FAMILY PRESERVATION COURT

Time: Family Preservation Court is held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2:00PM in Department A of the Watsonville Court House.

Presiding Official: Commissioner Gregory Peinado

Address: 701 Ocean Street, Room C-112, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Phone: 831-420-2352

Email: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org

Website and Online Presence: www.santacruzcourt.org

FPC "Official" Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/fpc-brochure-new.pdf>

FPC	Family Preservation Court Offers: aims to preserve and reunify families by addressing issues leading to court involvement and providing access to necessary treatments and services. The to provide wraparound care and support.	Family Preservation Court team: Collaborative Court, The Parents Center, Leaps and Bounds, Family and Children Services, County Behavioral Health Substance Use Disorder Services, Sobriety Works, and Parent Mentors
	Eligibility Criteria for FPC: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ An open dependency case or a Non-Minor Dependent➤ Struggles with substance use disorder➤ Voluntarily willing to participate in FPC	

Family Preservation Court: Background, Functioning and Purpose

For over 10 solid years, Santa Cruz County's collaborative Family Preservation Court has been dedicated to enhancing participant and community wellbeing by prioritizing the health and safety of families (and loved ones) in the dependency system. As a diversionary program, the strictly voluntary Family Preservation Court is a County and court-backed program focused on families (and criminal defendants) involved in dependency cases and non-minor dependents in child welfare. The chief aim and overarching goal of the innovative collaborative court system and associated programs is to preserve and reunify local families by addressing the inherent issues that (eventually) led to court and criminal justice system involvement, while providing vital access and easily accessible avenues to necessary treatments and key service components (on a personalized, case by case basis). Most defendants (with associated criminal cases) who end up taking up and enrolling in the alternative court and sentencing paradigms established within the Family Preservation Court involve substance use/abuse and behavioral health issues. In a collaborative, team-based approach the Family Preservation Court (team) works to empower local families by providing structured, coordinated supports and service referrals, fostering overall participant accountability, and urging positive behavioral changes – all to avoid future justice system involvement and ensuring familial health and wellbeing. Voluntary participation in the alternative court is offered to families and family members with substance use disorders who have an open dependency case and non-minor dependents in the child welfare system.

Through all of its extensive policies, programs, and procedures, the strength-based (assembled) teams operating within the Family Preservation Court – including the defendant, commissioner Gregory Peinado, county substance use disorder staff, child welfare staff, and community partners and treatment providers such as Janus, Sobriety Works, and the Parents Center – collectively work to encourage a commitment to a healthy lifestyle of stability,

recovery, and long lasting familial stability. The collaborative court offering is designed to preserve and reunify families by addressing the core and root causes of a defendant's court and criminal justice system involvement. Yes, the main focus is on family rebuilding and eventual reunification – healthy and stable for all parties involved. Through involvement with the court, participants receive fully-backed and court-supported expanded access to a range of treatments and services – including foundational support for substance use/abuse, mental and behavioral health, trauma, and parent-child relationships. Assembled Family Preservation Court teams also emphasize participant accountability through a range of supervised treatments and services to support participants' achieving eventual reunification goals and long-term stability.

Family Preservation Court: Program Structure and Completion

All of Santa Cruz County's collaborative court offerings are designed to enhance the quality of life for participants by providing a structured and supportive environment that adopts recovery and rehabilitative principles. The specialized courts are designed to improve treatment outcomes, reduce recidivism, and address public safety concerns while efficiently utilizing legal and community resources. Using a team-based approach, involving multiple agencies and community partners, the Family Preservation Court is designed and structured in such a way to allow for the progressive reunification of families (of loved ones involved in the justice system) and addressing the root causes of case and criminal justice involvement. The Family Preservation Court is structured in three main phases – in which the intensity of offered treatment services, alcohol and drug testing (urinalysis mandates), and required court appearances gradually decrease as participants advance in the process. Each case and defendant situation is unique though, so the duration of each specific programmatic phase varies with the completion of individual (personal and court/ordered) goals and metrics. During the first official "phase" of a typical participant's Family Preservation Court program and legal process, they are required show up to court (in Department A of the Watsonville Court House at 2:00PM on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month) to identify treatment and rehabilitative needs, carefully review and modify case and treatment plans, and, if caring for a child under the age of 5, enroll (and eventually complete) the "Leaps and Bounds" program (offered by a community partner). Phase two of the Family Preservation Court process and proceedings involves monthly (not bi-weekly) court attendance and effective engagement in court-established case and treatment plans (mandated programs and treatment services). During phase three of a typical Family Preservation Court alternative sentencing process, program participants meet with team and judicial officials once every two months (every six weeks) as they transition to continuing care, and ultimate stability and potential reunification.

Those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Family Preservation Court should contact their attorney or Child Welfare worker and request, or express interest in a "Collaborative Court Referral Packet." Or, simply Send your contact information to collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org and someone will respond to your inquiry. Once received, a Family Preservation Court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis. Here are the links to the Family Preservation Court's official, internally published "Brochure" and the aforementioned "Collaborative Court Referral Packet" for your review and perusal.

Santa Cruz County Family Preservation Court Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/fpc-brochure-new.pdf>

Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court Participant Packet: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

INTENSIVE SUPPORT COURT (and Mental Health Diversion)

Time: Intensive Support Court is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 11:00AM in Department Two of the Santa Cruz County Court House.

Presiding Official: The Honorable Syda Cogliati

Address: 701 Ocean Street, Room C-112, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Phone: 831-420-2352

Email: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org

Website and Online Presence: www.santacruzcourt.org

BHC “Official” Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/fpc-brochure-new.pdf>

ISC	Intensive Support Court offers: Assistance to individuals with significant mental health and/or substance use issues who are not connected to the MOST team, providing integrated support to help them achieve their treatment goals.	Intensive Support Court Team:
	Eligibility Criteria for ISC: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>Individuals who are granted Mental Health Diversion</i>➤ <i>Those living with mental health and/or substance use issues that are negatively impacting their lives</i>➤ <i>Individuals who have a significant need for case management, a past criminal history, and are at risk of reoffending</i>	The Collaborative Courts, pre-trial/probation, CAFES, and community partners. Primary Court Staff: Sarah Scott

Intensive Support Court: Background and Purpose

Routinely called the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system’s “problem solving court,” the collaborative (and/or alternative) **Intensive Support Court** is designed to connect eligible defendants to vital community-based services, resources, and programs – to establish (and maintain) overall health, wellness, wellbeing, identify and achieve (established and manageable) goals and aspirations, enhance their support networks and community ties, and to avoid the unhealthy and destructive patterns of behavior that resulted in their incarceration (in the first place). Participation in the Intensive Support Court – like all of the County’s collaborative court settings – is strictly voluntary. And any potential participant must express a core and intrinsic desire and full commitment to engage in (court-mandated) mental/behavioral health and/or substance use treatments - and to utilize decided-upon programs and services that they were (largely unsuccessful in completing (on their own) in the past.

Multidisciplinary and collaborative teams – including presiding judges, district attorneys, public defenders, probation officers, and pretrial collaborative courts case managers – work in concert to connect (court-eligible) defendants to community-based programs and rehabilitative services and ensure their complete compliance adherence to established (court mandated) case plans to keep them out of jail (and further time behind bars). Many participants (first time or otherwise) in the Intensive Support Court have had multiple brushes with law enforcement and the criminal justice system in the past – with especially challenging court and sentencing experiences. The Intensive Support Court is designed and intended to foster a more collaborative, less impersonal, and more trauma-informed

environment – with an assigned court team working together to ensure criminal defendants receive the services, programs, and supports they need and require to stay on track - and completely adhere to conditions of their case and established treatment plans.

Intensive Support Court: Eligibility and Participation

Not all defendants and those charged with a crime or criminal offense will necessarily qualify and be allowed to participate in the County's collaborative (alternative) Intensive Support Court setting. Potential Intensive Support Court participants must present an established case and criminal history of mental/behavioral health issues and/or illnesses that are (or have been) negatively impacting their daily lives. In this strictly voluntary program and alternative court environment, all defendants who "sign on" must be completely amenable to participate and follow the specific case plans created by their interdisciplinary team of supporters. And ready to complete all established goals and treatment metrics from start to finish (to avoid further incarceration and more serious punitive measures). From the beginning, all ISC program/court enrollees must show a significant need and requirement for comprehensive case management, a previous criminal history (and rap sheet), and are believed to be at risk of reoffending – experiencing recidivism and continuing through their revolving door process within the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system.

The large majority (almost entirety) of eligible (eventually accepted) participants in the Intensive Support Court must have already been granted what's known in the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system as "**Mental Health Diversion**" (MHDA). As a supportive pre-adjudication program designed around helping male and female defendants facing substance use disorders and mental health issues (and illnesses), the Intensive Support Court's comprehensive, collaborative team-based approach should provide integrated levels of support and structure facilitating mental health diversion and guiding participants towards their treatment goals and post-custody aspirations. Foundationally built upon AB 1810, "Mental Health Diversion" gives the judiciary (presiding judges in criminal cases) discretionary powers to "divert" qualified individuals who have (or are believed to have) committed a crime (or crimes) because of an existing mental health disorder.

Diversion – **Mental Health Diversion** in this specific case – may be ultimately granted at any time during a defendant's pretrial proceedings; after the filing of an accusatory pleading. To be deemed eligible for Mental Health Diversion, a criminal defendant (or their chosen legal representatives) must present that his or her mental health (illness or condition) was a significant factor in a charged offense, and they must have a recent mental health diagnosis from a qualified mental health treatment "provider." To qualify for Mental Health Diversion, individuals must prove that they do not "pose an unreasonable risk of danger of public safety if treated in the community" (as defined in Section 1170.1) and are willing and able to effectively respond (and adhere to) court-ordered treatment goals and plans. Those wishing to participate in this alternative justice setting under Mental Health Diversion must also (initially) waive the right to a speedy trial, agree to fully comply with (individual and provider) treatment goals and metrics on an ongoing basis.

Not every arrested and charged individual will immediately qualify for Mental Health Diversion, hardly so – referrals are made selectively, after great deliberation on a case-by-case basis. Exclusionary factors include a charge or offense of murder or voluntary manslaughter, a diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder or borderline personality disorder, any "290" offense, and offense of a possession on a weapon of mass destruction. Many defendants totally innocent of any and all of these serious, slightly dramatic caveats, are denied entry and enrollment in the Intensive Support Court (by the judiciary or otherwise) for other reasons and circumstances as well. Collaborative, diversionary, and alternative court settings are not for everyone. And much thought goes into exactly who is ultimately admitted and supported (in a team-based effort) throughout the inherent, often labor and systemically intensive process.

Once an eligible defendant is accepted into the Santa Cruz County court system's **Mental Health Diversion** program, he or she is illegible for placement into the collaborative **Intensive Support Court** environment. The Intensive Support Court's pre-adjudication program is designed to help those facing mental illness and substance

use disorders (sometimes co-occurring) to achieve their goals and post-custody aspirations in a highly structured team-based approach to criminal justice. To ultimately enroll and accept the judicial terms, conditions, and treatment plans of the I.S.C. participants must show a significant need for highly structured case management, a history of criminal behavior (related charges), and demonstratable risk of reoffending.

Those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Intensive Support Court should contact their attorney or request, or express interest in a “Collaborative Court Referral Packet.” Or, simply Send your contact information to collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org and someone will respond to your inquiry. Once received, an Intensive Support Court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis. Here are the links to the Intensive Support Court’s official, internally published “Brochure” and the aforementioned “Collaborative Court Referral Packet” for your review and perusal.

Santa Cruz County Intensive Support Court Brochure:

<https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/isc-brochure.pdf>

Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court Participant Packet: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>



Referral Process and Entry into the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court System – Veterans Court, Intensive Support Court, Family Preservation Court, and Behavioral Health Court

Santa Cruz County’s Collaborative (alternative) Court environments aren’t for everyone – even though almost every (potentially) qualified inmate would jump at the opportunity to voluntarily participate in one of the rehabilitative settings (and the alternative sentencing and punitive options entailed/offered). As stated previously, those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court system should contact their attorney or request (or express interest in) a “Collaborative Court Referral Packet.” Or, simply Send your contact information to collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org and someone will respond to your inquiry. Once received, a collaborative court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis, This information should provide the backbone and direction for potential (criminal defendant) entry and enrollment into any one of Santa Cruz County’s alternative court environments and associated programs.

Friends, family members, and involved service providers of inmates in the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system hoping to alert and educate Jail staff re: a defendant’s immediate mental health (or SUDS) needs can fill out (to the best of their ability) a Jail Crisis Intervention Referral Form online (here): <https://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/BehavioralHealth/AdultMentalHealthServices/CoordinatedCareTeamsandSpecializedServices/JailCrisisInterventionTeamReferral.aspx> or send a direct email (with relevant information including inmate’s name, Jail ID (#), date of birth, known conditions including medications ect.) to CIT@co.santa-cruz.ca.us. Direct, in-person correspondence can be dropped off (in the form or written letter) to the Jail Reception Center at the Santa Cruz County Main Jail location as well. Lastly, direct contact with the Jail

Behavioral Health Team can be made at (831) 454-865 – to speak personally with an internal crisis worker - or leave a detailed message regarding an inmate’s condition and potential future in Santa Cruz County’s collaborative court system. Due to HIPPA requirements, contacted Jail staff are prohibited from giving concerned friend and family members much information re: at risk (detainees) clients without a signed release of information from the individuals themselves. So this process can be beyond frustrating at times. It’s important for those outside of the criminal justice system to encourage those within – having located inmates and established safe and consistent contact – to submit requests for “Jail Behavioral Health” services themselves. This may take guidance from parties in the know, but these forms are readily available on inmates’ personal tablet systems or from individuals’ housing unit officers. Further information – from outside of custody – regarding alternative or collaborative sentencing options and associated programs and connecting with a justice involved attorney can be found by contacting the Jail Discharge Planner at (831) 454-5171.

Official collaborative court referrals can be made by the Santa Cruz County Jail’s Probation Department, parole officers, the Santa Cruz County District Attorney’s Office, Public Defenders, County Mental Health Department, and assortment of community treatment providers. To refer prospective collaborative/alternative court participants, all interested parties must fill out the appropriate part of the Collaborative Court Referral Packet (found here):

<https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

We’ll include screen shots of the types different forms and documents required throughout the Referral Packet below – but all referring individuals and agencies should definitely include any and all additional mental health records and documents with each submitted defendant referral packet. And if a client is currently incarcerated, request a formal Court Clinician Screening from the Santa Cruz County Court itself. In case you were wondering what the heck a Court Clinician actually is – they will assess each prospective participant’s eligibility and needs. and share their findings directly to court and judicial officials in confidential correspondence. Admission to any one of Santa Cruz County’s collaborative court environments does take time – sometimes significant periods – and is a gradual process of calibration and recalibration to eventuality. Anyone at all interested in the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court system of justice can send inquiries directly to: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org. And review the Collaborative Court Referral Packet that contains the following (referral) forms and documents here: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

SUPCR 1131 Collaborate Courts Referral Information Sheet

SUPCR 1132 Collaborate Courts Contact and Information

SUPCR 1133 Collaborative Courts Release of Information (Substance Use)

SUPCR 1134 Collaborative Courts Release of Information (Mental Health)

BH 306 Authorization to Release / Share Confidential Information

Veterans Release of Information

Veterans SF180 Military Records

CAFES Release of Information

The above documents are the foundations of the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts referral, and ultimate detainee enrollment process. Here are snapshots of the most important/impactful forms/documents on the official Collaborative Court Referral Packet:



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
COLLABORATIVE COURTS OFFICE
701 OCEAN STREET
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 420-2498
www.santacruzcourt.org

Collaborative Courts Contact and Information Form

Penal Codes: 1001.8 1170.9 1001.36 1001.35

Client Name: _____ Date of Referral: _____
DOB: _____ Sex: _____ Phone number: _____
Referral Source Name: _____ Referral Source Phone Number: _____
Case Number(s) _____
Offense(s) _____

Charge Level: Felony Misdemeanor

Violation of Supervision Other

In Custody: Main Jail Rountree Blaine St.

