



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

# PROBATION DEPARTMENT

## Los Angeles County Probation COVID-19 Weekly Update August 14, 2020

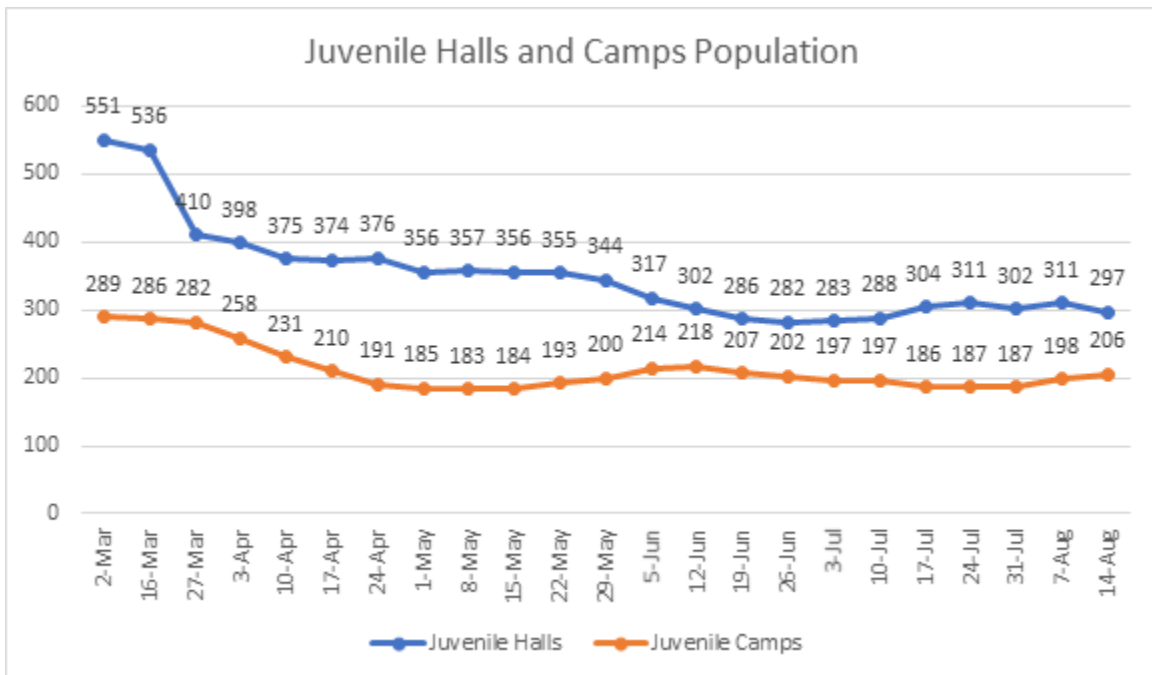
### L.A. County Probation COVID-19 at a glance for the week ending August 14, 2020

Youth testing positive for COVID-19 this week	4
Number of youth currently isolated from general population due to a positive COVID-19 test	3
Total number of youth testing positive upon intake since pandemic began	40
Total number of existing youth testing positive since pandemic began	13
Youth tested for COVID-19 this week	61
Total number of youth tested for COVID-19 since pandemic began	1336
Probation staff testing positive for COVID-19 this week	9
Probation Juvenile Institution staff testing positive for COVID-19 since pandemic began	66
Probation field and administrative staff testing positive for COVID-19 since pandemic began	67
Number of youth currently under quarantine due to exposure to individual testing positive for COVID-19	76

### Juvenile Division

#### Reducing the Population in Juvenile Facilities

Over the last week, the Los Angeles County juvenile hall population dropped from 311 to 297 and the juvenile residential camp population increased from 198 to 206 over the same period. Since March 2, the juvenile hall population has decreased by 254 youth, or 46.1% and the juvenile camp population has decreased by 83 youth, or 28.7%.



The L.A. County Probation Department continues to work with the courts and legal partners on methods to safely reduce the juvenile population housed at Probation facilities. A new warrant protocol has been developed after other jurisdictions around the State were surveyed to find other tools instead of automatic detention for warrants. This exploration process led to a reimagining of the Warrant detention protocol. The protocol was developed, vetted with the courts and stakeholders, and was implemented June 23. Warrants led to approximately 30% of detentions before this change. The expectation is this new protocol will lead to reduced police/youth contact and a significant reduction in detention numbers.

