



County of Santa Cruz



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

Behavioral Health Division

Salud Mental y Tratamiento del Uso de Sustancias

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

JANUARY 15, 2026, 3:00 PM-5:00 PM

**1400 EMELINE AVENUE, CONFERENCE ROOMS 206-207, SANTA CRUZ
THE PUBLIC MAY JOIN THE MEETING ON MICROSOFT TEAMS (LINK BELOW) OR
CALL (831)454-2222, CONFERENCE 812 449 1#**

Xaloc Cabanes Chair 1 st District	Valerie Webb Member 2 nd District	Michael Neidig Co-Chair 3 rd District	Antonio Rivas Member 4 th District	Vacant Member 5 th District	Natalie Stott Transitional Age Youth
Kaelin Wagnermarsh Member 1 st District	Dean S. Kashino Member 2 nd District	Hugh McCormick Member 3 rd District	Rachel Montoya Member 4 th District	Jeffrey Arlt Secretary 5 th District	Vacant Transitional Age Youth

Kimberly De Serpa
Board of Supervisor Member

Information regarding participation in the Behavioral Health Advisory Board Meeting

The public may attend the meeting at the Health Services Agency, 1400 Emeline, Conference Rooms 206-207, Santa Cruz. Individuals may click here to [Join the meeting now](#) or may participate by telephone by calling (831)454-2222, Conference ID 812 449 1#. All participants are muted upon entry to prevent echoing and minimize any unintended disruption of background sounds. This meeting will be recorded and posted on the Behavioral Health Advisory Board website.

If you are a person with a special need, or if interpreting services (English/Spanish or sign language) are needed, please call 454-4611 (Hearing Impaired TDD/TTY: 711) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting in order to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.

Si usted es una persona con una discapacidad o necesita servicios de interpretación (inglés/pañol o Lenguaje de señas), por favor llame al (831) 454-4611 (Personas con Discapacidad Auditiva TDD/TTY: 711) con 72 horas de anticipación a la junta para hacer arreglos. Personas con discapacidades pueden pedir una copia de la agenda en una forma alternativa.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA

ID	Time	Regular Business
1	3:00-3:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll Call • Public Comment (No action or discussion will be undertaken today on any item raised during Public Comment period except that Mental Health Board Members may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed. Limited to 3 minutes each) • Board Member Announcements • <i>Approval of November 20, 2025 minutes*</i> • Secretary's Report
		Presentation
2	3:15-3:40	Overview of Janus Services – Jessica Guiver, Chief Operating Officer
		Standing Reports
3	3:40-3:50	November and December Patients' Rights Reports – George Carvalho, Patients' Rights Advocate for Advocacy, Inc.
4	3:50-4:00	Board of Supervisors Report – Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa
5	4:00-4:10	Behavioral Health Director's Report – Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health Director
6	4:10-4:20	Site Visit Ad Hoc Committee Update – Kaelin Wagnermash and Dean Kashino
		New Agenda Items
7	4:20-4:30	<i>Review revised sections of Jail Packet*</i>
8	4:30-4:35	Discuss response to the BHSA Integrated Plan
9	4:35-4:40	<i>Letter of Recommendation regarding staff training in Generative AI Tools*</i>
10	4:40-4:45	Announcement: Funding Ad Hoc Committee 2026
11	4:45-4:55	<i>Thank You Letter -Dr. Jennifer Wells Kaupp*</i>
	4:55-5:00	Future Agenda Items
	5:00	Adjourn

*Italicized items with * indicate action items for board approval.*

NEXT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING IS ON:
FEBRUARY 19, 2026, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
1400 EMELINE, CONFERENCE ROOMS 206-207, SANTA CRUZ



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION



Salud Mental y
Tratamiento del Uso
de Sustancias

MINUTES – Draft

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

NOVEMBER 20, 2025, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY, 1400 EMELINE, ROOMS 206-207, SANTA CRUZ 95060
MICROSOFT TEAMS (831) 454-2222, CONFERENCE ID 183 340 820#