R&R Out of Custody

Military Service: Yes No Unknown

If yes, provide SSN _____

Military Service Types of Discharge:

Honorable General Other than honorable

Bad conduct Dishonorable

Enrolled in VA Services: Yes No

Has been declared PC 1368: Current Past

No Unknown

Healthcare insurance: Yes No

Insurance Provider: _____

County: _____

Primary Care Provider:

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Psychiatrist:

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Therapist:

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Mental Health Diagnosis:

1) _____

Current Past Documented Self-Report

2) _____

Current Past Documented Self-Report

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

SANTA CRUZ BRANCH
 701 Ocean Street, Room 120
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060



WATSONVILLE BRANCH
 1 Second Street, Room 300
 Watsonville, CA 95076

Authorization for Use, Exchange, and/or Discharge of Confidential Substance Use Disorder Information for entry and participation in the Collaborative Courts

I _____, _____
 (print name of client or client's representative) (print date of birth)

hereby authorize the Superior Court of Santa Cruz Collaborative Courts, to disclose

- Mental Health information, Health information, Substance Use treatment history,
 HIV test results and status, Written Assessments Other (specify): _____

to:

Santa Cruz County Department of Probation:

(Name) _____

Santa Cruz County District Attorney Representative:

(Name) _____

Santa Cruz County Public Defender Representative:

(Name) _____

Department of Veterans Affairs:

(Name) _____

Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency:

(Name) _____

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department:

(Name) _____

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

(Name) _____

Goodwill of Central Coast

(Name) _____

Other: _____

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

SANTA CRUZ BRANCH
701 Ocean Street, Room 120
Santa Cruz, CA 95060



WATSONVILLE BRANCH
1 Second Street, Room 300
Watsonville, CA 95076

Authorization for Use, Exchange, and/or Discharge of Confidential Mental Health and Medical Information for entry and participation in the Collaborative Courts

I _____, _____
(print name of client or client's representative) (print date of birth)

hereby authorize the Superior Court of Santa Cruz Collaborative Courts, to disclose

Mental Health information, Health information, Substance Use treatment history,
 HIV test results and status, Written Assessments Other (specify): _____

to:

- Santa Cruz County Department of Probation:
(Name) _____
- Santa Cruz County District Attorney Representative:
(Name) _____
- Santa Cruz County Public Defender Representative:
(Name) _____
- Department of Veterans Affairs:
(Name) _____
- Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency:
(Name) _____
- Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department:
(Name) _____
- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:
(Name) _____
- Goodwill of Central Coast:
(Name) _____
- Other: _____

1	1400 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 Phone: (831) 454-4170 Fax: (831) 454-4663	 Behavioral Health Services <small>FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS</small>	1430 Freedom Blvd. Ste F, Watsonville, CA 95076 Phone: (831) 454-4170 Fax: (831) 454-4663
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Client Legal Name:	Avatar No:
Nickname/Alias:	Date of Birth:
Address:	City: State: Zip:
	Phone:

2 **AUTHORIZATION for the RELEASE/SHARE of CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

I, _____ (PRINT NAME of LEGAL AUTHORIZOR)
 authorize **Behavioral Health Services** **MHP** or **SUDS** (check appropriate box) Staff
 to share (give and/or receive) the below identified information to: (AGENCY/ENTITY) authorized to receive
 my treatment information. [CARES Act permits "organization/agency" for SUD disclosures.]
Recipient Name: _____
Address: _____ **Phone:** _____

[FOR Children's Mental Health (CBH) staff (minor ownership): My signature below confirms that I have assessed this 12-17 year old minor and determined the minor does does not have the capacity to authorize the release of her/his/its protected health information.] _____ / _____ (CBH Staff Signature/Date)

3 **The purpose for the communication, disclosure and exchange of this information is:**

Facilitate treatment/payment/operational coordination Summarize treatment

Other (Specify reason): _____

Claims Assistance Quality of Care Review/Complaint Appointment Support/Scheduling Help

4 I permit staff to release/share the following sensitive information: [please check appropriate boxes]:

All Mental Health Treatment Information: FROM _____ TO _____ [Optional: Specify Unique Date Limit]

All Substance Use Disorder Treatment Information: FROM _____ TO _____ [REQUIRED for SUD: Specify Unique Date Range Limits - 42 CFR section 2.31]

Only the following information (can specify any type and/or date range): _____

Diagnosis Only treatment enrollment confirmation Psychiatry treatment, including medications

HIV/AIDS Test Results (A separate authorization is required for each disclosure & required signer initials): _____

5 **DURATION: This authorization is valid until: _____ (Date or event) or one (1) year from the date this form is signed, whichever date is earlier.**

6 **MY RIGHTS:** (1) I may refuse to sign this Authorization. My refusal will not affect my ability to obtain treatment or eligibility for benefits. (2) I understand that this is a communication release. (3) I understand if I authorize disclosure of my protected health information to someone who is not covered by confidentiality laws (such as a family friend) it is possible that my information may be re-disclosed by that person to someone else. (4) I may revoke this authorization at any time by submitting a written revocation to: Quality Improvement, 1400 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 to activate the revocation effective date. (5) I have the right to a copy of this authorization form and was offered a copy. (Initial: _____)

7 Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

8 Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____
(If signed by someone other than the client, state your legal relationship to the client): _____

Behavioral Health Staff (Print/Sign): _____ Date: _____

Legal Guardian or Conservator must provide a copy of current legal appointment papers to receive information

Client Name: _____ Client # _____

SUDS



Santa Cruz Office
1400 Emeline Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Phone: (831) 454-4170
Fax: (831) 454-4663

Watsonville Office
1430 Freedom Blvd. Suite F
Watsonville, CA 95076
Phone: (831) 763-8200
Fax: (831) 763-8231

SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES CONSENT FOR ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD EXCHANGE

County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services, and Network Providers utilize a secure, shared Electronic Health Record (EHR) system called Avatar to store your Protected Health Information (PHI). PHI that is stored in the shared EHR system includes but is not limited to your personal identifying information, payment information, assessments, treatment plans, progress notes, medications, and drug testing results. Having your PHI stored in the shared EHR system provides many benefits to you by allowing your care providers faster access to your health records and enabling them to better coordinate your care to ensure the best possible treatment for you. In the event of an emergency or disaster, consenting to allow your treatment providers to access your PHI in the shared EHR allows your care providers to give you faster, more effective, timely treatment when it matters most. County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services and Network Providers are committed to upholding the confidentiality of all EHR stored in Avatar in accordance with both federal and State privacy regulations including Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), 42 CFR Part 2 and the CARES Act. Only providers directly involved with your care have authorization to access your EHR for the purposes of treatment, payment, or healthcare operations.

Current List of Avatar Providers

County of Santa Cruz Mental Health Treating Providers • County of Santa Cruz SUD Treating Providers
Encompass Mental Health Treating Providers • Encompass Community Recovery SUD Treating Providers
• Janus of Santa Cruz SUD Treating Providers • Sobriety Works SUD Treating Providers • New Life
Community Center SUD Treating providers • Volunteer Center Mental Health Treating Providers • Front
Street Mental Health Treating Providers • Pajaro Valley Prevention & Student Assistance Mental Health
Treating Providers • Pajaro Valley Prevention & Student Assistance SUD Prevention Treating Providers •
Haven of Hope Mental Health Treating Providers • Parent Center Mental Health Treating Providers •
Telecare Crisis Stabilization Program • Horizon Service Providers

How Is My Privacy Protected?

County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services and participating Network Providers use a combination of safeguards to protect your PHI. Technical safeguards include encryption, password protection and the ability to track every viewer's usage of the system. All participating providers must agree to follow written policies controlling access to information through the shared EHR system. Participating providers must follow federal 42 CFR Part 2, CARES Act and HIPAA regulations; in addition to federal and State privacy laws. Please reference our Notice of Privacy Practices that was provided to you for more information.



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

POST OFFICE BOX 962, 1060 EMLINE AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-0962
SANTA CRUZ HEALTH CENTER WATSONVILLE HEALTH CENTER
1060 EMLINE AVE. 1430 FREEDOM BLVD.
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060 WATSONVILLE, CA 95076
(831) 454-4100 FAX (831) 454-4296 (831) 763-8400 FAX (831) 763-8237
TDD: (831) 454-4123

OUTPATIENT MEDICAL CLINICS DIVISION

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION FROM MEDICAL RECORDS

I, _____

Hereby authorize

To furnish to

(name and address of person or organization)

(name and address of person or organization)

any and all records obtained in the course of my diagnosis and treatment, which pertain to and may include the mention of alcohol and/or drug abuse, psychiatric illness, HIV+, AIDS Related Complex (ARC), and/or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), concerning:

(patient's name)

(patient's social security number)

(patient's date of birth)

(patient's medical record number)

The disclosure of records is required for the following purposes: _____

The disclosure shall be limited to the following specific types of information: _____

This consent shall expire: _____
(date)

I understand I have a right to receive a copy of this authorization upon my request.

Copy requested and received: Yes _____ No _____ Initials _____

A copy of this consent is just as valid as an original.

Patient signature

(date)

Witness name and title

Parent, guardian or authorized representative of patient

PROHIBITION ON REDISCLOSURE: This information is being disclosed to you from records which confidentiality is protected by federal law. Federal regulations (42CFR part 2) prohibit you from making any further disclosure of this information except with a specific written consent of the person to whom it pertains.

REQUEST FOR AND AUTHORIZATION TO
RELEASE HEALTH INFORMATION

PRIVACY ACT AND PAPER WORK REDUCTION ACT INFORMATION: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires us to notify you that this information collection is in accordance with the clearance requirements of section 3507 of the Act. We may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. We anticipate that the time expended by all individuals who must complete this form will average 2 minutes. This includes the time it will take to read the instructions, gather the necessary facts and fill out this form. The execution of this form does not authorize the release of information other than that specifically described below.

The information requested on this form is solicited under Title 38 U.S.C. The form authorizes release of information in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164; 5 U.S.C. 552c; and 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 7332 that you specify. Your disclosure of the information requested on this form is voluntary. However, if information needed to locate records for release is not furnished completely and accurately, VA will be unable to comply with the request. The Veterans Health Administration may not condition the provision of treatment, payment, enrollment in the VA Health Care Program, or eligibility for benefits on the signing of an authorization, except for research-related treatment where an authorization for the use or disclosure of individually-identifiable health information for such research is required. VA may disclose the information that you put on the form as permitted by law. VA may make a "routine use" disclosure of the information as outlined in the Privacy Act system of records notices identified as 24VA18A7 "Patient Medical Record - VA", 08VA05 "Employee Medical File System Records (Title 38)-VA" and in accordance with the Notice of Privacy Practices. VA may also use this information to identify Veterans and persons claiming or receiving VA benefits and their records, and for other purposes authorized or required by law.

TO: DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (Name and Address of VA Health Care Facility)

VA Palo Alto Health Care System
3801 Miranda Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94304

LAST NAME- FIRST NAME- MIDDLE NAME

DATE OF BIRTH (mm/dd/yyyy)

PATIENT'S MAILING ADDRESS (including City, State and Zip Code)

NAME AND ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION, INDIVIDUAL, OR TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL TO WHOM INFORMATION IS TO BE RELEASED
Santa Cruz Veterans Court (701 Ocean St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060), all affiliated individuals, agencies, attorneys, and court evaluator - see attached listing.

PURPOSE(S) OR NEED: Information is to be used by the requestor for:

TREATMENT BENEFITS LEGAL EMPLOYMENT OTHER (Please specify) _____

INFORMATION REQUESTED: Check applicable box(es) and state the extent or nature of information to be provided.

HEALTH SUMMARY (Prior 2 Years)

INPATIENT DISCHARGE SUMMARY (Date): _____

PROGRESS NOTES:

SPECIFIC CLINICS (Name & Date Range): _____

SPECIFIC PROVIDERS (Name & Date Range): _____

DATE RANGE: _____

OPERATIVE/CLINICAL PROCEDURES (Name & Date): _____

LAB RESULTS:

SPECIFIC TESTS (Name & Date): All drug tox screens as deemed relevant by the court

DATE RANGE: _____

RADIOLOGY REPORTS (Name & Date): _____

LIST OF ACTIVE MEDICATIONS: _____

FLU VACCINATION (Dose, Lot Number, Date & Location): _____

OTHER (Describe): All relevant medical record information needed for court supervision

REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

Requests can be submitted online using eVetRecs at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

To ensure the best possible service, please thoroughly review the accompanying instructions before filling out this form. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY OR TYPE BELOW.

SECTION I - INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS (Furnish as much information as possible.)

1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (last, first, full middle)	2. SOCIAL SECURITY #	3. DATE OF BIRTH	4. PLACE OF BIRTH
--	----------------------	------------------	-------------------

5. SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT (For an effective records search, it is important that ALL service be shown below.)

	BRANCH OF SERVICE	DATE UNTIL/END	DATE RELEASED	OFFICER	ENLISTED	SERVICE NUMBER (If unknown, write "unknown")
a. ACTIVE				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. RESERVE				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. NATIONAL GUARD				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. PLEASE LIST LAST FOUR DUTY STATIONS, IF KNOWN: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

7. IS THIS PERSON DECEASED? NO YES - MUST provide Date of Death if veteran is deceased: _____

8. DID THIS PERSON RETIRE FROM MILITARY SERVICE? NO YES

SECTION II - INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

1. CHECK THE ITEM(S) YOU ARE REQUESTING:

DD Form 214 or equivalent: Year(s) in which form(s) issued to veteran (Date of Separation): _____
This form contains information used to verify military service. An UNDELETED DD Form 214 is ordinarily required to determine eligibility for benefits. If you request a DELETED copy, the following items will be blacked out: authority for separation, reason for separation, readjustment eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and, for separations after June 30, 1979, character of separation and dates of time lost. Please note - recent veterans may be able to request a DD Form 214 through eVetRecs by visiting: <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/>
An UNDELETED copy will be sent UNLESS YOU SPECIFY A DELETED COPY by checking this box: I want a DELETED copy.

Official Military Personnel File (OMPF): The OMPF may include duty stations and assignments, training and qualifications, awards and decorations received, disciplinary actions, administrative remarks, enlistment and/or discharge information (including DD Form 214, Report of Separation, or equivalent), and other personnel actions. Detailed information about the veteran's participation in battles and their military engagements is NOT contained in the record.

Medical Records: Includes health (outpatient), extended ambulatory, and dental records. If inpatient/hospitalization records are requested, please specify below:
 I request inpatient/hospitalization records from _____ (facility), last treated in _____ (year). (NOTE: Fields are required)
If available, you may receive copies of inpatient narrative summaries, operative reports, discharge summaries, etc. contained in the record.

Dental Records: Please check this box if ONLY dental records are needed from the medical record.

Other (Please Specify): _____

2. PURPOSE: (Providing information about the purpose of the request is voluntary; however, it may help to provide the best possible response and may result in a faster reply. Information provided will in no way be used to make a decision to deny the request.)

Benefits (explain) Employment VA Loan Programs Medical Genealogy Correction Personal Other (explain)

Explain here: _____

SECTION III - RETURN ADDRESS AND SIGNATURE

1. REQUESTER NAME: _____

2. RELATIONSHIP TO VETERAN: _____

3. I am the MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER OR VETERAN (identified in Section I, above).
 I am the DECEASED VETERAN'S NEXT-OF-KIN (MUST submit Proof of Death. See item 2a on instruction sheet.)

4. SEND INFORMATION/DOCUMENTS TO:
(Please print or type. See item 4 on accompanying instructions.)
Xavier Bianchi Veteran Advocate Santa Cruz County
Name
842 Front St.
Street Address
Santa Cruz CA 95060
City State ZIP Code
831-281-0388 831-458-7116
Daytime Phone Fax Number

5. AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE: I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the information in this Section 3 is true and correct and that I authorize the release of the requested information. (See item 2a or 2b on the accompanying instructions sheet. Without the Authorization Signature of the veteran, next-of-kin of deceased veteran, veteran's legal guardian, authorized government agent, or other authorized representative, only limited information can be released unless the request is archival. No signature is required if the request is for archival records.)

Signature Required - Do not print Date

* This form is available at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html> on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) website. *

xavier.bianchi@santacruzcountyca.gov
Email Address



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

FERNANDO GERALDO, CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER
MAILING: P.O. BOX 112, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061
PH: (831) 454-2159 FAX: (831) 454-2127 • PH: (831) 765-8070 FAX: (831) 765-8233

"A Safe and Thriving Community with Justice for All"

Authorization for Use, Exchange, and/or Discharge of Confidential Information

Purpose of disclosure: To help assess and determine progress and compliance while under supervision.

General Release Signature: _____

General Consent: This consent remains in effect until my evaluation for or participation in services. Recipients of this information may re-disclose and use this information only in connection with their official duties.

- Check all that apply: ALL
- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barrios Unidos | <input type="checkbox"/> Encompass | <input type="checkbox"/> Janus | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Discipline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Office of Educ. | <input type="checkbox"/> First 5 Santa Cruz County | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaders in Community Alt. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sobriety Works |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Court | <input type="checkbox"/> Goodwill | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentors | <input type="checkbox"/> Streets to Schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Hope Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Monarch Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Center |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> New Life Community Svc. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Mental Health (MH)/Medical Signature: _____

For Mental Health/Medical Consent: A recipient of medical information pursuant to this authorization may not further disclose the medical information except in accordance with a new authorization that meets the requirements of California Health and Safety Code section 56.11, or as specifically required or permitted by law.

- Check all that apply: ALL
- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barrios Unidos | <input type="checkbox"/> Encompass | <input type="checkbox"/> Janus | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Discipline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Office of Educ. | <input type="checkbox"/> First 5 Santa Cruz County | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaders in Community Alt. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sobriety Works |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Court | <input type="checkbox"/> Goodwill | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentors | <input type="checkbox"/> Streets to Schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Hope Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Monarch Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Center |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> New Life Community Svc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Signature: _____

For Substance Use Disorder Consent: Substance use disorder records are protected under the federal regulations governing Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records, 42 C.F.R. Part 2, and cannot be disclosed without my written consent unless otherwise provided for in the regulations.

- Check all that apply: ALL
- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barrios Unidos | <input type="checkbox"/> Encompass | <input type="checkbox"/> Janus | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Discipline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Office of Educ. | <input type="checkbox"/> First 5 Santa Cruz County | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaders in Community Alt. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sobriety Works |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Court | <input type="checkbox"/> Goodwill | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentors | <input type="checkbox"/> Streets to Schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Hope Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Monarch Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Center |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> New Life Community Svc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

I, _____, _____
(Print name of client or client's representative) (Print date of birth)

hereby authorize the Santa Cruz County Probation Department to disclose and receive confidential information contained in their file to the agencies indicated above.

I understand that any of this information may be used by the Probation Officer in any report to the Court and, therefore, be available to the District Attorney and my attorney.

I may revoke my consent verbally or in writing at any time (except to the extent that action has already been taken), and if not earlier revoked, it shall terminate one year from today on (date): _____.

Signature: _____ <small>Signature of client or client's representative</small>	Date: _____	Witnessed by: _____ <small>Signature</small>
Legal relationship of above signer: _____	Date: _____	

Collaborative Courts Referral packet forms:

[Collaborative Courts Referral packet](#)

JAIL 101 CUSTODY ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (CAPS) GUIDE

Facing mounting societal and financial pressures to maintain, contain and otherwise “put a cap on” inmate populations in their local Jail Systems, Counties across the state are turning to a wide, and ever-growing array of “alternatives to custody-based-punishments.” Known in the corrections space by many names – including “alternatives to incarceration” or as in Santa Cruz County “Custody Alternative Programs,” – punishments and treatment responses to offenders (minor to medium-level typically) that involve means *other than* confinement in a locked facility have collectively proven themselves to be beneficial for individuals (inmates) involved and for society as a whole. Our own Santa Cruz County Jail’s Custody Alternative/Work Release Program, “CAPS” provides qualified community members – usually at the point of sentencing – with two major alternatives to incarceration: its “Work Release Program” and “Electronic Monitoring Program.” It’s worth briefly mentioning that CAPS *also* include the Santa Cruz County Sherriff Parole Program – a local offering that we’ll choose not to go into too much detail here.