### Health Care Services

Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) continues to work with Probation facility staff regarding the care of the youth in the Quarantine and Isolation units to prevent potential spread of disease. JCHS nurses have trained selected Probation staff at the juvenile halls and camps for the use of infrared thermometers on all staff and visitors upon entry to the facility. A DHS Infectious Disease specialist is assigned to assist correctional facilities. He is a clinical resource for medical staff to help workflow and answer clinical questions.

The Department has continued to partner with JCHS to develop telemedicine services for assessment and consultation by medical staff and to build 24/7 capacity that currently does not exist. Telemedicine workstations are now operational in all juvenile halls and camps.

L.A. County Probation and Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) continues to closely monitor the health of youth in Probation juvenile facilities. Besides testing youth displaying possible COVID-19 symptoms, all youth who are entering and departing juvenile hall for another facility are tested for COVID-19. Youth who have tested positive are housed in a designated isolation unit, separate and apart from other youth until cleared by medical staff to return to a traditional housing assignment. Additionally, all youth in juvenile facilities are provided with masks.

### **Staff Health and Screening Measures**

The Department is screening every person entering a juvenile detention facility. Those attempting to enter a juvenile hall or camp at any time are required to verbally respond if they currently have new or worsening symptoms of a respiratory illness. If the individual's response is that they are experiencing symptoms, they will be restricted from entering the facility that day. The department is also conducting infrared temperature checks on all individuals entering juvenile facilities.

Employees testing positive are legally entitled to privacy and we will provide no further details at this time. For each employee who has tested positive, the County will notify potential workplace contacts, including other employees who may have been in close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual. All Probation staff have been instructed to wear face coverings in line with County and State Health Orders as part of an employee outreach campaign.

### **Staffing of Juvenile Facilities**

The Department ensures that all critical security and safety posts are staffed as required by the Board and State Community Standards and in accordance with the Department's Emergency Operations Plan. Contingency plans have been developed and put in place if facilities are not adequately staffed. Juvenile and Adult Field Operations have been designated to assist and have continued to report to the halls and camps since March 23, 2020.

### **Expanded Precautions at Probation Offices and Facilities**

In addition to efforts outlined in past updates, Probation has made additional efforts to keep youth and staff safe from COVID-19:

- The Department has issued masks to all staff and youth in juvenile halls and residential camps.
- A new shipment of infrared thermometers was received that will be distributed to Probation facilities across the County.
- The Probation Department has continued to make safety assessments of the Downey Headquarters facility and area field offices to ensure that physical distancing plans are arranged. The plans include having hand sanitizer

dispensers, and place markings to create 6 feet spacing to allow for physical distancing.

- Probation's Management Services Bureau continue to provide janitorial services at facilities to ensure all bathrooms and staff quarters (where applicable) are cleaned daily and have readily available hand soap, paper towels, toilet paper and disinfectant. The Department has also hired additional staff to clean and disinfect common touch areas twice per shift.

All Probation facilities have been instructed to conduct additional deep-cleaning efforts in high-traffic, high-volume areas, including visiting and health care facilities. Staff have also been granted permission to carry personal-use hand sanitizer. Public Health guidelines are reinforced daily to all staff and youth of the importance of social distancing and frequent handwashing.

### **Youth-Parent Communications**

In person weekend visitation is taking place at juvenile institutions where quarantines are not in place. Last weekend, 139 youth received an outdoor physical distanced in person visit at the halls and camps. Parents and guardians followed the safety precautions set in place, including physical distancing, usage of hand sanitizing stations and having their temperature checked via infrared thermometers as well as a designated custodian who was responsible for cleaning chairs and tables after each visit. Procedures for visiting were sent out to parents as well as posted on the [Probation website](#). Increased collaboration and partnership with JCHS and the Department of Public Health took place to ensure health and safety is properly addressed as visiting sessions are reopened. The resumption of visitation at facilities is taking place as a phased, week by week approach, with safety focused criteria dictating the pace and locations. Unless units are under isolation or quarantine, all juvenile facilities are tentatively scheduled to receive visits this weekend.