Present: Dean Kashino, Hugh McCormick, Jeffrey Arlt, Kaelin Wagnermash, Michael Neidig, Natalie Stott, Rachel Montoya, Valerie Webb, Xaloc Cabanes, Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa

Absent: Antonio Rivas, Jennifer Wells Kaupp

Staff: Marni Sandoval, Amy Rhoades, Jane Batoon-Kurovski

- I. Roll Call – Quorum present. Meeting called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Chair Xaloc Cabanes.
- II. Public Comment – 1 addressed the BHAB in the conference room.
- III. Board Member Announcements
 1. New Transitional Age Youth Member – Natalie Stott
 2. County Strategic Plan – Mike and Jeffrey attended meeting
 3. No BHAB meeting in December
- IV. Approve October 16, 2025 Minutes
Motion / Second: Rachel Montoya / Dean Kashino
Ayes: Kashino, McCormick, Arlt, Wagnermash, Neidig, Montoya, Webb, Cabanes, De Serpa
Nayes: None
Abstain: Stott
Result: Approved
- V. Secretary's Report
 - Attendance issue – Jenny missed two consecutive meetings without an excuse, resulting in a vacancy in her seat. Xaloc will reach out to Jenny to ask about her intentions regarding the BHAB.
- VI. Patient's Rights Report – George Carvalho, Advocate
October report was provided. George attended the meeting.
 - AB2275 clarification – law that became effective last January. Advocacy Inc is contacted when a person is placed on second 5150 hold and within one week the person must be advised of their right to file writ and have a hearing scheduled on that issue.
 - Advocacy, Inc. and the County have agreed that Advocacy, Inc. will provide services to minors. The first floor of the Hope Forward facility will be designated for individuals placed on a 5855 hold, while the second floor will be for voluntary placements, not subject to a hold. There remains the same concern regarding

long-term care for individuals under a hold. George stated that this facility will not provide 14-day hold service for minors, which could result in a potential increase in the number of 5855 holds, which may lead to an increased number of hearings compared to current levels.

VII. Board of Supervisors Report – Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa

- The entire MHCAN board resigned, and there is currently no one working with the County to resume operations. Two former board members may be willing to return.
- Provided Letter of support for \$100M grant that Janus is seeking, to provide a facility and services in South County. The facility would provide a variety of care in the substance use continuum and serve folks that have medical complications, dual diagnosis issues, medication assisted treatment, services for seniors. The Grant is to construct and start up the facility, but ongoing costs would be covered by the revenue that would be generated from the service delivery from the various payer sources.
- Children's Crisis Center – continue to hire staff. Anticipate early 2026 opening.

VIII. Behavioral Health Director's Report – Dr. Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health Director

1. Launch of Recovery Incentives Program

- It is a 24-week outpatient pilot program for people with stimulant use disorders. Participants are tested twice weekly during weeks 1–12 and weekly during weeks 13–24, followed by 6 months of recovery support. Participants receive cash incentives for each negative stimulant test, earning up to \$599 total. Eligibility requires enrollment in Medi-Cal and participation in a county behavioral health or contracted SUD program.

2. Aspiranet Youth Crisis Center (Hope Forward) Project Update

- Aspiranet is making progress with hiring and has begun training new staff. They are participating in the monthly Crisis Continuum State group. Final facility updates are underway to enhance safety. The main delay is multi-layered licensing for the Crisis Stabilization Unit on the first floor. Importantly, the facility is now designated to receive youth on involuntary holds, allowing diversion from hospitals.
- The second-floor crisis residential treatment program requires multiple licenses from different agencies, including the CA Departments of Social Services, as well as county Medi-Cal certification. These approvals are currently with the state, causing some delay.

3. BHSA Community Planning Process Updates

- A system mapping session was held on the 12th with internal staff to review program crosswalks as funding transitions from MHSA to BHSA, which includes a 5% reduction. This process will help determine which MHSA-funded programs align with BHSA categories, identify gaps, and inform funding decisions going forward.