The implementation, general (legal and societal) acceptance and growing utilization of these two impactful and system-shifting custody alternative programs creates a clear path and avenue for (potential) inmates to be held fully accountable for their actions, crimes, and/or offenses while maintaining their dignity, connections with the “outside world,” and completely eliminating the oft-disastrous toll that incarceration can have on their personal, professional, and financial wellbeing.

Santa Cruz County’s CAPS, under the auspices of the Sheriff’s office, currently operates/facilitates two basic alternatives to incarceration – its work release and electronic monitoring programs –but many other California counties in California offer a wider, more expansive array of non-custodial options for their (qualified) residents to choose from during their terms of punishment. After close study, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors authorized local County correctional administrators to establish CAPS - and its core of groundbreaking “Work Release” and “Electronic Monitoring” programs. In its research and deep dive into the world of (potential) custody alternative programs, the Supervisors concluded that the Jail’s foundational CAPS avenues could potentially reduce pervasive overcrowding issues, provide significant cost savings to both the County *and* local taxpayers, and enhance public safety by reducing recidivism through rehabilitation.

The pressure to adopt and expand alternatives to custody-based punishment is growing across the state of California, and counties like Santa Cruz have increasingly begun to view programs like CAPS as a cost-effective means of holding offenders accountable while not negatively impacting public safety. Overcrowding in the Santa Cruz County Jail has been a pervasive issue for years, and by keeping potential inmates out of jail, embedded within the community, programs like CAPS help to alleviate the serious strain put on its often overcrowded and otherwise unsubstantial facilities. Jail is expensive – especially in California counties like Santa Cruz – where their costs per inmate are consistently among the highest in the nation. Custody alternatives like CAPS are proven cost-effective solutions – saving correctional systems *and taxpayers* millions of dollars every year. Some contend that releasing low-to-mid level offenders directly (back) into the community is a dangerous proposition, and a threat to overall public safety. But multiple studies have proven that custody alternatives like CAPS – which allow for an array of community-based treatments, rehabilitation, education, support and interventions – cause approved participants to become less likely to reoffend (reducing recidivism) and decrease crime rates within their communities.

In addition to their inherent systemic and societal benefits, incarceration alternative programs, like Santa Cruz County’s CAPS, provide a bounty of rewards to participants *themselves*. After being approved by a judge to enter CAPS at time of sentencing, potential enrollees are allowed the opportunity to maintain foundational ties and important connections with their friends, families, and loved ones – while continuing to receive and provide support emotionally and financially. Those granted an opportunity to enter the Jail’s CAPS services – into either the “Work Release Program” or “Electronic Monitoring Program” – are allowed to

satisfy their obligation to the County of Santa Cruz and the justice system while maintaining their employment and education status, and their overall ability (capability) to satisfy important social and financial obligations within the community. The Jail's CAPS programs help keep families together. Period. Instead of spending day, weeks, or months in lockup, individuals are allowed to continue being a mother, father, breadwinner and supporter, and establish a more constructive and established lifestyle. Instead of periods unquestionably traumatic confined punishment, CAPS allows for approved participants to fulfill their obligation to the court and society while breaking long-engrained cycles of criminal behavior through rehabilitation. The educational, behavioral health, substance use/abuse, and vocational skills that CAPS provides enrollees through modified sentencing are paramount for participants to reestablish themselves and successfully reintegrate into the community.

Santa Cruz County residents who are charged with a criminal offense and deemed "worthy for alternative incarceration" by a sitting judge during their sentencing, are typically referred to the Jail's Sheriff-facilitated CAPS system. And depending on a variety of circumstances and endemic issues, inherent the exact nature and seriousness of their mostly low-to-medium-level charges and crimes, given the valuable opportunity to enter either the "Electronic Monitoring Program" or "Work Release Program." Would-be-inmates who receive sentences of 30 days or less, are typically allowed to serve their alternative sentences in the Work Release Program – where they perform various types of semi-strenuous jobs and community-based service work in lieu of "normal" incarceration in the Santa Cruz County Jail. The ultimate decision regarding approval and exact CAPS placement always rests with the sitting judge during times of sentencing, but most would-be-inmates receiving custody alternative sentences of more than 30 days, are referred to Jail's sophisticated Electronic Monitoring Program. Under comprehensive 24/7 electronic surveillance – usually through a unbreakable ankle monitor - qualified Electronic Monitoring Program participants satisfy their court ordered sentences while continuing their community-based involvement in pre-approved activities such as treatment programs, schools and classes, volunteerism, religious events, and various forms of employment.

It's worth noting that there are certain instances when a judge's (the Court's) recommendation for CAP acceptance doesn't guarantee enrollment in any of its programs. The ultimate decision to enroll charged and sentenced persons, rests on the Sheriff's Office and County CAP officers. If an individual is denied entrance into CAP by a judge at their time of sentencing, they *will have to* serve their full sentence in the Santa Cruz County Jail. That's the deal.

We'll more-than-happily break down, closely examine, and analyze the operations, policies (including costs relating to), participant obligations, and important processes inherent to both the Electronic Monitoring Program and the Work Release Program below. Due to their proven efficacy, and potential rewards for qualified participants - and society as a whole - the Jail and Sheriff's foundational custody alternative options (programs and possibilities) are certainly worth a full investigation - for those who find themselves emmeshed within the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system at any level.

CAPS INFORMATION: HOURS AND LOCATION

The Custody Alternative Program (CAP) is headquartered within the Santa Cruz County Main Jail. The Main Jail Lobby has two windows to choose from – the CAP office is on the left as you enter. Those interested in CAP and any of its services (programs including Electronic Monitoring and Work Release) can visit the CAP Office's "Service Hours" from 8:00AM to 6:00PM Monday through Wednesday - and during the same time every other Thursday.

The CAP Office is located at the Main Jail here:

239 Water Street, Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

The CAP Office phone number is:

(831) 454-7814

CAPS: ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM

The “Electronic Monitoring Program” functions as a vital custody alternative geared towards Santa Cruz County low-to -mid level offenders who (generally) pose miniscule risk to society, yet whose patterns and behavior still warrant close surveillance and supervision. The program is generally designed for those who require a larger amount of attention that its sister “Work Release” program can typically provide. Those who qualify for the CAP’s Electronic Monitoring Program, following approval and referral from a judge (the Court) during time of sentencing (and an ultimate “OK” from CAP officers and the Sherriff’s Office) are generously provided the opportunity to “serve their time” and pay their debt to society under what’s collectively known as “house arrest.” It’s worth explain that “house arrest” doesn’t mean just “houses;” Electronic Monitoring Program participants can serve sentences in a variety of settings – treatment centers, behavioral health and substance abuse programs, and a variety of structured residential environments. Instead of spending long and arduous days in the dark and cavernous cell blocks within the Santa Cruz County Jail, those enrolled in the Electronic Monitoring Program are allowed to remain in the community - comparatively free - but with restricted movement and the required-wearing of a non-removable, tamper-resistant anklet.

Program participants must wear their sophisticated GPS-equipped ankle monitoring device 24/7, for the duration of their court ordered sentence. They’re still legally considered to be “in custody,” and clients’ movements are closely surveilled and severely restricted with different rules, requirements and stipulations. Those participating in the Sherriff’s Electronic Monitoring Program are allowed to leave their place of residence, and enjoy *some* environments and community-based resources– such as schools, places of employment, counseling services, treatment programs, medical care, and other activities – following an individualized plan and rigidly established schedule approved by the Sherriff’s Office. Under general stipulations, those in the Electronic Monitoring Program are not allowed to attend non-scheduled (or approved) functions and environments – like parties, sporting events, or any type of vacations. The enormous amount of GPS data generated their tiny little, virtually indestructible ankle devices allows CAP officers to monitor their step-by-step movements and general habits, and to pinpoint wearers’ exact location any time of the day or evening. CAP administrators stress that those involved in the Electronic Monitoring Program, though they are relatively free to move about society, are still considered to be “in custody.” This means that CAP officers can perform all manner of random searches, evaluations, and interventions to ensure that (all) Program participants are following set forth rules and adhering to their specified schedule at any time. Totally “out of the blue” house visits and random blood tests are the norm for CAP participants, with different types and extents of monitoring generally depending on the nature and seriousness of their current and past convictions.

CAPS officers and the Sherriff’s Office closely monitor and evaluate the progress and compliance of those participating in the Electronic Monitoring Program; ensuring the adherence to the specific details set forth in each individual’s unique conditions of release. While electronic anklet wearers are free to explore parts of the community at certain times and under specific conditions, many areas are off limits and deemed “restricted” – especially in cases where victims or serious infractions are involved. There is no set limit on the duration of a (custody alternative) sentence to participate in either CAP Program. And there definitely are situations, crimes or legal matters cases that eliminate a perspective participant from being accepted into them as well. While enrollees in the Electronic Monitoring Program are generally “free” to move about the community on a limited bases the CAP service isn’t free in and of itself; and comes with a rather sizable financial obligation. Those approved and deemed worth for the Electronic Monitoring Program must pay an application fee of \$125 up front. To cover device, cell contract, and administrative costs, anklet wearing participants must also shell out a substantial \$35 each day. These fees, which can quickly add up over time,

must be paid on a weekly basis. Fees aside, the alternative custody and community-based confinement options and that the Jail's CAP and Electronic Monitoring Program allow for seem worth it in the end – at all levels.

CAPS: WORK RELEASE

Like the Electronic Monitoring Program, the Jail-centered and Sherriff-facilitated “Work Release Program” provides another important non-custodial option for approved low-level offenders in Santa Cruz County. After satisfying certain established criteria, those given the “go” to enter the Work Release Program are able to serve their sentence and pay their court-ordered debt to society through the placement in and performance of community-based service work assignments. As opposed to Electronic Monitoring Program, the majority of Work Release assignees have behavior and charges for offenses that don't warrant the need for close supervision and surveillance. Once a convicted (typically) low-level offender is sentenced by a judge in court, and deemed “fit” by him/her for (possible) alternative custody sentencing, an application is quickly sent to the Work Release Program (CAP Officers and Sherriff) to determine if one's charges, current behavior and state, and criminal history are enough for them to serve their “time” in the program. With approval and direction from CAP and the Sheriff's Office, Work Release participants can begin assignments (not to their choosing) at specific worksites throughout Santa Cruz County. It's worth highlighting that the Work Release Program is specifically designed for low-level offenders with sentences of *30 days or less* – who pay their debt with periodic (not constant) days of community service in lieu of incarceration inside the Santa Cruz County Jail.

Those who are convicted and sentenced to perform community-based labor at designated sites in Santa Cruz County, as assigned by a CAP officer (under the direction of the Sherriff), perform unpaid work to avoid being “locked up.” Not only are Work Release Program participants not paid for their hours and days of court-ordered work, they must pay a pretty penny *themselves* just to do so. The Program involves an initial application fee of \$125 and a daily fee of \$13.25 after that. The total amount required varies depending on the sentence and number of required days and hours but can be considerable for someone struggling just to maintain and reestablish themselves (socially and financially) after being charged and convicted of a crime. However, there's no doubt that most given the opportunity to enter alternative incarceration avenues like Work Release, in lieu of long periods of separation and lockup, would jump to do so. The Work Release Program may seem like forced, almost slave labor in some regards, but participants are given time to reestablish themselves and reintegrate back into the community. They are not court-ordered to perform community-based labor each and every day -as some would expect (given the serious situation and the fact that they are technically, still “in custody”).

Program participants can continue to go to work, support their families, go to school, and complete their sentences by doing court-ordered obligations on weekends and their days off. Depending on an individual's life and work schedule, he or she can choose to work a minimum of 2 days a week, up to 5 days a week. Convicted, low level offenders given the powerful opportunity to perform community-oriented service work instead of entering the Jail might not know what to expect when they show up to the job site on the first day. In contrast with normal “court ordered service” for minor, rather mundane infractions, the work sites, roles, and exact tasks assigned in the Work Release Program are not cherry picked from the long list of available, assistance-seeking community-based organizations managed by the Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County. After being assigned to a job site by the CAP officers and the Work Release Program, new enrollees are given a fixed day and start time – usually 8:00AM – to begin serving their sentence.

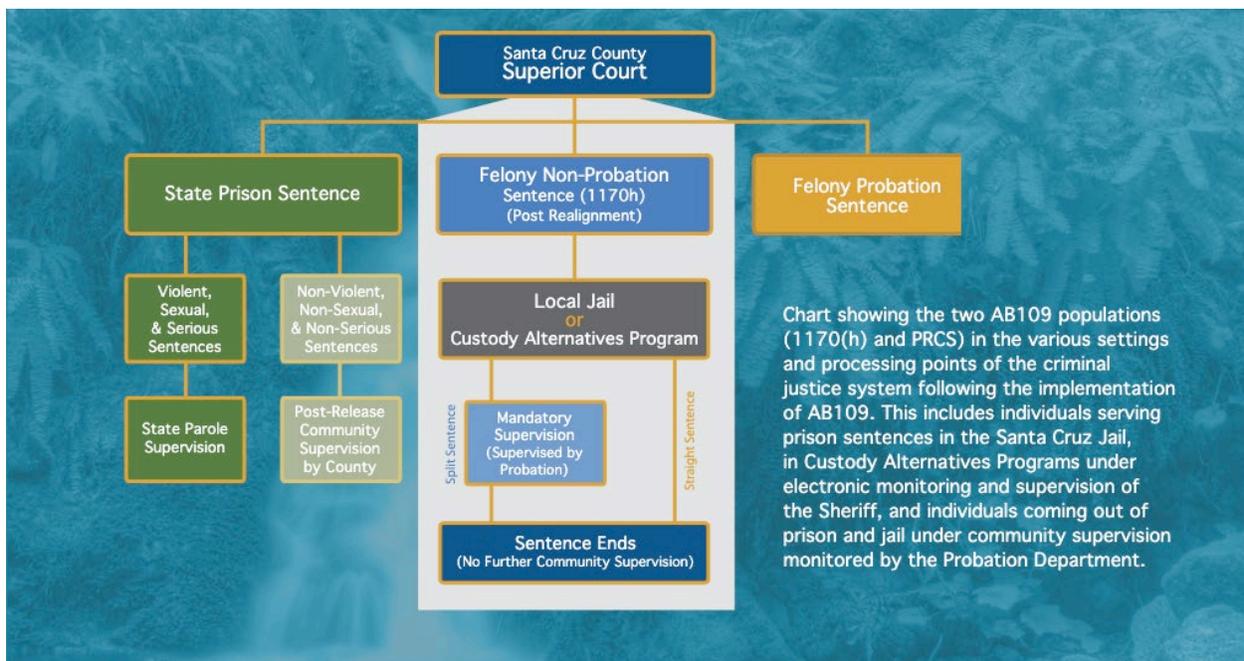
After a brief check-in a monitoring site supervisor, covering the new position's rules, job responsibilities, required tasks and role specifics, participants can expect to work for at least 7 hours. Lunch breaks are always given, but are taken onsite – so bringing snacks, food, and beverages is a must. Unless serious issues arise, or

important conflict of interest, once a work environment is chosen by CAP officers, the decision assignment is final. Personal preferences and general wants are only accommodated and granted on rare occasions. Due to the flexibility and potentially life-changing freedoms inherent to the Work Release Program as an alternative to in-custody incarceration, most Santa Cruz residents who find themselves charged, convicted, and eventually sentenced for a crime in local courts, will ask the judge to grant them admittance – and experience incredible relief and gratitude if and when approved.

AFFECTS OF “REALIGNMENT” IN THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY JAIL

California’s Public Safety Alignment, or simply “Realignment” was implemented almost 15 years ago as an innovative way to slam the revolving door and ever-troublesome recidivism of low-level offenders (inmates) cycling in and out of the state’s jail and prison systems. Resting squarely on the shoulders of Assembly Bills AB109 and AB117, Realignment paved the way for the development and eventual launch and implementation of a bounty of innovative and cost-effective custody-alternative programs, or alternatives to incarceration – including CAPS in Santa Cruz County. Programs like the Santa Cruz County Probation Department’s Custody Alternative Programs (CAPS) – that include offerings like expansive pretrial services, work and supervised release opportunities, Warrant Reduction Advocacy Projects (WRAP), electronic monitoring systems, and a collection of other post-sentence custody-alternatives – allow Jail systems like our own to have the choice, flexibility and ability to dramatically reduce pervasive overcrowding, while providing an avenue for low-level offenders to avoid the potentially traumatic conditions of confinement – and ensuring that the required housing, supervision, and correctional services for perpetrators of more serious crimes and offenses are given as needed.

Santa Cruz County’s Alternative Sentencing Structure Under “Realignment” (AB 109)



Through the Santa Cruz County Probation Department’s CAPS – including its two foundational Work Release and Electronic Monitoring Programs – the Santa Cruz County Jail’s population has been cut by an estimated average of 50 inmates (or beds) per day. These Realignment-inspired local CAPS programs have proven

themselves to be cost-effective solutions to maintaining overall public and Jail safety, while providing a smooth road and seamless transition - from incarceration to community – to qualifying (typically low-level) offenders. Early on, as a part of California’s Realignment of jails and prisons, Santa Cruz County’s Custody Alternative Program (CAP) established itself as one of the State’s finest custody-alternative frameworks – receiving a highly-prized California State Association of Counties (CSAC) “Challenge Merit Award.” The often-dramatic move from in-to-out-of-custody is realized and facilitated through a structured framework of (first) risk assessment, comprehensive case management, and close community supervision. Before being allowed to participate in any of the Probation Department’s Custody Alternative Programs (CAPS), and given the official “green light” from the Jail and Court for a release and attempted re-integration (back) into society, current and potential inmates (typically offenders of low-level crimes) must first endure an in-depth evaluation, case review, and overall need and risk assessment.

Under California’s Public Safety “Realignment” – the Santa Cruz County Jail assumed full responsibility for two (mostly low-level) offender populations that had previously been under the purview of the State’s prison system (under the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation). If the term “low-level offender” (which we’ve used repeatedly throughout) seems broad or somewhat nebulous to you ... it can be. Typically, though, this inmate population - widely known in the corrections space as “Non-Non-Nons” – largely consists of lower-level felony offenders who are sentenced for non-violent, non-serious, non-sexual offenses. Examples of crimes and low-level felony offenses typical of the “Non-Non-Non” group include auto theft, drug possession, possession or receiving of stolen property, burglary, and possession of controlled substances for sale.