Virtual visiting is also taking place in both the halls and the camps. Youth are still able to make free phone calls to families and are also provided with supplies for letter writing. The Department pays for all postage regardless of the number of letters a youth sends out.

### **Other Juvenile Facilities Highlights**

- Juvenile halls will be offering religious services in individual units instead of the facility's chapel to limit the gathering of youth in light of COVID-19 restrictions. All camps have virtual religious services every weekend as well.
- Youth from Probation juvenile facilities took part in a Game Changer Roundtable with the Los Angeles Lakers and law enforcement community representatives. The goals of the program are to bring about more peaceful interactions between members of law enforcement and community residents, educate, and provide a road map for reform where applicable.

- A Youth Leadership Academy will take place, part of Probation Education Services' ongoing partnership with UPS and East Los Angeles College. During the month of August, three virtual academy sessions are scheduled. The session themes are Leadership, Workplace Safety, Interview skills. The sessions will be led by UPS Managers and Executives. Youth will have an opportunity to ask questions directly to the decision-makers at UPS. Participating youth must be at least 17 1/2 years of age with an interest in pursuing a career at UPS when they transition back to their communities. Session participants will come from both the Camps and the Halls.

### **Efforts to Address the Medically Fragile Population in Detention Facilities**

The Probation Department continues to not have any youth with compromised immune systems or other medical conditions placing them at higher risk for COVID-19 infection. As previously reported, if any youth have other underlying medical conditions which might exacerbate the impact of such infection if one were to occur, the Department will work with Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) to assess and address those issues on a case by case basis.

### **Mental Health Services**

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) implemented virtual counseling kiosks in Juvenile facilities to supplement the existing in person services provided to youth.

### **School for Youth in Juvenile Facilities**

Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) efforts to provide a quality education to youth in Probation facilities during the pandemic can be found at <https://www.lacoe.edu/LACOE-Schools/Covid-19-Distance-Learning-Plan>.

### **Virtual Court Hearings**

Video Court for the halls continue to operate effectively. A youth that needs to attend court but is in a quarantined unit will not be transported to court.

### **Adult Division**

#### **Field Probation COVID-19 Precautions and related activities**

Area offices remain closed to the public. Deputy Probation Officers continue to maintain contact with probation clients by phone, email and videoconference. Clients are encouraged to reach out to their assigned probation officer as well. The Department continues to conduct field visits and is prioritizing cases where there are vulnerable victims, sex offenders, and any other circumstances that are considered high risk or require special attention. In addition to conducting safety checks, officers are providing COVID-19 Public Health information and resources. Additionally, the Department released a notice instructing adult field DPOs to work with clients experiencing financial

difficulty as it relates to fines and fees. Adult clients continue to receive housing support through contracts with the Health Right 360 housing services.

### **CDCR Accelerated Release Project**

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) began conducting accelerated releases of approximately 3,500 inmates (includes DAPO and PRCS) in April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to “decompress” the prison population. Early on, it was only anticipated that approximately 650 being released statewide will be coming to Los Angeles County Probation for PRCS supervision. As the pandemic continued and the number of COVID-19 positive cases climbed, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) expanded the accelerated release criteria to include individuals that are set for release 180-days early, 1-year early, and those provided with credits of 12-weeks. Due the updated criteria, the new anticipated accelerated release is approximately 17.5K statewide. Historically, Los Angeles County Probation will receive 1/3 of the PRCS releases. The Department has been in regular virtual meetings with the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) and CDCR for coordination, information sharing, and trouble-shooting efforts. As a result of the accelerated releases, AB 109 staff have pulled back from redeployment into the institutions to address and case manage the influx of PRCS individuals. AB 109 staff are in the offices 1/3 of their work week, in the field conducting contact 1/3 of the time, and the teleworking the remaining 1/3.