4. Emergency Food Bank Distribution Support

- On November 4th, Santa Cruz County declared a local emergency due to disruptions in federal CalFresh benefits, prompting emergency food distributions by local food banks. Community members are experiencing significant food insecurity along with anxiety and fear. At the request of Second Harvest Food Bank, Behavioral Health and Clinic staff volunteered at these events to provide trusted support and resources.

IX. Site Visit – Telecare on 11/04/25. Attendees: Dean, Kaelin, Mike, Jeffrey

- Discussed programs and toured the facility (built 2012–2013). Interior is somewhat dated, and space is limited. The center is now adults-only. They are working to improve through staff development, including de-escalation, violence response, CPR, and expanding bilingual/bicultural care.
- The PHF does not feel welcoming – more like a locked facility with plexiglass, occasional uniformed guards, and minimal lobby space. Staff are dedicated, professional, and knowledgeable but are working in an underfunded and unsupported system.
- Some individuals have been there for up to a year due to lack of placement options, though services are provided that allow them to remain.
- Operational issues include no space for officers to complete paperwork, and separate EHR systems between CSP and PHF requiring manual data entry during transfers, creating a need for better record sharing.
- There is a shortage of local placements and step-down services, resulting in 60–70% of clients being sent out of county at higher cost. They recommended expanding NAMI and adding skilled nursing facilities in Watsonville to better connect services. Housing was cited as a major driver of recidivism. There are no local services for postpartum depression, requiring referrals to Fremont Hospital.
- Recommendation for January meeting- propose that each consumer entering high-end services be assigned a peer support specialist at admission. The peer would engage during the residential stay to build rapport and begin service linkages, addressing silos and reducing recidivism caused by gaps in follow-up care.
- Next site visit in December: 7th Avenue

X. Funding Ad Hoc Committee

- The initial research was on Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health's capacity and funding needs but felt a need to respond to HRI's severe cuts to services. Reports that were reviewed were from the Grand Jury Criminal Justice Council, BHSA legislation, Mike Beebe's report, and the county budget.
- Slides were shared and after discussion, they decided to wait for the mapping to be completed, and then the ad hoc committee will meet with Marni to review and identify any information that may have been missing in the slides and identify gap areas.

XI. 2025 Data Notebook

- The Data Notebook has been submitted to the State and will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors to be included in the Written Correspondence for the December 9, 2025, BOS meeting.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.



Withdrawal Management

Chief Medical Officer: Jason Wasche, DO



- Unit and admissions Staff includes nurse practitioners, RNs, LVNs, medical technicians (MA, CNA and EMT) Peers, Enhanced Care Managers, and SUD Counselors as assigned.
- Withdrawal Management 3.2 Level of Care per ASAM Criteria- will later accommodate 3.7 level of care pending licensing with California Department of Public Health
- Services can be accessed through open access

Janus of Santa Cruz's withdrawal management program offers 24-hour medically monitored residential care to manage mild to moderate withdrawal symptoms from drugs or alcohol. Medications are often prescribed to assist with symptoms and discomforts associated with withdrawal. Medical staff may coordinate with primary care and specialty mental health services to manage a client's physical and mental health needs.

