

October 2024

Since California shut down its state-run secure juvenile correction facilities on June 30, 2023, the state's 58 counties have been responsible for young people adjudicated delinquent and previously committed to state facilities. The state legislature mandated the closings and dissolving of the state juvenile correctional agency to change the state's treatment approach from harsh and punitive to developmentally appropriate, centered on accountability and healing. Moving the young people to the counties also places them closer to their families, support services and probation officers with whom they have already established a relationship. The legislature created the Office of Youth and Community Restoration to support the counties. Thirty-six of the counties created new secure treatment facilities for the post-adjudicated young people. The counties are required to provide programming including education, health and mental health, trauma-based needs, substance use, counseling, recreation, family engagement and treatment services that promote healthy adolescent development.

Seven new programs joined the Center for Improving Youth Justice's (CIYJ) Performance-based Standards program, which provides a blueprint for research-based and best facility practices along with a continuous improvement data system to measure and monitor implementation. Some of the data reported in the April 2024 surveys of staff and young people show the new California facilities are in alignment with like facilities across the country and in some cases, doing better:

### **Staff said they feel safe and burned out.**

**79%** of staff in California felt safe, compared to the national average of 80% feeling safe.

- Staff in California and nationally said they would feel safer with more training and equipment and less crowding, training specifically in gangs and verbal de-escalation.

**81%** said they were satisfied with their jobs, fewer than 90% nationally. More said they felt burned out always, sometimes or often – 69% in California compared to 66% nationally.

### **Young people said they feel safe and report getting helpful education and medical care.**

**75%** said they did not fear for their safety in the facilities, slightly more than 73% nationally.

**73%** of those who attended school said it was helpful or very helpful, while nationally 62% said school had been helpful or very helpful.

**62%** of those who received medical care said it was helpful or very helpful, similar to the national average of 61% reporting medical care being helpful or very helpful.



**The majority of young people in the new California secure youth treatment facilities said their treatment plans help them understand what they must do to reach their goals: 94% percent compared to 64% nationally.**

There is more to learn as more and more state facilities are closing and community-based facilities and programs work to establish practices and build services to prepare more justice-involved young people to leave and end their system involvement.

The survey responses come from 113 staff and 68 young people in facilities in Fresno, Sacramento, San Diego and Stanislaus counties and about 3,000 staff nationally and 2,300 young people and were administered during the month of April 2024. Survey respondents are selected randomly and have the option to decline participation. The surveys are administered every April and October and the data is used to improve programming, practices and policies.

CJJ's [Performance-based Standards program](#) was launched in 1995 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice specifically to provide youth justice agencies with a tool to ensure residential facilities and programs are safe, services are effective in reducing recidivism and increasing positive outcomes for young people, their families, staff and communities. Facilities and programs join the program voluntarily and commit to using research-based standards to guide practices and monitor implementation by collecting and analyzing data. Member facilities come from 58 different jurisdictions and include correction, detention, assessment, community residential and community supervision agencies.