Realignment created a framework that allows for Non-Non-Nons in the criminal justice system to do two things: First, it establishes an avenue for lower-level felony offenders being released from state prisons to enter (directly) into custody-alternative programs like Santa Cruz County’s CAPS (officially known as Post Release Community Supervision). Second, it allows for non-serious, non-violent, non-sexual felony offenders who are sentenced to new prison terms to serve their time locally, within the confines of Santa Cruz County Jail instead. The court’s “split sentencing” program – which allows for Non-Non-Nons charged with and sentenced for low-level offenses to serve portions of their time in custody, and then under community supervision – will be discussed further below. Combatting recidivism and shutting the endlessly revolving door ushering low-level offenders in, out and then back into the correctional system, was a chief focus and force behind California’s sweeping Public Safety Realignment. The development of custody-alternatives like CAPS allows for low-level offenders – Non-Non-Nons facing sentences for chronic drug/substance abuse and property crimes – a group that empirically recidivates at the highest rate among all offender populations – to safely rehabilitate and remain actively engaged and accountable in non-correctional environments while creating vital space and resources for those charged and sentenced for more-serious crimes.

During the time when inmates are awaiting trial - prior to entering the court for their sentencing - extensive pretrial evaluations are conducted by the CAP team in order to determine program eligibility. The Santa Cruz County Probation Department’s “Pretrial Services Division” uses an intricate and rather expansive validated risk assessment system in to determine whether a defendant (with an upcoming trial) needs to be incarcerated in the Santa Cruz County Jail, or could potentially qualify for CAPS and “safely” serve their time (under supervision) in the community. Based upon perceived risk factors – current state/condition and previous criminal history – CAP Team recommendations may be made for ongoing incarceration (for an inmate’s entire term of sentence), probation supervised release (including Work Release Program), admission into the Electronic Monitoring Program, and in some cases immediate release under one’s own recognizance. The multi-disciplinary partnership between the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office and the Probation Department, the “CAP Team” allows for low-level offenders – who meet certain criteria, specific classifications and certain program requirements - to serve all or a portion of their sentences in the community - under law enforcement supervision - in lieu of correctional housing.

The collection of alternatives to incarceration endemic to the Santa Cruz County Probation Department's CAPS, as a component of AB 109 and California's larger Public Safety Realignment, have dramatically curbed the Jail's pervasive problem of recidivism, helped to alleviate the impact of local budget deficits and financial stresses, and have helped to ease the physical and emotional toll and associated traumas that incarceration could potentially exert on hundreds of individuals and their families. The Santa Cruz County's Probation Department plays an instrumental role in the administration of CAPS and the local Jail's Realignment plans under AB109. And Probation Department Officers provide comprehensive case management services that assess the specific needs of individuals, ascertain associated risk levels and recidivism potential, manage service referrals in and outside of the Jail, and provide foundational support to (eventual CAPS qualifying) offenders that ensure they stay actively engaged, motivated, and totally accountable (and available) through the dramatic process of reentry - back into their communities.

Through proper risk assessments (for recidivism), one-on-one case planning, support and management, in depth interviewing, and constant monitoring, CAPS evidence-based probation supervision and criminal justice interventions collectively work to ensure the ultimate success of qualified participants without jeopardizing the overall safety of the general public.

“SPLIT SENTENCING:” WHAT IT MEANS FOR INMATES IN THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY JAIL SYSTEM

California's system-shaking Public Safety "Realignment" didn't *just* shift the way Jails and court systems treat Non-Non-Nons and low-level offender populations. It also changed the way that judges can impose and deliver structured sentences as well. Currently judges, including those presiding in Santa Cruz County courts, have complete discretion to deliver "split sentences" – highly structured hybrid devices allowing for low-level offenders to effectively "split" their sentences between terms in the Santa Cruz County Jail (or state prison system), and mandatory periods of community-based supervision (CAPS). As a whole, Realignment, and custody-alternative innovations like CAPS, were established to help ease the considerable (physical and financial) strain on California's overcrowded and bottlenecked jail and prison systems – to ensure that the necessary space and resources remain available for an ever-growing number of more-serious, more-violent criminal offenders who (truly) require them. The ultimate goal of "split sentencing" is to reduce pervasive problems of recidivism by combining the impact and deterrence of incarceration with the supportive and rehabilitative structure of community-based alternatives (like the Probation Department's CAPS).

Repeat offenders of low-level felonies and other non-serious crimes shuffle in and out of the Santa Cruz County Jail at a dizzying rate – and sometimes it is appropriate, necessary even, to enact an in-custody deterrent and/or punishment before a referral to CAPS and community-based supervision. Judges can create a detailed plan and cohesive structure that allows for qualified individuals to begin their rehabilitation efforts during their days and weeks in jail, and effectively continue during their supervised release and transition (back) into society. A presiding judge has complete discretion regarding how to split a potential CAPS-qualifier's sentence between community supervision (including Electronic Monitoring and Work Release Programs) and incarceration – with tailored plans designed to uphold the punitive side of the law while allowing for community-based monitoring, rehabilitation, and societal reintegration.

Of course, not every individual, even the most-obvious Non-Non-Non case, will qualify for split sentencing - or any of Santa Cruz County's CAPS offerings for that matter. Judges, the courts, and CAPS officers themselves must carefully consider an individual's offense severity, chance and likelihood of compliance with community-based supervision decrees, criminal history, and other case-specific circumstances. A judge's split-sentence ruling may include weeks or months of incarceration within the Santa Cruz County Jail followed by weeks or months enrollment in CAPS-oriented probation programs – in which certain conditions, requirements and step-by-step

stipulations must be met throughout. The structure, intricacies, and specific policies endemic to the Sheriff's and Probation Department's Custody Alternative Programming have been discussed previously (CAPS Intro) – but split sentencing could be an intriguing prospect and potential avenue for new or low-level criminal offenders – and their friends and family members supporting them– attempting to make sense of and navigate through the complicated levels of Santa Cruz County Jail and criminal justice systems. For current inmates and affected friends and family members alike, having at least a rudimentary understanding of CAPS and associated split sentencing potentials could prove helpful in mapping out a reentry and rehabilitative plan among yourselves and legal counsel.

TYPES OF SENTENCES PRESIDING JUDGES IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY COURTS CAN IMPOSE (INCLUDING PROBATION AND CAPS-ORIENTED CUSTODY ALTERNATIVES)

In addition to having a complete understanding of the way the Santa Cruz County's Probation Department's Custody Alternative Programs (CAPS) for qualified new and current inmates in the County Jail and criminal justice system, it's worth quickly breaking down the types of sentencing conditions– from probation and community based alternatives for low-level crimes, to determinate, indeterminate, and other “split sentences” for more serious crimes – typically imposed by judges in the Santa Cruz County criminal court system. Sentencing is always a dramatic, sometimes traumatic, time for all parties involved – those facing charges themselves, victims, parties affected by a crime, and friends, family members, and loved ones. It can also be incredibly confusing and horrifying not knowing what to expect – or even where parties involved may be the day, year, or even hour. A judge's ruling and a criminal sentence passed down can have life disrupting, at times ruining consequences and far reaching implications on one's personal, financial, and communal future. Here are the basic types of sentences one can expect to find and receive in Santa Cruz County criminal courts: loosely depended upon a crime or incident's severity, offender's criminal past/inclinations/history, and the presiding judge's assessment and interpretation of aggravating, applicable, and mitigating factors:

BASIC, NON-ALTERNATIVE, SENTENCING OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTS:

Determinate Sentencing: A presiding judge can impose a fixed sentence for incarceration in a prison or county jail.

Indeterminate Sentencing: For some very serious criminal offenses, including charges of murder, a judge can levy a sentence of a term of “life in prison with the possibility of parole.” An offender is only released from incarceration if and when a decision is made by a parole board.

Split Sentencing: As previously covered, the split sentencing option allows certain (mostly low-level) felony offenders to split and serve parts of their levied sentence in the Santa Cruz County Jail, with the remainder served under mandatory, structured supervision by the Santa Cruz County Probation Department (including CAPS and associated programming).

Consecutive and Concurrent Sentencing: In cases when a criminal defendant is convicted of multiple crimes, a judge can give them sentences to be served consecutively (one following the other) or concurrently (at the same time).

ALTERNATIVE AND COMMUNITY-BASED CRIMINAL SENTENCING OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTS

The following “Alternative Sentencing” scenarios include instances and avenues in which an individual convicted of a criminal offense, is allowed, as ordered by a judge, to complete his or her sentence in a community-based environment or program (including home) rather than in the Santa Cruz County Jail. Some alternative sentences are awarded as part of a “no contest” or “guilty” plea or are incorporated into what's known as a “plea agreement” between a defendant and judge (the court). Alternative sentencing programs, as previously documented at length,

allow for community-based solutions and programs that keep low-level offenders out of the Jail and prison system while allowing them (in many cases) to maintain employment, connections with friends and families, maintain their societal reputation, keep their home and possessions, and avoid substantial financial hardship.

Probation (Felony or Misdemeanor): Generally, a judge-levied sentence for “probation” allows an offender to serve his or her sentence under mandated community-based supervision in lieu of incarceration in prison, or the Santa Cruz County Jail. (Could be a component of Split Sentencing). While under or sentenced to (felony or misdemeanor) probation, qualifying offenders are subject to a (often substantial) list of conditions and protocols imposed by a residing judge. It’s worth noting a few common conditions and requirements - of either felony or misdemeanor probation – that may be included by a sitting judge at time of sentencing: A defendant may have to complete treatment programs, submit to random drug testing, abstain from all substance and alcohol usage, seek gainful employment or pursue educational advents, pay court costs, fines, and restitution for victims, show up to all court dates, complete community service, and not violate any laws or have further arrests or altercations with la enforcement agencies. If and when an individual violates the conditions and stipulations of their probation, a judge can choose to overlook the violation, modify the terms (with often harsher conditions), or revoke their probation and alternative sentence altogether – remanding an individual into custody (jail or prison). The following are the two basic classes of probation offered in Santa Cruz County courts of law:

Felony Probation: Also known as “formal probation,” sentences for felony probation can include strict rules, policies and conditions such as regular drug and alcohol screenings (testing), 24/7 check ins with a probation officer, financial conditions, required treatments/groups/programs/therapies, and community service work. In most cases, probationary periods capped at two years – except in rare cases.

Misdemeanor Probation: Known in the court system as “summary probation,” misdemeanor probation is obviously, generally connected to sentences for misdemeanor criminal offenses. With less stringent supervision, requirements, and court ordered conditions of community-based release.

Custody Alternative Programs: As forementioned (thoroughly) these programs for typically low-level, low-risk individuals allow for the completion of community-based sentences lieu of incarceration and other punitive measures. Judges mostly refer those deemed qualified or worthy to the Sherriff’s and Santa Cruz County Probation Department’s CAPS Programs – usually the “**Electronic Monitoring Program**” or “**Work Release Program**” – which have each been fully explored and analyzed in previous sections of the Guide.

Diversion Program: Mostly low-level offenders, with charges often relating to drug or substance use-oriented crime and/or offense can be referred to and required to successfully complete a court-ordered program or treatment plan. The full compliance of a judge’s order and an offender’s successful program completion can ultimately result in their charges being dismissed - allowing them to avoid any negative mark or life-altering blemish on their criminal records.

Drug Diversion: Under Penal Code 1000 PC, some eligible first-time offenders with non-violent illegal substance and drug charges can participate in a court-ordered drug diversion program that allows for them to have their case and charges dismissed after full completion. The similar conditions hold true for those sentenced to court-ordered drug treatment programs per Proposition 36. It’s worth noting a few of the key differentiators between “drug diversion” under Penal Code 1000 and court ordered “drug treatment” programs under Proposition 36 though. The state of California’s “Pretrial Diversion Program was established by Penal Code 1000 PC for low-level drug crimes (simple drug possession for example). In a program similar to the former “deferred entry of judgement” Penal Code 1000 PC allows for eligible defendants to have their entire case dismissed – avoiding a criminal record with the successful completion of drug treatment. The key difference between drug treatment statutes in Penal Code 1000 PC and Proposition 36 – simply known as “Prop 36” today – is that the former (Prop 36) requires that defendants enter a “guilty” plea – after which he or she is placed on formal probation and given a collection of terms, conditions, and protocols to follow. In addition, while drug-related charges under Penal Code 1000 PC often include a case’s ultimate dismissal and expungement of all criminal records, a judge has complete and total discretion in determining whether or not to dismiss a defendant’s charges under Prop 36 – even after they have successfully completed all mandated treatment modalities.

Collaborative Courts: In Santa Cruz County, the Superior Court offers a collection of specialized “collaborative courts” for eligible (mostly low-level) offenders with specific service-related issues including substance use and mental health problems/diagnosis. The details, policies, and eligibility requirements of this important collection of alternative court environments, including Santa Cruz County’s Behavioral Health Court and Veterans Court will be detailed in a forthcoming section below.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Santa Cruz County Probation Department

Felton

Juvenile Probation

**3650 Graham Hill Rd., Felton, CA 95018
Ph: 831-454-3800 Fax: 831-454-3827**

Juvenile Detention Facility

**3650 Graham Hill Rd., Felton, CA 95018
Ph: 831-454-3800 Fax: 831-454-3824**

Santa Cruz

Adult Probation

**303 Water St., Suite 9, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Ph: 831-454-2150 Fax: 831-454-3327**

Watsonville

Adult and Juvenile Probation

**1430 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville, CA 95076
Ph: 831-763-8070 Fax: 831-763-8233**

Mailing Address for All Locations

**P.O. Box 1812
Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1812**

<http://sccounty01.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/prb/index.asp>

Email: prb.info@co.santa-cruz.ca.us

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY JAIL 101 – VISITATION AND SOBERING CENTER GUIDES

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SOBERING CENTER

Since its highly anticipated 2024 (re) unveiling, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office "Sobering Center" has diverted over 2,000 people from the County Jail in its first 12 months of operation. Designed as a short-term care facility – with stays typically ranging from 4-to-a-max-of-24 hours – the Sobering Center provides a safe and supportive environment for residents who are intoxicated (and deemed to be "non-violent") to safely recover from the debilitating mind-and-body effects of alcohol and (more frequently these days) illicit substances. Literally a stone's throw from the Santa Cruz County Main Jail, the Sobering Center operates 24/7, 7 days-a-week in a collaboration between the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office and (direct management from) Janus of Santa Cruz County - a highly-respected local non-profit organization specializing in providing behavioral health and substance use/abuse-related programs, treatments and interventions.

Between 2015 and 2020, the County's first and earliest manifestation of the Sobering Center existed as a sanctuary and cell-less refuge for first-time DUI offenders, publicly intoxicated individuals and those clearly under the influence of drugs and illicit substances. Sobering Center "Number One," let's call it, was a highly effective and groundbreaking community resource, freeing up coveted jail space and keeping citizens out of emergency rooms - and allowing officers to process at-risk individuals more effectively. But a combined gut punch from a tragic (structure) fire and the dramatic onset of the devastating coronavirus pandemic forced the then-permanent closure of the Center quite suddenly (in 2020). The County's newly reborn Sobering Center, located at 265 Water Street in downtown Santa Cruz, is officially "open for business" and staffed with equally impactful medical providers highly trained to stabilize at-risk clients, and steer intoxicated and/or drug-addicted individuals toward the resources and treatment environments they (may) desperately need.

Around a quarter of all individuals entering into the Santa Cruz County Jail – roughly 200+ per month – are directly diverted to the Sobering Center; where they are closely and regularly monitored (and evaluated) for negative effects (and consequences) of intoxication, drug and alcohol poisoning, and potential overdose or bodily harm – and gently connected to community resources/services providing care for mental health, substance use, and stabilization. Though the Sobering Center was largely established as a jail diversion program, it also accepts intoxicated patients referred by behavioral health and medical clinics, community programs, paramedics, ED's, and even self-referral and walk-ins. Prior to the establishment of the County's highly effective Sobering Center facility, local law enforcement's most-common response to low-level offenses such as public drunkenness, or driving under the influence was to simply detain individuals in cells in the Main Jail – widely known in the correction's industry as "drunk tanks" – and levy a charge of "public intoxication" or "drunk and disorderly conduct." Conditions endemic to these types of situations proved poor at best – cells were typically unmonitored, serious health complications (mental and physical) arose, and the cold and unsupportive environment/setting did nothing but exacerbate the root problems at hand.

In just over a year, the Sobering Center has established itself as a vital custody-alternative- and effective tool for local law enforcement agencies, the Santa Cruz County Jail, health care systems, and hundreds of individuals needing to "sober up" and stabilize without ever receiving criminal charges. The Sheriff's Office Sobering Center is one of around 15 similar programs – just over a quarter of the nationwide total – operating throughout the State of California. More and more counties are being drawn to the sobering center concept – also known as sobering stations, stabilization programs, recovery programs, or diversion centers – as a proven cost-effective alternative to providing care, stabilization, and supportive interventions to those experiencing acute (public) intoxication (and drug or alcohol-related behaviors that put others or themselves at-risk). It's worth highlighting that by using sobering centers in lieu of booking and eventual incarceration, counties like Santa Cruz can reap significant financial rewards: Some estimates calculate the cost of a daily stay in a sobering center is around \$130 compared to a \$280+ cost of a typical day in a county jail.

The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office has an annual reported budget of just over \$140 million, and the office uses a portion of these funds to pay for a share of the Sobering Center's operating costs. The department views "their" sobering center as a worthwhile investment – in time, money, and energy. The Sobering Center's proximity to the Main Jail makes it relatively simple for Santa Cruz County law enforcement agencies, responding to low-level drug-or-alcohol related crimes, offenses or situations in the community, to take worthy individuals directly to always-open facility – skipping the notoriously complicated, time consuming, and expensive Jail booking process and freeing up important space and resources for more-serious offenders. Local officers boast that they can deliver and admit at-risk individuals to the Sheriff's Office Sobering Center in 10 minutes or less, whereas navigating through the practices and procedures of the Jail's laborious booking process could take hours – in which individuals receive no "real" treatment, stabilization, or support in often cold and brutal environments.

