



SOLANO COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

2022-2023

ASSESSMENT OF SHERIFF'S CUSTODY DIVISION OPERATIONS

July 3, 2023

Assessment of Sheriff's Custody Division Operations

Solano County Civil Grand Jury 2022-2023

I. SUMMARY

The Custody Division is the arm of the Sheriff's Department responsible for overseeing and operating the County's detention facilities. Due to changes in state law and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, among other potential factors, the Custody Division has seen a 39% reduction in its Average Daily Population (ADP) over the last six years. This has resulted in a drop in the detention facility occupancy rate in the County from 65% down to 37%.

While it might be expected that a dramatic reduction in the number of detainees would result in a similar drop in custodial staff, that has not been the case. In fact, during this same period, the County custodial staff has only experienced a 2.5% reduction. As a result, the average annual cost of housing each detainee in the County has increased from \$65,329 in 2017 to \$139,430 in 2022.

II. INTRODUCTION

California Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109) and Assembly Bill 117 (AB 117) were signed into law in 2011. These laws, collectively referred to as the "Realignment Laws," were implemented to revamp the management of detention facilities in the State, detailing various changes in how detention facilities would operate. Locally, the Realignment Laws mandated that the Solano County Sheriff's Department work together with the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), and the Solano County Community Corrections Partnership (CCP)¹ to improve the community-based approach to public safety.

Solano County has three detention facilities, namely the Justice Center, Stanton and Claybank. To address the evolving inmate population resulting from AB 109, the County increased capacity, which is now a combined total of 1,435 inmates. A point-in-time snapshot of Solano County Detention Facility Capacity and Occupancy provided by the Sheriff's Department as of July 2017 and July 2022 reflected a dramatic decrease in ADP in the County. (See following Table 1).

The 2022/2023 Solano County Civil Grand Jury elected to review the inconsistent trends and impacts on the Sheriff's Custody Division Operations (Custody Division).

¹ The CCP was formed in 2011 as part of the Public Safety Realignment Plan and consists of executive committee members from the following departments in Solano County: including Probation, Public Defender, District Attorney, Health and Social Services, Sheriff, Superior Court, Victim Advocate, and other local agencies focusing on components and elements of the Public Safety Realignment Plan

**Table 1- Solano County Detention Facility Capacity & Occupancy
July 2017 & July 2022**

	Inmate Capacity	Average Inmates Housed in 2017	Occupied Percent 2017	Average Inmates Housed in 2022	Occupied Percent 2022
Justice Center	712	545	76%	185	25%
Stanton	365	265	73%	243	67%
Claybank	358	123	34%	97	27%
Total	1,435	933	65%	525	37%

III. METHODOLOGY

Documents reviewed:

- Solano County Recommended Budgets for 2017/2018 thru 2022/2023
- Solano County 2021-22 Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) Survey
- Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) website and statistical information
- *Daily Republic* article Jan.1,2023 “Sheriff wants to develop new Academy in Solano”
- Solano County Sheriff’s Office request for information Feb 3, 2023 containing diagrams of detention facilities, minimum staffing, ADP, inmate bed rates, inmate to staff ratios, excess unused salaries returned to General Fund, and workers compensation statistics
- Solano County Sheriff’s office Jail Based Competency Treatment (JBCT) report dated August 2019
- Solano County Civil Grand Jury 2014-2015 report on “Solano County Jails Technology in Action”
- Solano County Public Safety Realignment Plan updated report December 2021
- Recommended Budgets reviews of other counties in California including Sonoma, Yolo, Yuba, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Tulare, Los Angeles, Alameda, and San Diego.
- Solano County Civil Grand Jury 2019-2020 report on Rourk Vocational Training Center “Big Facility – Few Inmates”
- *Daily Republic* article April 12, 2023 “A little positivity goes a long way”

Tours and interviews:

- The Solano County Rourk Vocational Training Center and staff interview
- The Solano County Justice Detention Facility and staff interviews
- Solano County Administrative staff and budget analyst interviews
- Solano County Sheriff Management staff interview

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

The Sheriff’s Custody Division Data Summary details charts, graphs, and data provided by the Solano County Sheriff’s Department. [See Appendices for Graph A-Average Daily Population (ADP) and Graph B-Daily Bed Rate Fee]

