COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO RESPONSES TO 2025-2026 GRAND JURY REPORTS

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO RESPONSE TO 2025-26 GRAND JURY REPORT "Investigation of Adult and Juvenile Detention Facilities" Published June 2, 2026

FINDINGS

Finding 3: The lack of body-worn cameras in San Diego County juvenile detention facilities is detrimental to an effective juvenile detention operation.

Response: The Probation Department disagrees wholly with the finding that the lack of body-worn cameras in San Diego County juvenile detention facilities is detrimental to an effective juvenile detention operation.

The Probation Department's juvenile detention facilities feature comprehensive camera systems throughout. The Youth Transition Campus, which opened in 2022 and had a second phase completed in 2024, was designed to meet best practices for visibility and recording capability. The Probation Department recently completed upgrades to the camera systems at the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility, improving overall video quality and adding cameras to increase coverage and eliminate former blind spots. Currently, there is only one juvenile detention facility within the state that has a pilot program utilizing body worn cameras. While body worn cameras are one of many tools available, there is currently no data the Department is aware of to support their effectiveness in juvenile facility operations.

The Department has also continued in efforts to reduce the use of force in juvenile facilities, including through the implementation of Crisis Awareness Response (CARE) Teams. The CARE Team focuses on de-escalating situations and working to resolve the youth's issue or primary stressor without the need for the use of force or room confinement. In collaboration with the County's Juvenile Justice Ad Hoc Subcommittee, a stakeholder group focused on juvenile justice policy and system improvements, the Department has also embarked on a plan to reduce and eliminate the use of O.C. spray within our facilities, supported by a significant training program to prepare our personnel and further strengthen the use of de-escalation strategies. The Department also contracts with community-based organizations, including lived experience providers, to deliver supportive services to youth and training to our staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2025-2026 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the County of San Diego Probation Department:

Recommendation 3: Equip all San Diego County Probation Officers, especially those in juvenile detention facilities, with body-worn cameras and create policies and procedures for their use.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Probation Department does not agree that the absence of body-worn cameras is detrimental to the effective operation of a juvenile detention facility. The Department continually reviews best practices among other juvenile facilities as well as recommendations from juvenile justice system advisors and stakeholders. The Probation Department is only aware of one juvenile detention facility in the state which recently began piloting the use of body worn cameras. The Probation Department has previously internally discussed body-worn cameras and will continue to consider their use in the future.