Though the "sobering center" concept was initially brought forth over 5 decades ago, new interest in the long-discussed approach has been ignited by the DHCS's California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) – centered around the quality of life and health outcomes of Medi-Cal patients. Through CalAIM, many of the services provided in sobering/stabilization facilities – including Santa Cruz County's – are designated as "reimbursable." This means that the growing number of California counties electing to establish their own local "sobering center" programs will not have to foot the entire bill on their own. The aim of CalAIM and associated reforms are to enhance and solidify the integration between mental health, physical health, and social services/programs/supports for all Medi-Cal enrollees – including those entering into settings like our (own) Sobering Center. Individuals referred to the Sobering Center can enter into and receive services at no cost to themselves – all services and programs are – always - provided free of charge.

50 years ago, the "Uniform Alcoholism and Intoxication Treatment Act" (UAIITA) established the framework, and many of the necessary resources for states including California to develop a variety of innovative treatment solutions – including voluntary, short-term care hubs designed to provide stabilization, monitoring, and coordination of care services eerily similar to those endemic to today's increasingly popular sobering and stabilization environments. The issues and conditions that inspired legislation such as the decades old UAIITA reflected increasing systemic and societal recognition that alcoholism was a serious illness or disease, and that classifying public intoxication as a "crime" or punishable offense was an "inhumane, ineffective, and costly" way to address the growing problem. Many of the same issues, concerns and potential solutions voiced by individuals and advocates at the UAIITA's time of signing, are still being heard today – with the inclusion and/or addition of the current drug crisis and public use and abuse.

The Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office Sobering Center shouldn't be confused with other types of drug and alcohol-related care and treatment settings: sober living houses and detoxification (detox) centers. Sober living facilities or "houses" generally provide structured longer-term group residential settings and programs with a focus on "recovery" and complete abstinence from drugs and alcohol. Detox centers on the other hand, are designed to facilitate gradual transitions and eventual complete cessations of drug and alcohol consumption over a period of days. Time spent in the local Sobering Center is capped at 24 hours – in all cases. Local non-profit, and longtime addiction and substance use treatment standout, Janus of Santa Cruz handles staffing and programming to the Sobering Center – providing a team of allied medical personnel - assistants, licensed vocational and registered nurses - and nonclinical workers to complete facility intake, provide motivational interviewing, peer-level support, and conduct detailed assessments updates regarding each client's stay. A person in a security role is also onsite at all times.

Those "sobering-up" in the Center are monitored and personally evaluated periodically to assess any negative effects and consequences regarding their intoxication – including potential drug overdoses, alcohol poisoning, or illicit substance-related potentialities. The ultimate goal at the Sobering Center is to gently stabilize clients while helping them connect and form relationships with partnering community programs and organizations providing mental health, stabilization, and substance-use related care. Most folks associate the Sobering Center with *just* "sobering" but addition to providing a safe and secure home for community members to gather themselves and recovery from drug or alcohol related intoxication, the Sheriff Office program also assesses

health care services eligibility and offers screenings for acute medical and behavioral health conditions, injuries, and substance use ailments.

Those spending a day or night in the local Sobering Center are given referral opportunities and potential handoffs to an array of mental health, shelter, and substance use programs and services. At the conclusion of their stay, referred clients can receive (longer-term) treatments and services from a list of local programs specializing in the stabilization of intoxicated and/or addicted adults dealing with illicit substances like methamphetamines, crack cocaine, fentanyl, and others – in addition to addressing the drug or alcohol inebriation that brought them into the Sobering Center. In addition to providing an immediately and highly valuable stabilization environment, Santa Cruz County Sobering Center really functions as a referral hub - transitioning residents back into the community and into programs and services they might otherwise forego.

With around-the-clock workers, established internal programming and support structures, and vital referral capabilities, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department, and partner organization Janus of Santa Cruz County, play an instrumental role in the care, and care coordination of thousands of residents. Just over a year old, the Sobering Center has already become a key component and treasured avenue/option within our legal and criminal justice systems – and a vital resource for community members struggling with intoxication and issues of substance abuse and addiction.



JAIL 101: IN-PERSON (CONTACT and NON-CONTACT) and VIDEO/DIGITAL VISITATION GUIDES

The evidence is clear. Decades of research and comprehensive assessments have proven that frequent highly-quality connections and visitations (between inmates and their support networks on the “outside”) reap massive rewards for *all parties involved*. Numerous studies illustrate that effective correctional visitation programs, including those within the Santa Cruz County Jail system, lead to enhanced physical and emotional wellness (for inmates and families), better in-Jail conduct and behavior, reduced recidivism (re-offending), and greater odds for post-release success and successful re-entry. For inmates in the Santa Cruz County Jail system, visitors often represent their sole lifeline and connection to the “real” world – beyond dreary institutional walls, bars, chains, violence, and colored jump suits – and the often chaotic and confusing environment they will most likely return to after paying their debt to society. Regular visitation and familial contact – through any one of the Jail’s in-person, virtual, or text-based connection avenues - allows local inmates to maintain social and familial bonds (with children, significant others, and parents), smooth their re-entry processes and planning, provide (and receive) immediate emotional support, coordinate legal defenses, and share vital information regarding internal/external policies, situations and events.

Healthy and regular visitations (and other forms of correspondence) between inmates and their families, friends, and supporters reap impressive physiological and psychological rewards for all individuals involved – during a time in which each party’s outlook, financial and social stability, and mental health is otherwise deteriorating. The toll that incarceration can and does exert on families and loved cannot be underestimated. Recent studies indicate that (just) having a family member in lockup is directly correlated with poorer physical and behavioral health, and even comes with a special prize: an earlier death sentence (i.e. shorter lifespan). In particular, children of incarcerated men and women seem to be even more negatively impacted by their parent’s and/or loved one’s time in jail or prison. These under-the-radar victims are found to suffer from more pronounced drug and substance use disorders, behavioral health conditions, and struggle or fail in educational settings compared to children without an incarcerated family member. The visitation programs embedded in correctional institutions – like the ones in the Santa Cruz County Jail – do wonders to keep families connected and keep them together. It’s been shown that familial ties and supports enhanced by visitation efforts lead to a higher probability of families staying together post-release and better mental health – including reduced depressive symptoms – for all.

From an inmate’s point of view, frequent highly-quality connections and correspondence with friends, families, and out-of-wall support networks are critical to maintaining their emotional, financial, and physical health and wellbeing during their time in lockup. Regular in-person and virtual visitations with family members strengthen foundational family bonds, smooth the process and enhance the possibility of successful reentry into the community, and wear down the intergenerational cycle of incarceration. Visits strengthen inmates’ ties and associations with the world outside of jail or prison walls – and gives them a semblance of hope and a (more) positive outlook during a time when it is needed most. The quality time in which inmates plan for and anticipate future/upcoming visits with their friends or family members can be incredibly valuable – and not only for the inmate his or herself, but for their entire correctional institution. Multiple studies have linked (increased) jail and prison visitations to reduced behavioral issues and overall inmate misconduct, and a greater adherence to institutional rules, policies and edicts. Because, visitation “rights” can be taken from inmates at any time, and for a variety of (sometimes unfair or punitive) reasons, inmates tend to be on their best – or at least better - behavior in the days leading up to an anticipated visit. Giving credence to the supposition that increased inmate visitations lead to better overall behavior and rule adherence, an Iowa-based researcher pronounced that in-prison misconduct (using official citations as a measurement) was visibly reduced in those who received visits in his state’s penitentiaries. Each additional visit per month, concluded the enthusiastic reporter reduced misconduct by an impressive, further 14 percent. Misconduct and inmate misbehavior decreased markedly in the three weeks before a planned in-person visit, another similar study

found. The uplifting and anticipatory effects that upcoming or planned friend and familial visitations are also linked to improved mental health (reduced depression and anxiety concerns) – existing as a bright light on the horizon in an otherwise isolated jail or prison environment bereft of warmth, love, and affection.

In addition to (increased) visitations being linked to helping keep inmates on their p's and q's, friend and family jail and prison visits have also been tied to reducing criminal reoffences, or "recidivism." There is probably no one better to undertake an in-depth study and careful evaluation of the potential benefits and effects of inmate visitation than the actual administrators of a state prison. In a recently released comprehensive report, the Minnesota Department of Corrections presented data that showed that inmates who received (any) in-person visits during their incarceration were dramatically less likely to reoffend and re-enter the correctional system post-release. Evaluating the progress and movement of just over 16 thousand state prisoners, the group of Gophers reported that prisoners who received visits were a full 13% less likely to be reconvicted of a felony after being released. And equally impressively, more than 25% less likely to violate their probation or have their parole eliminated. Another impactful recent study, created and based in central Florida, concluded that of the 7,000 men and women tracked leaving the state's expansive prison system, each visit (first and additional) received during their time in lockup cut the odds of two-year recidivism by 3.8 percentage points. The number, size and scope of studies like these - proving the considerable (positive) impact and ready rewards that frequent visitations can have of inmates, their families and loved ones, and correctional systems themselves – continues to grow. The visitation programs established within jails and prisons are important correspondence vehicles that contribute to public safety as much as they benefit families and inmates themselves.

Even though periodic visitation has proven to be a critical component of successful rehabilitation efforts – dramatically enhancing the quality of life, mental and physical outlook, health and wellbeing of inmates and their support networks – friends and families often face systemic barriers and impediments in their attempts to arrange, schedule, and attend visitation sessions with their incarcerated loved ones. Families and inmate supporters planning, coordinating, and eventually attending a scheduled in-person visitation session, often do so at a steep financial toll. In many instances, families and friends must travel considerable distances to reach their incarcerated loved one's jail or institution. Between gasoline, costly hotel stays, and in some cases pricy airline flights, corrections advocates estimate that a weekend familial visit to an inmate in the California correctional system typically costs around \$435. In the mid-nineties, California became one of the first states in the nation to change inmate visitation from a "right" to a "privilege. The official aim of the 90's legislative efforts was to give Jail and correctional officers more control and dominance over in-house activities – allowing them to block planned and upcoming inmate visitations at their whim and individual discretion (including instances of misconduct and/or misbehavior completely unrelated to visitation). The overall importance and impact of scheduled in-person visitation sessions can't be underestimated – this modest block of time and communication truly matters – emotionally and financially for both inmates and their families and out-of-wall supporters.

More recent policy initiatives- like Assembly Bills 2959 and 2709 - were pushed forward to curtail this often-overreaching power, limiting the reasons that jail and prison corrections officers could block upcoming inmate visits. By mandate, officers would lose the ability to block a party's visits unless it is for a disciplinary infraction directly related to visitation – including possessing contraband or committing acts of violence during a visitation session. Those behind the push for AB 2959 and 2709 hoped to reverse decades of punitive and inequitable correctional officer behavior – contending that there can be no effective rehabilitation without the restoration and rebuilding of bonds between family members, incarcerated men and women, and their communities. The legislative efforts are part of a larger groundswell of policy initiatives and activism focusing on (and eliminating) the prodigious financial and emotional costs that families must pay to maintain healthy connections with their incarcerated loved ones. (We focus on the inherent costs and effects of Jail Phone Call, Mail, Commissary, and E-Messaging policies, issues, and potential impacts in separate sections of this Jail 101 Guide).

Due to ever-changing policies, conditions, and complicated operating procedures it can be difficult for friends and concerned family members to establish initial connections with inmates in jail or prison and find clear and detailed information regarding the intricacies and specifics of an institution's visiting process. Initial or overall confusion and frustration can lead some to abandon visitation possibilities altogether – so facilities must ensure that they deliver clear, easily digestible, in-depth, up-to-date information to the public. In order to support individuals in and outside of jail - and to make society a safer more connected place for all - officials designing inmate visitation programs must make the entire process, rules, and expectations as clear and easy as possible.

The visitation policies and processes in Santa Cruz County Jail(s) are complex and ever-changing – difficult to navigate through and completely grasp even for the most veteran of the County criminal justice system. But substantial empirical evidence proves that when local inmates are allowed to and able to visit their family members and support networks (in-person or virtually) all parties involved are rewarded not only emotionally, but in many other impactful ways as well. Knowing this, it's entirely worth – imperative actually- thoroughly investigating and carefully guiding readers through the current, and often-times overwhelming visitation policies, procedures and avenues (contact, no-contact, and virtual visitation) endemic to the Santa Cruz County Jail (system). Non-contact visitations – in which allow inmates and their families/ loved ones to speak (through phone systems) and see one another in an enclosed space separated by a thick pane of opaque glass – are available at multiple Jail sites including the Main Jail, Blaine Street and Rountree campuses, and the Jail's Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility (known as "T-Unit"). Effective April of 2025, "Family Contact Visits" are available (monthly) for inmates with minor children who are housed in the Blaine Street and T-Unit as well. To supplement and enhance the Jail's vital in-person visitation options, the Jail (system) now provides and supports video or "virtual" visits and correspondence between inmates and contacts on the "outside" via a fleet of in-unit electronic tablet computers and digital kiosks operated by contracted telecommunications provider Smart Communications. We'll delve into the ins, outs, and specifics of *each viable visitation option* – including scheduling, external and internal policies, and other key pieces of pertinent information – in the forthcoming sections of the Jail 101 Guide.

An Exploration of the Santa Cruz County Jail's Newest Visitation Option: Virtual Visitation

The COVID-19 pandemic effectively shut down in-person visitation programs in jails and prisons around the country – including our own in Santa Cruz County. As the coronavirus's size, scope, and system rattling implications became more apparent, correctional institutions began to (more) seriously consider adding "virtual" or "video visitation" services/options as a potential means of keeping their inmate populations connected to their cut-off (and slightly panicked) friends and loved ones outside of jail and prison walls. Large multi-million-dollar telecommunications companies – mostly those already deeply established and entrenched within other areas of the corrections industry - rushed in to save the proverbial day; pitching a range of digitally-based virtual/video communications and visiting services to jail and prison systems who found themselves in desperate need of - some - viable solution and immediate replacement for suspended in-person visits.

Most of the telecom collectives (giants), including Global Tel Link (GTL) and Securus Technologies (and subsidiary JPay) offered package deals – promising to provide correctional facilities all-in-one call, e-messaging, and video visit platforms/solutions they could begin using almost immediately. The Santa Cruz County Jail had already been testing out a small pilot tablet-based content, e-messaging, and service program in some units of the Main Jail. But with only 1 or 2 electronic tablet computers designated to each unit, it certainly wasn't a widely used or entrenched program or service it could rely upon or use throughout the entire facility. Corrections officials at the Santa Cruz County Jail knew they had to pivot and expand – fast.

Securus and GTL dominate the billion-dollar industry of providing telecommunications to prisons and jails – controlling over 85% of the space by a systematic gobbling up of smaller competitors and delivering "too good to be true" offers to hundreds of cash-strapped jails and prisons nationwide. The hydra-like corporations' promises of "virtually free" virtual visitation, e-messaging, and communications services to jails and prisons also come with equally enticing commitments to share millions of dollars in commissions on the profits from

the services (phone calls, messages, video calls, tablet applications, money transfers ect.) they happily provide. As COVID-19 spread, so did the size and scope of the partnerships and arrangements between corrections telecom giants and desperate local jail and prison systems. The technology jails and prisons were being pitched wasn't "brand new," but suddenly it was needed - everywhere. The offers and promises made to rapidly adapting corrections institutions weren't exactly uniform or consistent. Far from it actually.

Most new jail-to-provider partnerships guaranteed inmates a very limited (and varied) number of free calls, emails, and/or video visits followed by for-pay premium services through their comprehensive service platforms. Some correctional facilities promised inmates COVID-era visitation packages that included things like 2 free 15-minute phone calls, 4 email "stamps," and one video visit per week. In its top-to-bottom partnerships, Securus guaranteed inmates in Pennsylvania prisons 5 free 15-minute phone calls per week, but only provided inmates in Georgia one free 15-minute phone call and two email credits per week. In order to communicate and visit "virtually" with family members and support networks on the outside, thousands of inmates were forced to "buy in" to these new systems and often-costly de facto arrangements. Once incarcerated individuals nibbled through their allotment of free communications offerings provided by their jail/prison partnership, they were forced to pay the "standard price" for products and services they (often) desperately needed. These set, "standard" pricing schemes varied considerably as well – some estimates are 36-44 cents for an "e-stamp," around 14 cents-per-minute for a typical non-local call, and \$2.95 for a 15-minute virtual, video call. Many COVID-era contracts and profit/commission-sharing arrangements between giant telecommunications companies and jails and prisons continue to exist today – having grown significantly in size and scope with the inclusion of new electronic tablet-based innovations, products and services. During COVID, the Santa Cruz County Jail entered into an expansive – profit-sharing – contract and exclusive partnership with powerful correctional telecommunications corporation Smart Communications (chosen over Securus and GTL). The agreement guaranteed the delivery (and ongoing maintenance) of a fleet of fully-loaded personal electronic tablet devices for each and every inmate in the Jail – at zero initial or sustained cost to the Jail itself. If that sounds too good to be true... in a way, it may be (as we'll explain)

The Jail had been conducting a very-limited trial run and test of Smart Communications' tablet computer system for months – placing a select few electronic devices on some units to evaluate use patterns, potential problems or concerns, and its overall functionality. The option to go "all in" for "zero in" proved to be a deal too juicy to pass up – and the Santa Cruz County Jail decided to roll the dice on a full facility-wide integration of Smart Communications' platform, products, and tablet-based technologies.

Smart Communications' electronic tablet computer-based e-messaging, e-mail, and video visitation suite – fully embedded into each inmate's personal electronic device- has significantly altered the way local inmates communicate and maintain connections to the outside world. Through its large and varied contract with the Santa Cruz County Jail, Smart Communications Holding Co. didn't just take complete control over (and by all accounts malign) the institution's long-functioning (snail) mail program, it significantly the way the Jail's commissary, phone, grievance reporting, and now-super-impactful tablet programs function as well.