Sheriff's Custody Division Data Summary

	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023	Variance
Inmate Average Daily Population (ADP)	856	752	631	590	572	524	-39%
Average Daily Inmate Bed Rate	\$178	\$214	\$257	\$276	\$385	\$382	114%
Annual Expenses of Inmate in Custody	\$65,329	\$77,951	\$93,732	\$100,868	\$140,469	\$139,430	114%
Number of SC Custody Employees	284	287	276	277	277	277	-2.5%

The Custody Division along with the CCP have made major strides achieving many of the BSCC correction realignment goals including reducing the number of inmates in state and county detention facilities. Inmate ADP in Solano County has gone down 39% from 2017 to January 2023. The average amount to keep an inmate in custody has grown 114% in six years from \$65,329 in 2017 to \$139,430 in 2022. The bed rate calculation used by the Sheriff’s Custody Division has increased from \$178/day in 2017 to \$382/day in 2022.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE) custody officers authorized in the budget to maintain inmates has gone from 284 in 2017 to 277 in 2022, or a 2.5% decrease compared to inmate population steadily decreasing by 39%.

The Sheriff’s Department has returned millions of dollars in unused salaries to the General Fund in recent years due to authorized positions not being needed. COVID-19 years of 2019-2021 also contributed to the huge budgeted salary savings with early inmate releases and staff sickness.

Jail Based Competency Training (JBCT) in Solano County was successful speeding up the wait time for mental illness competency hearings that were once done by the state hospitals with long waits of 3-6 months. JBCT is subsidized by the state and ultimately decreases the time in detention for inmates with mental health complications to receive a faster trial.

The Sheriff’s Department is currently declining to lease bed space to other detention facilities but has done so in the past. Leasing bed space helps to offset minimum staffing requirements. Staff also suggested that leasing bed space creates potential liability concerns.

The use of updated technology including video, personal data assistants, website visitation, and body cams have been added to update facilities, improve operations, and increase officer and inmate safety.

According to staff, food service assisted by inmates to provide meals was discontinued and is currently being done by a contractor. Declining inmate population and a lack of approved inmates was cited as the reason for discontinuing inmate food service.

Rourk vocational training facility continues to be underutilized with little or no visible improvement since the Solano Civil Grand Jury 2019/2020 report “Big Facility-Few Inmates.” Staff cited decreasing inmate population, shorter sentences, and inmates approved for training creates challenges. Rourk offers vocational training classes such as forklift, welding, tire maintenance, and pre-approved Laborer’s Union programs. \$200,000 was budgeted from the inmate fund to help with supplies and training.

The Probation Department has been approved to utilize Rourk but detention inmates and probationers cannot use the facility at the same time. A Fairfield *Daily Republic* article dated April 12, 2023, titled “A little positivity goes a long way” indicates that the Probation Department has been successful in reducing recidivism among inmates on probation and not in custody.

Charts, diagrams, and data provided by Sheriff’s staff indicate the three detention facilities in the County have a combined inmate capacity of 1,435. Claybank facility is the oldest of the three facilities with a 27% occupancy. Staff is against closing Claybank due to the expenses of reopening once closed. The combined detention centers were at 65% occupancy on July 1, 2017 and at 37% occupancy on July 1, 2022.

A *Daily Republic* article dated January 1, 2023, “Sheriff wants to develop a new police academy in Solano”, indicates that there is space and talent to do it at the Claybank jail complex.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDING 1 – The bed rate calculation ,which include custody expenses used by the Sheriff’s Custody Division, has increased from \$178/day in 2017 to \$382/day in 2022. Budget patterns and metrics do not reflect steps being taken to reduce custody expenses.

RECOMMENDATION 1A – The County continue re-evaluating operations to assess how to control costs with a currently declining inmate population, including consulting with other jurisdictions and reviewing best practices and efficiencies achieved in other counties.

RECOMMENDATION 1B – The County needs to develop a plan to reduce the number of Custody Officers through attrition, including retirements, a hiring freeze, expanding duties, and increased training and promotions to deputy positions.