The AB 109 Admin team is tracking all the names projected to be released early, including those being released from San Quentin. Information from those being released is being gathered from each of the prisons, including any COVID-19 information, such as negative and positive test results, quarantine and isolation periods. The AB 109 Pre-Release Center (PRC) is coordinating housing with CDCR and Project Hope. Project Hope is a State of California Housing Program for those that are being released either COVID-19 positive, or under quarantine status, who do not have housing upon release from prison. We are also working closely with our Department of Health Services (DHS) partners in coordinating medical care and housing for those who may be ineligible for Project Hope. We have been working closely with CDCR transport teams and our own MAT unit to facilitate many transports from the institutions to coordinated and agreed upon locations in Los Angeles County. Lastly, we are also keeping the Department of Mental Health (DMH) staff informed of any individuals needing mental health assessments or care, so they may be offered such services at the earliest opportunity in the community.

Deputy Probation Officers assigned to the Adult Division also continue to support the staffing in juvenile institutions.

### **Communication with the Public**

The L.A. County Probation Department, in conjunction with DPH, DMH, JCHS and LACOE, hosted a townhall July 22 to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on juvenile

institutions and the Department's operations as a whole. The townhall can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/FutuMp8nY9o>. Below are some questions and answers that were not able to be answered during the townhall:

**How long are youth quarantined for?**

*The time a youth is quarantined in the general population is determined by a medical assessment from JCHS. Youth newly admitted are tested and quarantined until their results have returned. If test result is positive, youth is to be moved to the Medical Isolation Unit. If test result is negative, youth may be released to a regular residential unit.*

**What is the policy for youth testing Covid-19 positive while in Probation care (JH, camps, or placement)? Are parents informed? Is the court informed? Do they have to test negative twice before being sent home?**

*If a youth tests positive, then they are quarantined until cleared by JCHS. Parents and courts are also informed. JCHS has not indicated that it is necessary to test negative twice before being sent home.*

**What is the staff to minor ratio at this time?**

*1 to 8*

**What medical screening are being done for employees reporting to work at the probation facilities?**

*Staff are given a COVID-19 screening questionnaire and have their temperature check before entering a facility.*

**What is the protocol for the juvenile halls and camps when anyone has tested positive for Covid-19? Why do some close their facilities and others do not.**

*If there is a confirmed positive case, then all youth and staff are quarantined based on JCHS's recommendations. The number of days depends on various factors such as when the Department was notified of the positive case.*

**What is being done to ensure that outside organizations and agencies can partner with the department to provide supplemental support services and enrichment activities via online/virtual platforms?**

*The Department has a list of certified organizations that are contracted and cleared to work with probation youth. The only locations that we have wi-fi capabilities are in the classrooms, and in some locations, we can use a hot spot in the gymnasium. We work directly with the Department's contracted provider(s) to coordinate a schedule based on*

*youth's interest. Providers that are contracted through other Departments, like Arts and Culture, are coordinated through that Department's Program Manager.*

Other questions that were not able to be answered during the townhall will be addressed in future updates.

For information or services, clients and members of the community may call the juvenile facilities. For general questions, please contact the Probation Information Center at 866-931-2222 Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### **Future Updates**

The care of youth in Probation facilities is a joint effort between the L.A. County Probation Department, Juvenile Court Health Services, Department of Mental Health and the Los Angeles County Office of Education. During the COVID-19 crisis, these agencies have collaborated to create an environment of safety and stability for the youth under their care.

We are pleased that the situation in our juvenile facilities has remained largely stable during the COVID crisis and this creates an opportunity to respond to your needs for additional information about the situation. Accordingly, we invite questions related to the County's response to COVID-19 in its juvenile probation facilities or topics you would like to see addressed in future updates. Please email any questions to [prob-news@probation.lacounty.gov](mailto:prob-news@probation.lacounty.gov) and we will select questions and provide responses in future weekly updates. Please note that we cannot discuss the circumstances of any individual youth assigned to probation facilities or any pending litigation.

To view previous Probation COVID-19 updates, please visit <https://probation.lacounty.gov/coronavirus>.



*The Los Angeles County Probation Department is committed to rebuilding lives and providing for healthier and safer communities for all 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, the*



*Probation Department's mission is to enhance public safety, ensure victims' rights and effect positive probationer behavioral change. The Probation Department comprises nearly 6,100 employees and has an operational budget of \$900 Million as of 2019.*

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