Now that - through the large contracted partnership between the Santa Cruz County Jail and Smart Communications - electronic tablets are so engrained within all levels of the Santa Cruz County Jail system – with almost every inmate on every cell block in every wing of the Jail in possession *at no cost* - a thorough examination of exactly who controls, and how the apps, programs, content and important corrections-related services are curated, presented, and otherwise integrated into the tablets themselves in definitely in order. We'll delve into the vast and varied world of Smart Communication's electronic tablets in its very own (much needed) section of the Jail 101 Guide - but here, we'll get into the nitty gritty of the "SmartVisit Video Visitation" features/platform available on each inmate's device. The tablet-oriented virtual visitation platform functions as an important alternative to in-person visitation in the Santa Cruz County Jail - years after the "official" end of the COVID-19 pandemic

Using the “SmartInmate” and “SmartVisit Video Visitation” Platform(s) for Planning and Conducting Virtual Visitations with Inmates in the Santa Cruz County Jail

Now that e(almost) every inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail has their own fully loaded, personal Smart Communications-powered tablet computer at the ready, direct face-to-face connections between you and your incarcerated loved ones is easier than ever before. Well, sort of. The video communication and virtual visiting platform required for the scheduling and conducting two-way, real-time video/virtual visitations can be a wee tricky to get the hang of and use properly. So, we’ll do our best to walk you through the process of setting up an account on the SmartInmate website (owned and operated by Smart Communications) and give you every tool and trick in the book to effectively speak to your loved one directly in their unit/housing location within the Jail.

Using SmartInmate and its embedded “SmartVisit Video Visitation” feature is actually pretty when you get the hang of it. It is in fact, a premium feature in the Santa Cruz County Jail though. Meaning that either you, or your incarcerated friend or loved one inside the Jail must foot the (entire) bill before any “remote” virtual video visitation sessions can take place. There is a barely-used free video visitation option available however – using the SmartInmate program featured on the SmartKiosk within the lobby of the Santa Cruz County Main Jail. The kiosk itself has been plagued with issues pretty much since its installation, but when functioning can be freely used when scheduling a local, on-site visit.

In a generous recent policy shift, Santa Cruz County Jail corrections officials are gifting all inmates two entirely free 15-minute video visitations per week - through the SmartInmate video visitation and e-messaging platform loaded onto their personal electronic tablet devices. This means that you and your incarcerated family member or loved one can speak face-to-face for up to thirty uninterrupted minutes at no cost. Pretty cool. Beyond that, typical remote visits (those from home) are billed by the minute: either by minutes used or minutes scheduled in 15 or 30-minute increments.

Sound good? Step one for scheduling a virtual visitation session with an inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail is opening an account on www.SmartInmate.com. The process should be relatively quick and painless, but there are some important issues and potential bumps in the road to be aware of.

Creating an Account and Getting Started

After logging onto the www.SmartInmate.com website for the first time, create a user account by providing a chosen user name and password information, personal data including name, address, date of birth, and email address. You’ll also be asked to choose a security question and provide an answer. It’s a good idea to make a record of all information used/provided during the signup process – including chosen username, password, and security Q+A.

When the above user information is submitted (by a simple button push) SmartInmate will send you a confirmation E-Mail or (preferred) Text Message to verify and activate your account. At this point in the signup process there is no need or requirement to enter any financial information or credit card details. Creating an account and searching for an inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail (the following process that we’ll detail next) is totally free.

For those lacking computer or internet access, it’s worth mentioning here that the always-available kiosk located in the lobby of the Santa Cruz County Main Jail is equipped to handle the signup process as well. But a cell phone is required to receive a text-message or e-mail based activation code. This is not a much-utilized option.

Finding an Inmate and Establishing Connections Within the Santa Cruz County Jail

Once your account is activated – by either text message or E-mail and you click the link to “continue”, a screen called “Account Activated” will pop into view. Here, click “Search” for an inmate, detainee, or prisoner.

Now it’s time to search for an incarcerated individual (your inmate friend or family member). Click “Search Facility” and when prompted, select “Santa Cruz County Jail, Santa Cruz CA” or choose to enter a “name” and/or Date of Birth. When the list of inmates matching the name you inputted pop-up, find and click on the inmate you wish to contact and connect with Now, the “inmate details” page will become visible. Carefully pick how you wish to communicate with your inmate. Choose “Friend or Family Member.” After entering the “relationship to inmate” Click “Send Connection Request.”

Next comes the financial part of the process. While waiting for the inmate to officially “approve” your initial connection request on his/her tablet within the Jail, be sure to purchase as many credits necessary to allow for future communications between you and your loved one. Inmates need for you, as the account holder/creator, to purchase credits to allow them to respond to any e-messages and to send you any message or correspondence on the SmartInmate platform in the future. Yes, the SmartInmate platform is used for both electronic messaging a video visitation within the jail – and adding funds to facilitate both modes of communication is a piece of cake.

You’ll also need to purchase enough “video visitation” credits – in 15-or-30-minute increments – to allow for any virtual face-to-face meetings and future video visits with the desired inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail as well. The costs and fees associated with remote (at home) video visitation through SmartInmate is typically 15 cents per minute. As noted above, these charges are scheduled and billed in either 15-or-30-minute increments. Before a scheduled (remote) video visitation can take place, you must have the necessary funds in your account to pay for it. Of note, there is a \$5.00 minimum to fund your SmartInmate account.

Scheduling a Video Visitation Session with an Inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail

Each day, (most) inmates in the Jail have total or periodic access to their very own personal tablet device loaded with apps, content, and features such as SmartInmate. The latter is prominently displayed on the “home screen” of each device, with alerts for incoming messages, alerts, and requests. When an inmate sees the initial “Connection Request” you sent to them on SmartInmate, he or she can “approve” the request with a click of a button, and move all parties involved one step closer to official correspondence and face-to-face visitations.

Having established an “approved” connection with an inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail, you can use the tools and options on the www.smartinmate.com website and visitation section to schedule a visit. There are two different types of visits that you can schedule here: a “local (on-site) visit” (available at no cost through a SmartInmate kiosk located in the Main Jail lobby) or the much more common and widely used “remote visit from home” option.

Planning for and Scheduling Remote Video Visits from Home – The Most Common Approach

The “visitation” section of the SmartInmate website is pretty straightforward and easy to navigate through, but a little coaching (here) certainly doesn’t hurt. Remote visits from home (or any setting or environment other than Jail lobby kiosks) do cost money – typically around 15 cents per minute in 15-or 30-minute blocks of time. After logging into your account, it’s vital that you add the (necessary) funds to cover the entire duration of any planned remote visitation prior to scheduling.

The SmartInmate scheduling mechanism is actually pretty straightforward. Here are the necessary steps: Simply select “Visitation” from the services menu, then select the “Schedule a Video Visit” button, then select the inmate that you’d like to schedule a visit with, then select the “Remote Visit” option. Next, select how long you would like your remote visit to last – typically 15 or 30 minutes based upon preference. Next, select the

date that you would like to schedule a visit on. And then select the desired time for that virtual visit to take place. Look over the details carefully for errors and miscues and once satisfied, click the “Confirm and Schedule Visit” button.

Once your visit is scheduled, the details will be presented on the “list of scheduled visits” on the SmartInmate.com website. The details and information regarding scheduled visits will also be clearly visible on each approved inmate’s personal tablet computer. This ensures that parties inside and out of the Jail can be and remain on the same page and coordinate successful connections.

On the big day of your scheduled face-to-face virtual visitation, log in to the SmartInmate.com website using a laptop or home computer. You’ll clearly see your upcoming visit in the list of scheduled visits section. Close to 10-minutes prior to your scheduled visit’s start time the “Status” of the visit will change to “READY – BEGIN VISIT.” When this obvious change occurs, click the “BEGIN VISIT” option/button when it pops up to begin your remote (at home) video visitation.

After beginning the video visitation on your end, the Jail’s SmartInmate system will wait until the inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail is also logged into their kiosk or electronic device. Once you and the other party are logged into the system and “present” the virtual visit will commence. Visits will terminate automatically when purchased time or credits run out – but usually not abruptly because of an always visible clock and timer function.

You’ll be able to see the inmate you are visiting virtually in high definition and even though it’s “not the real thing,” the platform and overall design of SmartInmate delivers a comfortable and admittedly invaluable alternative to “normal” in-person meetings – when circumstances dictate.

Virtual and Video Visitation – Potential Impacts and Implications of (Widespread) Inmate Use

Video visitation platforms and services, including tablet-king Smart Communications’ SmartInmate program in the Santa Cruz County Jail, provide finely designed safe spaces for relatively simple face-to-face virtual conversations and connections for inmates and their friends, families, and loved ones. Though video calls have drawn the criticism and ire of some - who claim these newly popular virtual environments fail to match or replicate the psychological impact and experience of in-person visitation – when effectively used as a supplement, they can help augment and/or eliminate many of the barriers and complications that in-person visitations can present. As highlighted above, visitation (in general) does wonders to keep families integrated and inter-connected – bettering the mental health, wellbeing and overall health of all involved parties, and serving as an important intervention and much-needed break from the traumatic stress, fear and loneliness that incarceration often involves. Corrections advocates contend that virtual and video visits should never function as a replacement for in-person visitation in jails and prisons– as widely witnessed during the heyday of the COVID-19 pandemic – but as a viable and easy-to-use alternative to more intensive and at times cumbersome in-person environments.

While video visits conducted through internet-connected kiosks, tablets, and computers in prisons and jails have the innate capability to make face-to-face connections less expensive and far more accessible to many, they also foster less intimacy and come at an emotional and financial cost to others. Because a large number of inmates within jail and prison systems are placed or housed far from their homes and support networks, sheer distances and costs associated with in-person visitations can act as severe impediments to regular meaningful connections. Families and friends of inmates in far flung locations regularly drop hundreds, if not thousands of dollars for the mere possibility of an in-person contact or non-contact visit with their loved ones. And in many correctional systems, severely limited visiting hours make in-person visits only feasible during certain time periods and specific days of the week. Virtual visitation platforms, like SmartInmate, are designed to allow friends and relatives from distant places– who would never dream of visiting a long-lost inmate in-person - to maintain intimate face-to-face correspondence with inmates in jails and prisons nationwide. And video visitation services also directly enhance familial bonds and connections – allowing those who are elderly or

disabled, and minors who may have a serious problem adhering to strict jail or prison visiting rules and edicts to successfully and seamlessly interact with their families and loved ones.

Private vendors in the jail and prison communications space – including Smart Communications – have and are developing an ever-evolving array of technologies that facilitate virtual visits over closed circuit and web-based microphones and cameras. A few major corporations have developed and installed an assortment of on-site electronic kiosk systems that allow inmates to schedule and conduct video visits with their families and loved ones using laptops and personal computers. Some corrections industry watch dogs contend that virtual and video visitation programs and services are a double-edged sword – contrasting the tangible benefits they routinely provide to inmates and their families with barbed criticisms surrounding inherent financial and emotional costs and implications. Most video visitation platforms, including the Santa Cruz County Jail’s cost a pretty penny – with the burden of fees and associated charges placed squarely on the shoulders of inmates and their loving (and often heavily impacted) support networks outside of jail and prison walls. Private jail and prison vendors – yes, including Smart Communications – stand to gain considerably as their web and tablet-based virtual visitation products and related services expand and gain traction. Remember, these giant hydra-like corrections corporations typically provide their services and ongoing support (including mail, phone, and electronic tablets) to jail and prison systems at no cost. And in this space... well, nothing is really free. The commission and mark-up centric partnerships and financial arrangements between telecommunications contractors like Smart Communications and cash-strapped jails like our own, are fueled by the profits made on phone calls, tablet-based e-messaging, premium content and entertainment, money transfers, and video visitation.

The Local, On-Site, Free Virtual Visitation Option Within the Santa Cruz County Main Jail

After successfully navigating through the sign and setup process on the SmartInmate website and platform and forming a “connection” with an inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail, you will be given the option to schedule and arrange virtual visitation. Though at home or “remote” video visitations do cost money, local or “on-site” virtual visitations – conducted on a visitation kiosk in the lobby on the Main Jail – are provided free of charge. It’s actually pretty easy to set up a visit through this free service.

The scheduling process for on-site video calls with inmates in the Jail is pretty darn similar to that of at home remote visits detailed previously. With a few little tweaks and wrinkles. To schedule a free local, on-site visit with a desired inmate – log into your account on the SmartInmate website and select “visitation” from the services menu. Next, select the “Schedule a Video Visit” option and select the Santa Cruz County Jail prisoner who are hoping to visit with. Now, click on the “Local Visit” option and choose the desired duration of the visit (typically 15 or 30 minutes). Again, as opposed to premium “remote” virtual visitation services, there is no charge to use this mechanism. After selecting the date and time you would like for the scheduled visit to commence– visits can be scheduled up to 7 days in advance – confirm the details or the desired inmate connection and press the “Confirm and Schedule Visit” icon to wrap things up.

After successfully scheduling a video visit with an inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail system, you will clearly see the details of your upcoming visit when you log into your SmartInmate account. When the day of your scheduled visit arrives, show up to the Main Jail lobby, and on-site visitation kiosk at least 10 minutes before the visit is scheduled to begin. An hour or two before the time of a scheduled visit, you’ll receive a text message or email from SmartInmate that will include visitation information and a “Visitation QuickCode.” When you enter this QuickCode on the Main Jail lobby visitation kiosk, your visitation can begin. As a backup option, feel free to use your SmartInmate username and password to kick off a scheduled visit or even schedule a future one. Visits begin on your end, after logging into the Jail lobby system – and the system will pause until an inmate is concurrently logged into their own kiosk within the Jail. Once all parties are logged on and present, the video visit will begin – and end abruptly when the allotted time runs out. It’s imperative that users of this free virtual visitation option arrive and login to the system on time. All visits cannot continue past their scheduled end time – so being late means that you will lose that amount of time.

Santa Cruz County Jail “In-Person Family Contact” Visitation Guide

JAILS/SITES THAT PROVIDE IN-PERSON FAMILY CONTACT VISITATIONS

ROUNTREE REHABILITATION AND REENTRY FACILITY

**100 ROUNTREE LANE, WATSONVILLE, CA 95076
831-454-7873**



BLAINE STREET WOMEN’S FACILITY

**141 BLAINE STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
831-454-7800**



IN-PERSON FAMILY CONTACT VISITATION BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When the COVID-19 pandemic slammed into many of us like an out of control MAC truck, it exerted an equally devastating toll on inmates inside the Santa Cruz County Jail. The coronavirus created havoc inside the County Jail system – leading to outbreaks, corrections staff fleeing in droves, and created even more distance between male and female inmates and their friends and families outside. A brand-new era of required vaccinations, face masks, ritualistic hand sanitization, toilet paper hoarding, and strict social distancing protocols put immense pressure on all of us. Through all of this drama, the already-substantial distance and problematic disconnections between incarcerated individuals and their friends, families and support networks was magnified dramatically. Almost overnight, many types of in-person interactions and social activities long taken for granted either went remote or were eliminated altogether. This certainly included the hugely important impactful in-person contact visitation programs (for families and inmates) in the Santa Cruz County Jail. When in-person family contact visits were terminated within the County correctional system, the action put pressure on already strained and fractured familial relationships – the maintenance of those vital for successful reentry, ultimate reunification, post-release success, and in-Jail mental and emotional health and wellbeing. The Santa Cruz County Jail stopped providing in-person family visits during the COVID-19 pandemic and didn’t restore and relaunch this important communications avenue until very recently. For years, local advocates called the Jail’s crucial ban on in-person visitation “inhumane” – to this the Jail and Sherriff’s

Office cited “staffing issues.” When current Sherriff Chris Clark took office, he boasted repeatedly that one of his top priorities was reestablishing in person visitation programs at the County’s Blaine Street Women’s Facility and the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility. Today, at long last, in-person familial visits have been restored at both sites.

FAMILY CONTACT VISITATION SCHEDULING & INFORMATION Effective APRIL 2025 (link to ANNEX!)
https://shf.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/1/County/sheriff/formsdocs/Family%20Contact%20Visit%2006_2025.pdf

IN-PERSON FAMILY CONTACT VISITATION AT THE ROUNTREE REHABILITATION AND REENTRY FACILITY – BACKGROUND AND FIRST STEPS

It might be a bit confusing to some, but the Rountree Detention Center, located in the South County agricultural mecca of Watsonville, actually consists of two separate jail facilities – a medium security campus at 90 Rountree Lane, and the minimum-security Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility at 100 Rountree Lane. When most folks hear “Rountree” they immediately envision the older, medium security Santa Cruz County Jail site – a campus that has long housed local inmates who require incarceration and/or segregation from other detainees but who do not require the maximum level of segregation endemic to the Main Jail. But Rountree also houses another totally separate classification of inmates in the much newer (and lesser known) 29,000 square foot, 64-bed minimum security Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility. Inmates in the \$25 million Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility, also known as “T-Unit,” typically houses low-level offenders lacking criminal sophistication and posing no visible threat to other inmates in the Jail. It also is home to some inmates with low level felonies serving sentences in the Santa Cruz County Jail under realignment. Both the Rountree medium-security facility, and the Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility – literally a stone’s throw away from each other in a woodsy property near the bay– cater to inmate populations that have been convicted and sentenced to less than one year in jail. Only the less-restrictive Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility offers “In Person Family Contact Visitation” – not the medium security portion of the Rountree Detention Center. We hope that’s clear.

The Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility – the Santa Cruz County Jail’s most-recent State funded (\$24 million) expansion – offers low-level prisoners a sense of freedom and relative autonomy while still allowing for direct supervision. With almost 30,000 square feet of housing and 64 minimum-security beds (semi-private living areas), the Facility was created to break cycles of criminal activity and empower and equip inmates with the tools and resources they require for successful community reintegration. After two long years on construction and almost a decade of planning and scrambling for cash prior to that, the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility has emerged as an important, impactful, and largely under the radar piece of the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system. With a well-lit dayroom, bright and open wings, work areas, classrooms and ample space for workshops and educational pursuits, and resources such as counseling and vocational development, most of the Facility’s inmate population spend their days and evenings outside of their bunks and semi-private “homes.” While they become rehabilitated and inch ever closer to reentry into the community.

Effective April 2025, “Family Contact Visits” are now being offered to (some) inmates in the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility. Those with minor children are allowed to visit their families and loved ones in-person, face-to-face, with full contact opportunities and privileges once a month: On the 3rd Saturday of the month- wherever that may fall – one-hour visits can be scheduled for 8:00am, 10:00am, 12:00pm or 1:30pm. Familial contact visits occur in a nicely appointed visitation area within the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility at 100 Rountree Lane, Watsonville CA, 95076. This small window of time may seem small or limiting to some, but remember, the precious privilege that local inmates now have to hug, hold, and intimately connect with their families and loved ones – at all – hasn’t been granted for many years. Family Contact Visitations are limited to one adult and the Rountree inmate’s minor children – who must be accompanied by either their parent or legal guardian.