FINDING 2 – The County Custody Division is not taking advantage of opportunities to internally address some of the diverging trends with respect to detainee management such as leasing bed space, better use of the Rourk facility, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 2A – The County revisit leasing available detention facility beds to other jurisdictions. Leasing bed space can improve facility occupancy and workload metrics that have minimum staffing requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 2B – The County explore expansion of high demand community services vocational classes at Rourk. Classes could include hospitality training, landscape services, tree trimming, truck driver training, pest control, food service certification and cooking. Create class lengths that are commensurate with detainee retention.

RECOMMENDATION 2C – When the type of detainees allows, the County reinstate food services by inmates.

RECOMMENDATION 2D – Evaluate the use of new technology, including video and body cameras, website visitations, and other information technology updates, to generate cost saving efficiencies and improve safety for officers and inmates.

FINDING 3 – Custody Division occupancy rate continues to decline. They are not efficiently addressing how to incorporate advances in detainment policies and changes in state laws.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – Custody Division evaluate alternate use of their facilities for less restrictive alternatives. Consider an electronic monitoring center, increase work furlough programs, and the use of less restrictive community-based Adult Residential Facilities or transitional housing.

COMMENTS

The County’s budget officer should continue to take an active role helping correctional administrators overcome obstacles that make it difficult to reallocate dollars to community-based treatments.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

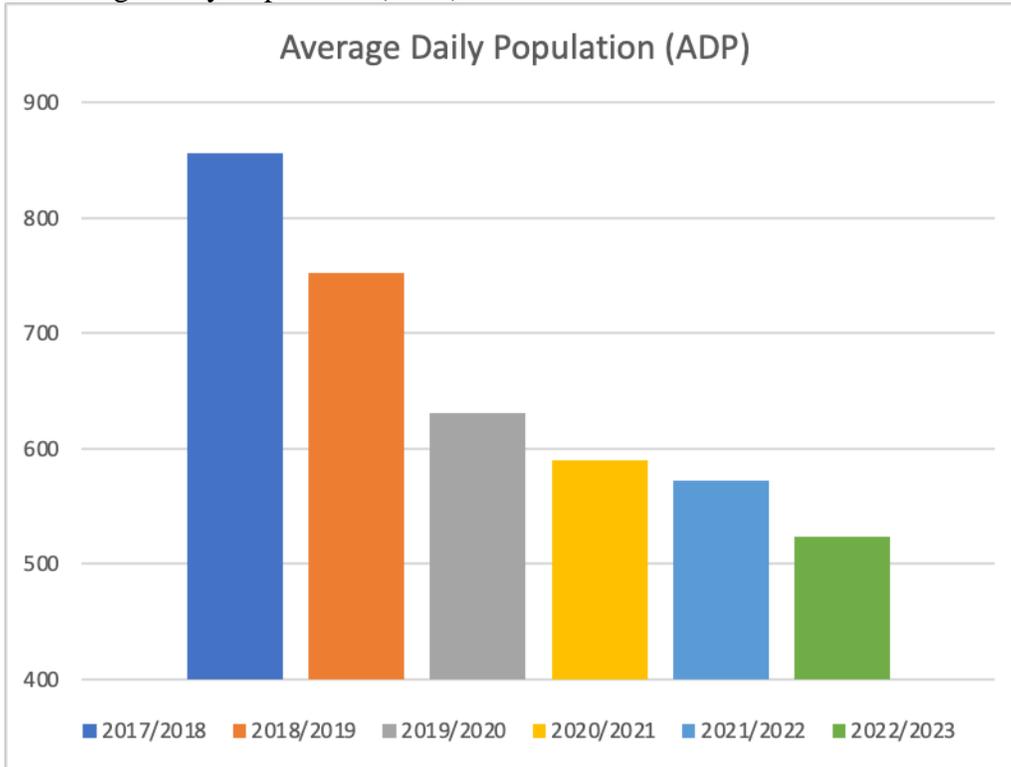
Solano County Sheriff (All Findings)

COURTESY COPIES

Solano County Administrative Officer
Solano County Board of Supervisors
Solano County Community Corrections Partnership
Board of State and Community Corrections

APPENDICES

Graph A – Average Daily Population (ADP)



Graph B – Daily Bed Rate Fee

