

Fouts Springs Youth Facility

Issued March 14, 2011

Chief Probation Officer response to the Grand Jury Report:

Finding 1 – The underutilization of Fouts Springs, Solano County’s subsidizing of contracting Counties, and the facility’s remote location cause the facility to operate at a deficit.

Probation’s Response to Finding 1 – Probation disagrees partially with this finding. The facility is operating at a deficit for the first time since 2006. The deficit is primarily due to low ward census and increased operational costs.

Recommendation 1 – The County Probation Department should undertake a complete analysis of the Juvenile Probation system to condense and localize the functions of the department. As part of this analysis, the Probation Department, with the approval of the Solano County Board of Supervisors and Fouts Springs Board of Directors, should eliminate subsidies of other counties’ wards and all parties should be charged based on actual cost involved with housing the wards.

Probation’s Response to Recommendation 1 – The first part of the recommendation will not be implemented as it is not warranted. The Probation Department has analyzed intervention options and identified a continuum of services that are used based on assessed risk and need of each youth. The second part of the recommendation is not under the control of the Probation Department.

Finding 2 – The State is reducing its role in the Juvenile Justice area, thus causing Solano County to find or create a facility to house the displaced wards from Department of Juvenile Justice facilities.

Probation’s Response to Finding 2 – Probation disagrees partially with this finding. If the State further reduces its role in the Juvenile Justice area without providing alternatives, Solano County will need to seek alternative options for high risk juvenile offenders. Although AB 109, which was signed by the Governor on April 5, 2011, eliminates DJJ as an option for juvenile court commitments, it provides an alternative for the County to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the State to continue to house youth at DJJ.

Recommendation 2 – The County Probation Department should work with other counties in the immediate area to develop a jointly-operated facility to house this class of wards.

Probation’s Response to Recommendation 2 – This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted at this time. If the State takes action to further reduce its role in the Juvenile Justice area and does not provide alternatives, there may be a need for a regional facility; however, joint-operation is not the only option and may not be the most efficient approach.

Finding 3 – The high cost of operating Fouts Springs is an inefficient use of taxpayers’ money.

Probation’s Response to Finding 2 – Probation agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 3 – The County Probation Department should work with other counties in the immediate area to develop a jointly-operated facility to house the class of wards that is currently being housed at Fouts Springs. The Probation Department should consider combining such a facility with the facility discussed in Recommendation 2.

Probation's Response to Recommendation 2 – This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Currently there are sufficient residential alternatives available, including group homes, making it unnecessary to pursue developing another facility.

Comments

There are clarifications needed to information in two sections of the report:

INTRODUCTION

Upon arrival, Clinton B. Nielson High School personnel test the wards in reading and math to determine their grade level.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Fouts Springs has a full time registered nurse and contracts with a physician in a nearby community for routine medical care. If the nurse or contract physician cannot provide the necessary medical attention for a ward, Fouts Springs provides transportation to Glenn Medical Center in Willows. In case of life threatening medical emergency, helicopter air lift is obtained through 911/local emergency response.