While Family Contact Visits are a huge blessing for (some) inmates with minor children in the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility, the Santa Cruz County Jail campus also provides “normal” non-contact visitations – with no specific familial limitations or rules – to all inmates weekly. Non-contact visits between inmates in the minimum-security Watsonville campus and their friends and families – held in visitation rooms/chambers in which parties are separated by thick glass - can be scheduled (in advance) weekly. One-hour visits (the max) can be arranged and scheduled weekly – on all Sundays with (chosen) start times of 8:00am, 9:00am, 10:00am, 1:00pm, 2:00pm, or 3:00pm.

We’ll carefully explain the pertinent information and specifics regarding scheduling and attending an In-Person Family Contact visitation or “normal” Non-Contact visitation with a friend or loved one in the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility (or the Blaine Street Women’s Facility) below. And make the entire visiting process as easy, clear, and impactful as it can possibly be.

IN-PERSON CONTACT FAMILY VISITATION AT THE BLAINE STREET WOMEN’S FACILITY – BACKGROUND AND FIRST STEPS

The Santa Cruz County Jail’s minimum-security Blaine Street Women’s Facility, situated near the San Lorenzo River and the Main Jail, has been on a circuitous up-and-down journey in recent years. After being shut down due to staffing and considerations in the middle of 2021, the 32-bed women’s jail reopened after 18 months of dormancy in late 2023. The now-open “Blaine Street,” as it’s affectionately known, typically houses low-level female offenders deemed suitable for the Facility’s more-relaxed, less-confining programs and atmosphere. Women with a violent or serious criminal history or who require medical or behavioral health supervision are alternatively housed in more supervised wings of the nearby Main Jail. Of the Santa Cruz Main Jail’s average inmate population of just around 300, incarcerated females typically make up about 10% of the total. For some time, there was no less-restrictive and less-punitive setting or resources for low-level female offenders in the Santa Cruz County Jail system. The relaunch of the Blaine Street Women’s Facility finally provides the setting, structure, support and supervision that qualified females, deemed worthy of the Jail campus’ less-severe dorm-like environment and innovative programs, need to rehabilitate and plan for their gradual reentry, back into the community.

Blaine Street residents (technically prisoners or inmates) are given every opportunity to succeed – during their incarceration and their eventual reintegration into society. While the Main Jail offers female inmates little in the way of classes, support groups, or outside programs, the Blaine Street Women’s Facility provides a bounty of offerings not typical to those found in normal institutions. Blaine Street inmates or residents are provided “Animal Bonding” programs in which by becoming trained to look after and care for cats, dogs, and even birds they gradually learn how to accept responsibility for the care of others (human people). Other classes and programs that would never be found in highly restrictive settings like the Main Jail include Skill and GED classes, Computer Labs and Applications, Job Skill Development, Knitting and Crocheting, Parenting Education and Non-Violent Communication, and all manner of Twelve Step Programs.

The uplifting, calmer, and far less traumatic environment created with the reestablishment and relaunch of the Jail’s influential Blaine Street Women’s Facility is a godsend for dozens of local women – many of them struggling as mothers and/or caregivers in the “real world.” The COVID-19 pandemic put a dramatic end to always-impactful In-Person Contact Family Visitation program for the women of Blaine Street years ago. And it wasn’t until this year – even after the relaunch of the downtown Jail site itself – that in-person visitations between inmate mothers of minor children and their family members were allowed to take place. Even though in-person contact familial visits are only offered at the Blaine Street Women’s Facility once a month – the opportunity for physical touch, intimacy ... even just a hug with long-separated loved ones is an almost-impossible blessing that Blaine Street mothers cherish deeply and look forward to.

In-Person Family Contact Visits between Blaine-streeters with small children and family members can be scheduled monthly: Visitations can be scheduled in one-hour blocks for the 1st Saturday of each month

(wherever that may fall) at either 9:00am, 11:00am, 1:30pm, 3:00pm. These types of visits are limited to one adult and a Blaine Street inmate's minor-children – who must be accompanied by either a parent or caregiver.

Inmates in the Santa Cruz County Jail's Blaine Street Women's Facility aren't limited to *just* once-per-month Contact Family Visitations – they are also free to schedule in-person non-contact visits with friends, family members, and support networks each week as well. Non-contact visits can be scheduled and arranged weekly – in one-hour sessions (hourly) on all Saturdays and Sundays between the hours of 8:00am to 4:00pm. The procedures, protocols, and required preparations for more-frequently available (but less intimate) non-contact visits are very different from those endemic to the In-Person Family Contact Visitation program.

We'll guide readers through the process and steps of planning, scheduling, and attending in-person Non-Contact visitations – available at the Main Jail, Blaine Street, Rountree, and Rehabilitation and Reentry Facilities – in a separate section of the Jail 101 Guide. Below we'll focus on the process, procedures, and important information relating to Contact Family visits – an avenue only available to in the Blaine Street and Rehabilitation and Reentry Facilities.

SCHEDULING, ARRANGING, AND CONFIDENTLY PREPARING FOR “FAMILY CONTACT VISITATIONS” WITH INMATES AT THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BLAINE STREET AND ROUNTREE REHABILITATION AND REENTRY FACILITIES

As previously stated, in-person “Contact Family Visitations” are not available in every Santa Cruz County Jail facility – just Blaine Street Women's and the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility (also known as T-Unit). And each planned one-hour visitation – between inmates with minor children and their family members at either listed Jail campus – can only be scheduled occur once per month:

@Blaine Street Women's Facility (141 Blaine Street, Santa Cruz CA, 95060) on the 1st Saturday of each month at either 9:00am, 11:00am, 1:30pm, or 3:00pm. **Phone: 831-454-7800**

@Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Program (100 Rountree Lane, Watsonville CA 95076) on the 3rd Saturday of each month at either 8:00am, 10:00am, 12:00pm or 1:30pm. **Phone: 831-454-7873**

Scheduling and Planning for a First or Future Contact Family Visit with an Inmate at Either Facility

Simply having a friend or loved one in (any) jail can be traumatizing and highly stressful in and of itself – but trying to successfully navigate through the Santa Cruz County Jail's complicated and ever-evolving rules, operating procedures, and visitation policies can be overwhelming in and of itself. We'll provide the link to the Santa Cruz County Jail's in-house published “**Family Contact Visitation Scheduling and Information**” – effective April of this year – below. Between our own insights and the Jail's, you should have enough information, courage and direction to confidently schedule an important first or upcoming visit with an inmate loved one.

https://shf.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/1/County/sheriff/formsdocs/Family%20Contact%20Visit%2006_2025.pdf

First Steps: Submitting a VISITOR REQUEST FORM

You can't just call up the Jail – either the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility or the Blaine Street Women's Facility – and schedule a visit immediately. There is an established, slightly-problematic process and steps required to actually set up a visit – and it all starts with an inmate's – not yours! – filing a “**Visitor Request Form**” while incarcerated. Visitor Request Forms are common, readily available documents in all Santa Cruz County Jails – and can be attained as a “paper version” or an equally common “digital” version on each inmate's personal electronic tablet devices. Obviously, before an inmate can file this important paperwork, he or she must first understand its existence and importance, and second must know that someone outside of the Jail actually wants or needs to visit them. This usually requires clear contact, communication, coordination, and mutual understanding - typically by phone using an e-message platform within the Jail – between an inmate inside the Jail and often-desperate friends and family members. Only (ultimately) approved

and checked individuals on an inmate's Visitor List are allowed to enter the Jail. To ensure visitor vetting and approval, incarcerated individuals must submit each potential visitor's full name, address, phone number, date of birth, and government ID number (driver's license or passport). Just crossing these initial hurdles – searching for and finding an inmate in the Jail system, establishing initial contact and connection with them, sharing pertinent information, and then encouraging them (or explaining the process of) filing an accurate and valid Visitor Request Form – can be a tall order for many.

Once an inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail files a completed and accurate Visitor Request Form – containing required personal information and details about *you, the outsider* - a background check on each requested visitor is performed by corrections staff. Inmates themselves must provide information and details for each and every person they want to visit – currently, or in the future. The Jail's background checks can take up to 5 days to complete for each initial, or future visitor to the Jail. Once (or if) an inmate's Visitor Request Form is approved, potential visitors can contact/call Jail Reception to schedule a visit. Before listing the required numbers for Jail Reception services at the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility and the Blaine Street Facility below, we should note that the process of actually knowing if and when a Visitor Request Form is approved or not can be problematic – requiring further communication and cooperation between you, the outsider attempting to schedule an initial or future visit and inmates in any County Jail facility. Once learning of a Visitor Request approval by the Jail, calling Reception at Blaine Street or T-Unit is in order. Here are the direct phone numbers to ask questions and potentially schedule a visit in each Facility:

Blaine Street Women's Facility Reception Desk: 831-454-7800

Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility: 831-454-7873

The Jail Reception staff at both above Facility's are available to answer questions regarding Visitation Approvals and to schedule visitations – both Non-Contact and Contact Family Visit types – during office hours Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 3:30pm. Because in-person familial contact visits are only offered on one select Saturday each month, some one-hour time slots – or days altogether – may be unavailable as requested. Visits can be scheduled up to 3 weeks before a desired visitation date and is closed 14 days before a visit. Again, getting the timing right takes coordination, planning, and work between parties in and outside of the confines of the Jail – more so for non-contact visitations (available at T-Unit, Blaine Street, and all other Jail Facilities) that can be scheduled weekly. As readers can clearly see, the important but equally frustrating process of scheduling a visit – any type of visit – with inmates in Santa Cruz County Jails isn't exactly a piece of cake. Another little wrinkle to consider is that even after successfully winding through the laborious Jail scheduling process for an all-important visit, the Jail Watch Commander can cancel the entire shindig at any time for a variety of reasons and circumstances as required. But we'll cover issues like this “nicety” and other important Jail policies and visitation protocols in the post-scheduling information below.

Preparing for a Scheduled Contact Family Visit at the Blaine Street and Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Santa Cruz County Jail Facilities

Even though No-Contact and Contact Family Visits are **both** supported and offered in programs operated by corrections officials at Blaine Street Women's Facility and the Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility – the policies and procedures inherent to each visitation avenue/structure differ in some keyways. So, it's worth investigating the specifics and requirements of each visitation modality separately. But the required visitation protocols and procedures for in-person Contact Family Visits at both T-Unit and Blaine Street are virtually the same. The only real difference between visitation policies in each Facility are the specific days and times Family Contact Visits are offered and supported.

No-contact visitation rules and policies – universal to all Santa Cruz County Jail facilities - should, and do, differ considerably from those central to in-person Contact Family Visitations offered only in T-Unit and Blaine Street. Though children are allowed to take part in non-contact visitations throughout the entire Jail system, they play a pronounced role in in-person hour-long full-contact visitations with incarcerated family members – mothers and fathers. There are more rules and requirements associated to these often more chaotic, loud, and potentially boisterous affairs. During each Contact Family Visit, male and inmates are free to meet

with any or all of their minor children, but only one other adult. Jail policies require close supervision and monitoring of the youngsters during a visit – not allowing them to be left unattended in lobby areas or any other area on jail property for that matter. Because in-person Contact Family Visitations are largely rarities, some call luxuries, in the County criminal justice system – the list of rules, mandates, and corrections requirements is actually quite substantial. We'll go into the long parade of “non-no's” further, but first wish to detail what visiting families should expect and may encounter when arriving at and preparing for a face-to-face Contact visitation with an inmate loved one in either the Blaine Street or the Rehabilitation and Reentry Facilities.

What Adult Visitors and Their Minor Children Should Expect and Plan for Upon Their Arrival at a Scheduled Contact Family Visit

Loved ones hoping to attend a scheduled Contact Family Visit need to do their homework and plan ahead. Running late – not arriving at least 30 minutes before a scheduled visit is supposed to commence – will lead to its immediate cancellation. This policy is pretty darn rigid as corrections officials takes any entry – especially complicated and fast-moving Contact Family visitations– into any County Jail Facility extremely seriously. If something – and many things can – go horribly wrong – a perspective visitor fails to show up on time, fails to cancel in advance, or is otherwise unprepared to a Jail facility under officer escort – not only will the visit not take place; it will put a ding on a person's record and be counted as a “no show.” Future visitations could potentially be impacted with just a few “no shows” – 3 in a 12-month period will lead to visitation privileges being unilaterally suspended for 30 days. Again, these types of Jail rules are taken seriously.

The first step in the entry and check-in process at a scheduled visit at either Contact Family Visitation site is ensuring that personal information and documentation matches that contained within the pages of an inmate's approved Visitor Request Form. All adult visitors must provide a valid form of government ID (Passport, California ID, or Driver's License) with name and contact information matching that on documents at the Jail. Minor children are obviously not required to provide their own identification, but parent's must deliver an original or copy of the youth's birth certificate. A school ID and even a passport will not be accepted in the place of a child's birth certificate. Legal guardians are required to submit valid court documentation that verifies guardianship or a appropriately notarized letter in addition to a minor's certificate of birth. Failing to provide any required – matching – documentation can terminate a scheduled visit at the get go.

In addition to required documentation for all parties involved, visitors are frequently asked to submit to searches of themselves or their property (not that they're technically allowed to carry much with them into a Facility. Refusal to a required person or property search can, yep, result in the termination of a planned familial visit. Contact Family Visits in the Rountree Rehabilitation and Blaine Street Facilities look and feel very different from those typically seen in Hollywood blockbusters. There's no partying going on and definitely no sex or PDA. Not only can visitors not bring any food or drinks, alcohol, tobacco or any personal property (cell phones, purses, cameras, anything) into the jail, they can't even bring in diapers. And absolutely nothing can be given to incarcerated loved ones during a visit either. There are no fancy vending machines or movie-like canteens in visitation areas either.

Even though they are officially called “Contact Family Visits,” there is NO physical contact allowed between adults at the Blaine Street and Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry facilities. Mothers and fathers are free to hug, comfort and be intimate with their minor children, but kissing, hugging and even draping arms around each other is a terminatable offense for themselves and adult loved ones. There are rigid policies and mandates that place limitations on the types, styles and amount of clothing and attire that visitors can wear during their scheduled visits with family members. Outfits that are deemed “revealing,” “offensive” or “distracting” – as determined by Jail Staff – will simply not be allowed. This includes open toed shoes, hats, skirts and dresses, clothing or shoes containing metal, medical attire, clothing that resembles jail or military patterned outfits, and revealing clothing like halter-tops, bare midriff outfits, tank tops, and strapless outfits. On one Saturday per month, after the extensive check-in process, successful appraisal and evaluations by Jail staff, and other

necessary preparations, a scheduled one-hour oh-so-important Contact Family Visitation can commence at each minimum-security Jail Facility.

Santa Cruz County Jail In-Person “Non-Contact” Visitation Guide

While “Contact Family Visitations” are offered only in the Santa Cruz County Jail’s Blaine Street Women’s Facility and the Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility, normal “Non-Contact Visitation” is offered and supported in all for Jail Facilities – including the Main Jail and Rountree medium-security Facility. While Contact Family Visitation are only hosted once per month, inmates and their friends, families, and loved ones can schedule one-hour No-Contact Visits weekly.

@Blaine Street Women’s Facility (141 Blaine Street, Santa Cruz CA, 95060) on the 1st Saturday of each month at either 9:00am, 11:00am, 1:30pm, or 3:00pm. **Phone: 831-454-7800**

@Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Program (100 Rountree Lane, Watsonville CA 95076) on the 3rd Saturday of each month at either 8:00am, 10:00am, 12:00pm or 1:30pm. **Phone: 831-454-7873**

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY JAILS/SITES THAT PROVIDE NON-CONTACT VISITATIONS

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY MAIN JAIL
259 WATER STREET, SANTA CRUZ CA, 95060
831-454-7800



ROUNTREE MEDIUM SECURITY FACILITY
90 ROUNTREE LANE, WATSONVILLE CA 95076
831-454-7873



ROUNTREE REHABILITATION AND REENTRY FACILITY
100 ROUNTREE LANE, WATSONVILLE, CA 95076
831-454-7873



BLAINE STREET WOMEN'S FACILITY
141 BLAINE STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
831-454-7800



Scheduling and Planning for a First or Future Non-Contact Visit with an Inmate at Santa Cruz County Jail Facilities

Simply having a friend or loved one in (any) jail can be traumatizing and highly stressful in and of itself – but trying to successfully navigate through the Santa Cruz County Jail’s complicated and ever-evolving rules, operating procedures, and visitation policies can be overwhelming in and of itself. We’ll provide the link to the Santa Cruz County Jail’s in-house published **“Incarcerated Person Non-Contact Visitation Scheduling and Information”**– effective April of this year – below. Between our own insights and the Jail’s, you should have enough information, courage and direction to confidently schedule an important first or upcoming visit with an inmate loved one.

https://shf.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/1/County/sheriff/formsdocs/Noncontact%20VISITOR%20INFORMATION%20%28ENGLISH%29%2004_2025.pdf

First Steps: Submitting a VISITOR REQUEST FORM

You can’t just call up the Jail – any facility – and schedule a visit immediately. There is an established, slightly-problematic process and steps required to actually set up a visit – and it all starts with an inmate’s – not yours! – filing a **“Visitor Request Form”** while incarcerated. Visitor Request Forms are common, readily available documents in all Santa Cruz County Jails – and can be attained as a “paper version” or an equally common “digital” version on each inmate’s personal electronic tablet devices. Obviously, before an inmate can

file this important paperwork, he or she must first understand its existence and importance, and second must know that someone outside of the Jail actually wants or needs to visit them. This usually requires clear contact, communication, coordination, and mutual understanding - typically by phone using an e-message platform within the Jail – between an inmate inside the Jail and often-desperate friends and family members. Only (ultimately) approved and checked individuals on an inmate’s Visitor List are allowed to enter the Jail. To ensure visitor vetting and approval, incarcerated individuals must submit each potential visitor’s full name, address, phone number, date of birth, and government ID number (driver’s license or passport). Just crossing these initial hurdles – searching for and finding an inmate in the Jail system, establishing initial contact and connection with them, sharing pertinent information, and then encouraging them (or explaining the process of) filing an accurate and valid Visitor Request Form – can be a tall order for many.

Once an inmate in the Santa Cruz County Jail files a completed and accurate Visitor Request Form – containing required personal information and details about *you, the outsider* - a background check on each requested visitor is performed by corrections staff. Inmates themselves must provide information and details for each and every person they want to visit – currently, or in the future. The Jail’s background checks can take up to 5 days to complete for each initial, or future visitor to the Jail. Once (or if) an inmate’s Visitor Request Form is approved, potential visitors can contact/call Jail Reception to schedule a visit. Before listing the required numbers for Jail Reception services at the Main Jail, Blaine Street Facility, and Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility, and Rountree medium-security Facility below, we should note that the process of actually knowing if and when a Visitor Request Form is approved or not can be problematic – requiring further communication and cooperation between you, the outsider attempting to schedule an initial or future visit and inmates in any County Jail facility. Once learning of a Visitor Request approval by the Jail, calling Reception at the Facilities listed below is in order. Here are the direct phone numbers to ask questions and potentially schedule a visit in each Facility:

Santa Cruz County Main Jail Reception Desk: 831-454-7800
Rountree Medium Security Facility: 831-454-7873
Blaine Street Women’s Facility Reception Desk: 831-454-7800
Rountree Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility: 831-454-7873

The Jail Reception staff at both above Facility’s are available to answer questions regarding Visitation Approvals and to schedule visitations – both Non-Contact and Contact Family Visit types – during office hours Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 3:30pm. Visits can be scheduled up to 3 weeks before a desired visitation date and is closed 14 days before a visit. Again, getting the timing right takes coordination, planning, and work between parties in and outside of the confines of the Jail – more so for non-contact visitations (available at T-Unit, Blaine Street, and all other Jail Facilities) that can be scheduled weekly. As readers can clearly see, the important but equally frustrating process of scheduling a visit – any type of visit – with inmates in Santa Cruz County Jails isn’t exactly a piece of cake. Another little wrinkle to consider is that even after successfully winding through the laborious Jail scheduling process for an all-important visit, the Jail Watch Commander can cancel the entire shindig at any time for a variety of reasons and circumstances as required. But we’ll cover issues like this “nicety” and other important Jail policies and visitation protocols in the post-scheduling information below.

What Adult Visitors and Their Minor Children Should Expect and Plan for Upon Their Arrival at a Scheduled Contact Family Visit

Loved ones hoping to attend a scheduled Non-Contact Visit at either the Main Jail, Blaine Street Facility, Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility or Rountree Facility need to do their homework and plan ahead. Running late – not arriving at least 30 minutes before a scheduled visit is supposed to commence – will lead to its immediate cancellation. If something – and many things can – go horribly wrong – a perspective visitor fails to show up on time, fails to cancel in advance, or is otherwise unprepared to a Jail facility under officer escort – not only will the visit not take place; it will put a ding on a person’s record and be counted as a “no show.” Future visitations could potentially be impacted with just a few “no shows” – 3 in a 12-month period will lead

to visitation privileges being unilaterally suspended for 30 days. Again, these types of Jail rules are taken seriously.

The first step in the entry and check-in process at a scheduled Non-Contact visit is ensuring that personal information and documentation matches that contained within the pages of an inmate's approved Visitor Request Form. Non-Contact visitations at any one of Santa Cruz County's 4 Jail Facilities can include up to 2 adults, or one adult and up to 2 minor children. All adult visitors must provide a valid form of government ID (Passport, California ID, or Driver's License) with name and contact information matching that on documents at the Jail. Minor children are obviously not required to provide their own identification, but parent's must deliver an original or copy of the youth's birth certificate. A school ID and even a passport will not be accepted in the place of a child's birth certificate. Legal guardians are required to submit valid court documentation that verifies guardianship or a appropriately notarized letter in addition to a minor's certificate of birth. Failing to provide any required – matching – documentation can terminate a scheduled visit at the get go.

In addition to required documentation for all parties involved, visitors are frequently asked to submit to searches of themselves or their property (not that they're technically allowed to carry much with them into a Facility. Refusal to a required person or property search can, yep, result in the termination of a planned familial visit. There are rigid policies and mandates that place limitations on the types, styles and amount of clothing and attire that visitors can wear during their scheduled visits with family members. Outfits that are deemed "revealing," "offensive" or "distracting" – as determined by Jail Staff – will simply not be allowed. This includes open toed shoes, hats, skirts and dresses, clothing or shoes containing metal, medical attire, clothing that resembles jail or military patterned outfits, and revealing clothing like halter-tops, bare midriff outfits, tank tops, and strapless outfits.



Upon arrival to a scheduled No-Contact visitation with an inmate in any of the 4 eligible Santa Cruz County Jail facility, expecting visitors must report to the site's designated visitation reception area. After a security screening - which may include a pat down search, metal detector screening or electronic wand check – a thorough baggage (belonging) inspection, document review process, and successful check-in Jail visitors receive an official "visitor badge" and led to a Facility's designated visitation area/wing. Each of the Jail's four Facilities offering weekly one-hour Non-Contact visitations between inmates and their families, friends and loved ones have on-site visitation rooms consisting of individual booths to ensure privacy and intimacy between visiting parties. After an escort by Jail corrections staff to their assigned booths, inmates and outside visitors can speak for the duration of their visit through a thick glass partition. After an hour, when a visit wraps up, the more grounded and hopeful inmates and loved ones say their goodbyes and are guided in opposite directions. Visitors return to the visitation reception area, collect their belongings, gather themselves, and return their badges to Jail staff upon departure.

Dr. Marni Sandoval, Director
Behavioral Health Division
Health Services Agency
County of Santa Cruz

DRAFT Re: Letter of Recommendation for 2026–2032 AI Training Initiative

Dear Dr. Sandoval,

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board recommends a six-year AI training initiative (2026–2032), with approximately \$75,000–\$100,000 per year in 2026–27 and 2027–28 for a "build-out" phase, followed by lower maintenance funding, to train 60–70 Behavioral Health administrative staff in the safe, ethical use of AI. This will increase service delivery, reduce stress and burnout, and lessen the need for additional administrative hiring.^{[1][2][3]}

AI tools can reduce documentation time by 40–50%, saving 800–1,000 hours per FTE annually while improving job satisfaction. A conservative 25–30% efficiency gain for Behavioral Health administrative staff could yield 10–12 "effective" FTEs over six years, avoiding \$720,000–\$1.1 million in hiring costs at \$90,000–\$110,000 per FTE (excluding overtime savings).^{[2][3][4][5]}

Two-Year Build-Out (2026–27, 2027–28): \$75,000–\$100,000/year

Train 60–70 staff in two tracks:

- **Intensive (25–30 staff):** 2–3 UCSC Extension courses (Generative AI Fundamentals, healthcare AI) plus BH-specific workshops on workflows, privacy, ethics.^{[6][7]}
- **Foundational (35–40 staff):** 1 UCSC course plus tailored half-day sessions.^[6]

At ~\$625/course, 85–100 enrollments cost \$53,000–\$62,500 total. Remaining funds cover curriculum adaptation, staff time, UCSC/Cabrillo partnerships, and implementation support.^{[7][8][6]}

Four-Year Maintenance (2028–29 to 2031–32)

Lower annual funding for:

- Refresher/advanced training
- New staff onboarding
- Workflow optimization with new EHR and regulations^[1]

Six-Year Service Delivery Targets

- **2027–28:** 20–25% faster turnaround, 10–15% more throughput (contracts, reports, credentialing)^{[4][9]}
- **2028–30:** 30–35% faster, 20–25% more throughput^[3]
- **2030–32:** 35–40% faster, 25–30% more throughput with full integration^[9]

These gains mean timelier services for clients despite constrained staffing.^[1]

UCSC's AI Center and certificates provide technical depth; Cabrillo offers accessible workforce training. With governance, equity safeguards, and metrics (turnaround time, overtime, satisfaction), this initiative enhances service delivery and protects staff from burnout.^{[8][10][11][2]}

The Board urges including this \$75,000–\$100,000/year build-out (2026–27, 2027–28) in Behavioral Health's budget to generate 10–12 effective FTEs, save \$720K–\$1.1M, and improve service timeliness over six years.^{[2][3][1]}

Sincerely,

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board

1. <https://www2.santacruzcountyca.gov/CAO/StrategicPlan/Budget/2025-26/dept/24>
2. <https://drchrono.com/blog/2025/11/how-to-reduce-administrative-burden-in-healthcare-with-technology/>
3. <https://www.inquirah.health/en/blog/the-roi-of-ai-powered-care-administration-reducing-costs-while-improving-care>
4. <https://thebioscan.com/index.php/pub/article/download/3223/2714/5803>
5. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38499053/>
6. <https://www.ucsc-extension.edu/courses/generative-ai-fundamentals>
7. <https://www.ucsc-extension.edu/series/artificial-intelligence>
8. <https://pulivarthigroup.com/californias-behavioral-health-crisis-addressing-workforce-shortages/>
9. <https://kissflow.com/workflow/impact-of-ai-workflow-automation-on-healthcare-efficiency/>
10. <https://admissions.ucsc.edu/programs/artificial-intelligence>
11. <https://genai.ucsc.edu>

Feb 9, 2026 **DRAFT**

Dr. Marni Sandoval, Director of Behavioral Health
1400 Emeline Avenue, #1976
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831 454 4170

Re: Letter of recommendation to submit a proposal for funding a Clubhouse

To: Dr. Marni Sandoval, Director of Behavioral Health

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board recommends that a submission be made for funding of a Clubhouse in response to the Commission for Behavioral Health's, CBH, Innovation Partnership Fund, IPF, Grant RFP at the earliest date following the RFP announcement in the winter of 2026 with a project implementation date of July 1, 2026

The IPF is administered by the CBH. Up to \$20 million, in total, per year for 5 years (FY 2026–27 through FY 2030–31; \$100 million total)

The current outline for submissions is that the proposal "must be directed toward innovative mental health and substance use disorder programs and practices that improve county BHA programs; county programs that must prioritize the populations with the highest behavioral health needs who often face structural barriers. Projects must align with the statewide goals of the BHA and demonstrate innovation in serving eligible priority populations or groups, as defined in law." Details will become available as the normal part of the RFP process. Melissa Martin-Mollard, IPF Acting Deputy Director of Research, Evaluation, and Program may also be contacted.

California behavioral health certified Clubhouses are community-based, evidence-based psychosocial rehabilitation centers for adults with serious mental illness, focusing on recovery through work, social interaction, and peer support. Certified by Clubhouse International and recognized by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) as Centers of Excellence, these programs offer voluntary membership for education, employment, and housing support.

Thomas Insel, former director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), is a strong advocate for the clubhouse model of mental health care. He highlights its effectiveness in promoting recovery, reducing hospital readmissions, and improving overall well-being for individuals with serious mental illness. Insel emphasizes that the clubhouse model, with its focus on "people, place, and purpose," offers a more humane and cost-effective approach compared to solely relying on traditional medical interventions and emergency care.

Again, the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board recommends that a submission be made for funding of a Clubhouse in response to the Commission for Behavioral Health's, CBH, Innovation Partnership Fund, IPF, Grant RFP at the earliest date following the RFP announcement in the winter of 2026 with a project implementation date of July 1, 2026

Please do not hesitate to contact Xaloc Cabanes, chair of BHAB, should you have any questions.

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831 4543 2200

Re: Letter of Recommendation to Increase General Fund Allocation over 3 years from 1.2% to a minimum of 2%.

To: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board recommends the County increase its General Fund contribution to the Behavioral Health Division from approximately 1.2% to a minimum of 2% over a three-year period (FY 2027-28 through FY 2029-30) as part of the Santa Cruz County 2026-32 Strategic Plan. This measured increase is necessary to address documented underfunding, stabilize mandated services, and align Santa Cruz County with peer California counties.

Three-Year Implementation:

- FY 2027-28: Increase General Fund allocation by approximately \$1.5 million (to 1.4% of GF)
- FY 2028-29: Increase by additional \$1.9 million (to 1.65% of GF)
- FY 2029-30: Increase by final \$2.6 million (to 2.0% of GF)
- Total investment: \$6 million over three years

Statewide Context: Where Santa Cruz Ranks

No single statewide table lists "Behavioral Health as percent of each county's General Fund," but authoritative statewide data provides clear context:

- Across California's 58 counties, Maintenance-of-Effort plus County General Fund contributions together total approximately \$212.8 million out of roughly \$8 billion in county behavioral health funding—about 2.7% of total behavioral health spending statewide.
- This indicates counties generally use typically 2-4% of their discretionary General Fund resources to support behavioral health, with some counties using dedicated local taxes or higher percentages.
- Santa Cruz County's 1.2% General Fund allocation falls below this typical range and is at the low end of county practice statewide.
- A 2025 RAND report documented that California counties collectively face a \$9 billion funding gap for adult behavioral health services, underscoring systemic underfunding and the urgent need for enhanced local General Fund support across the state[.

Again, the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board recommends the County increase its General Fund contribution to the Behavioral Health Division from approximately 1.2% to a minimum of 2% over a three-year period (FY 2027-28 through FY 2029-30) as part of the Santa Cruz County 2026-32 Strategic Plan.

Please do not hesitate to contact Xaloc Cabanes, chair of BHAB, should you have any questions.

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831 4543 2200

Re: Letter of recommendation for 2 Priorities in 2032 Strategic Plan

To: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board recommends that these 2 priorities be included in the county 2032 Strategic Plan

1. Doubling in-county mental health and substance use treatment capacity within the next three years.
2. Reducing by 50% the time in both the justice system and in custody for those not sentenced within the next five years.

1. Doubling in-county mental health and substance use treatment capacity within the next three years. The range and capacity for treatment of mental health in our county has been largely static, or possibly declining, for the last 10 years. More recently, one of our very few step down facilities, Telos, closed, as did MHCAN and the day program at Housing Matters. Half of the individuals in need of acute short term hospitalization are sent out of county, and there are few options for lower levels of care for them to both be directed to or transition down to a more appropriate treatment setting. National planning standards and California's own infrastructure programs support moving toward at least 30 acute psychiatric beds per 100,000 residents; Santa Cruz is currently at about 6.

Every time we send a Medi-Cal beneficiary out of county for acute psychiatric hospitalization, the County is effectively writing a check on the order of \$7,000–\$15,000 per episode and forfeiting the federal match we would receive if that same care were delivered in an in-county, 16-bed-or-smaller facility.

The June 11, 2024 Grand Jury Report entitled “County Behavioral Services- A State of Mind” highlighted that in 2022-23 (and previous years) the HSA department was spending \$23 million for out-of-county transfers or ‘outside hospital expenses’. Due to Medicaid rules these transfers do not qualify for the 50% match we receive for in-county treatment resulting in unreimbursed costs of over \$11 million each year.

2. Reducing by 50% the time in both the justice system and in custody for those not sentenced within the next five years. The county's review of positives and improvement opportunities from the last strategic plan found overrepresented justice system involvement by people with behavioral health issues and in communities of color. Sheriff Clark reports that 78% of the jail's 340-person population are on some form of medication, with 50% of those individuals taking mental health medication and 37% having a chronic medical condition. Additionally, 92 individuals take medication for substance use, 9 are on detox protocol, and 13 individuals were incompetent to stand trial due to escalated mental health concerns. Furthermore, the average days in custody for those still awaiting outcomes of their charges was 235 days.

Expanded pre-booking and post-booking diversion options (e.g., enhanced behavioral health court, expanded competency restoration in the community, robust outpatient and residential SUD/MH slots).

Stronger jail to community transition supports (benefits activation, medication continuity, housing navigation, peer support), which are commonly cited as key to sustaining savings from reduced jail use.

Justice system process changes (earlier screening for behavioral health needs, priority calendaring, presumptive diversion pathways, improved data sharing) that keep average processing times down.

Evidence from other counties indicates that these programmatic costs are modest relative to the dollars associated with jail bed days avoided, and that net savings typically grow in years 2–3 as both jail and mental health system costs decline with improved stabilization.

The lack of capacity in our community for treatment has largely led to our jail becoming the default mental health facility, which it was never designed for. Resources to strengthen medical support for those in jail should be prioritized. In addition to expanding treatment capacity, a focus on reducing the average time it takes to resolve cases in the justice system would address the underlying reasons for delay in needed court outcomes.

Based on national statistics 33% (85,000) of our county's population will have some degree of mental health (43,000) and substance use disorder (42,000). Of the 43,000 individuals with a range of mental health conditions, 9,700 will have a serious disorder. Statistically, 1 in 6 of our youth ages 6-12 will experience mental health disorder every year and only 50.6% of that same population receive treatment nationwide.

Again, The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board recommends that these 2 priorities be included in the county 2032 Strategic Plan:

1. Doubling in-county mental health and substance use treatment capacity within the next three years.
2. Reducing by 50% the time in both the justice system and in custody for those not sentenced within the next five years.

Please do not hesitate to contact Xaloc Cabanes, chair of BHAB, should you have any questions.

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

Behavioral Health Division

Behavioral Health Advisory Board

1400 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Phone: (831) 454-4767 Fax: (831) 454-4663



Salud Mental y
Tratamiento del Uso
de Sustancias

February 19, 2026

Dear Dr. Kaupp,

On behalf of the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board, I want to express our deepest gratitude for your exceptional service and dedication as a member of the board from August 2020 through November 2025. Your kindness, thoughtful input, and tireless advocacy have made a meaningful difference in the lives of the people we serve.

Throughout your five years on the Board, you consistently offered wise counsel, practical support, and a compassionate perspective that helped shape our work and priorities. You were not only helpful in meetings and initiatives, but a true champion for our community – lifting up voices, advancing access to care, and inspiring others to join in the mission.

Thank you for sharing your time, expertise, and heart with us. Your contributions have left a lasting, positive impact on our Board and on Santa Cruz County. We are deeply grateful for your service.

With sincere appreciation,

Xaloc Cabanes, Chair
Behavioral Health Advisory Board