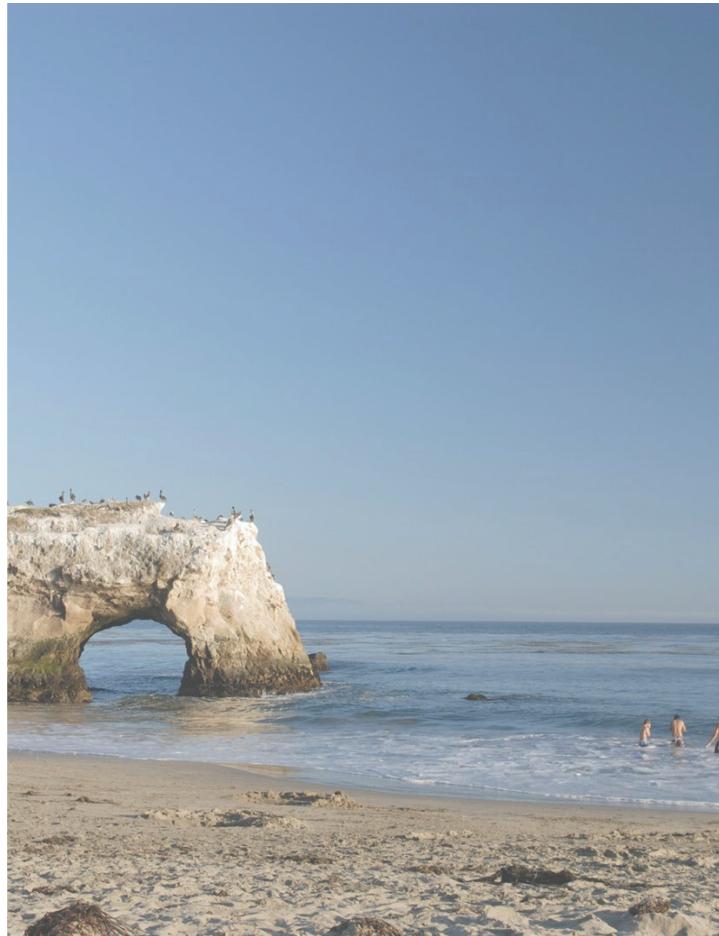


Sobering Center

- EMT/LVN, Peer Support, Case Managers
- DUI Referral, Case Management, Peer Support, Medical Support(Monitoring Vitals)
- Police drop offs or self referrals
- While at the Sobering Center, clients are monitored by our Medical Staff. Vitals are checked and tracked. Case Managers/Peer Support can have conversations with clients, for potentially entering a program or DUI classes. Clients also have access to a shower. Staff may also wash clients clothing, if the client request it. A change of clothing is provided to client.



Janus Integrated Behavioral Health



- **Services Offered:** Person-centered psychotherapy with a strengths-based approach
- **Levels of Care Offered:** Mild to moderate behavioral health symptoms
- **How to access care:** Clients enrolled in a Janus program may be referred internally for therapy at Janus Integrated Behavioral Health by a counselor, peer support or manager, provided client has CCAH insurance.
- **General program description:** The Integrated Behavioral Health Program at Janus aims to address the interconnected nature of substance abuse and mental health issues by providing integrated, holistic, and individualized care to support clients in achieving lasting recovery and improved overall well-being.



Residential Services at 7th



- Unit Staff includes Counselors, ECM, Certified Peers, Associate Counselors, Supervisor, Medical Support for medication and IMS (MAs, LVN, RN, MD)
- Residential 3.1 and 3.5 Level of Care per ASAM Criteria
- Length of stay depending on need
- Services can be accessed through assessment interview.

Janus Residential currently offers 24-hour clinically supervised care along with Incidental medical services. Clinical services include EBP service provision of DBT, Seeking Safety, Interactive Journals, and Motivational Interviewing. Residents has additional access to Wings, Dientes, Weekly Acupuncture from Five Branches, Family education and support, support group introduction, dynamic educational sessions, and daily beach walks.



Perinatal Program

- Types of Staff: Counselor, Treatment Techs, Case Manager, Peer Support Specialist and Medical Assistant
- Services Offered/Levels of Care Offered: 3.1 and 3.5
- How to access care: self referred by calling main number at Janus, or referred by OBGYN, PCP, County SUDS, FCS

Perinatal is a residential facility that provides treatment to pregnant, post partum and moms that are parenting children under the age of 18. Children under the age of 6 can live at the facility with the mother. We focus on learning to be in recovery while also parenting a child under the age of 18. We offer Life Skills groups as well as educational and clinical groups.

Updates: Ribbon cutting of new facility in September 2026

Moving to 150 Pennsylvania: Age of children allowed to live onsite along with census will increase.



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Women and Family Program





Janus Outpatient and Recovery Residences

Outpatient Services

- Types of Staff: Certified counselors, certified peer support, ECM
- Services Offered: Group and individual counseling, discharge planning, care coordination
- Janus provides intensive outpatient treatment to up to 12 clients per group 9 hours of group per week plus additional individual sessions, peer support, and ECM as needed

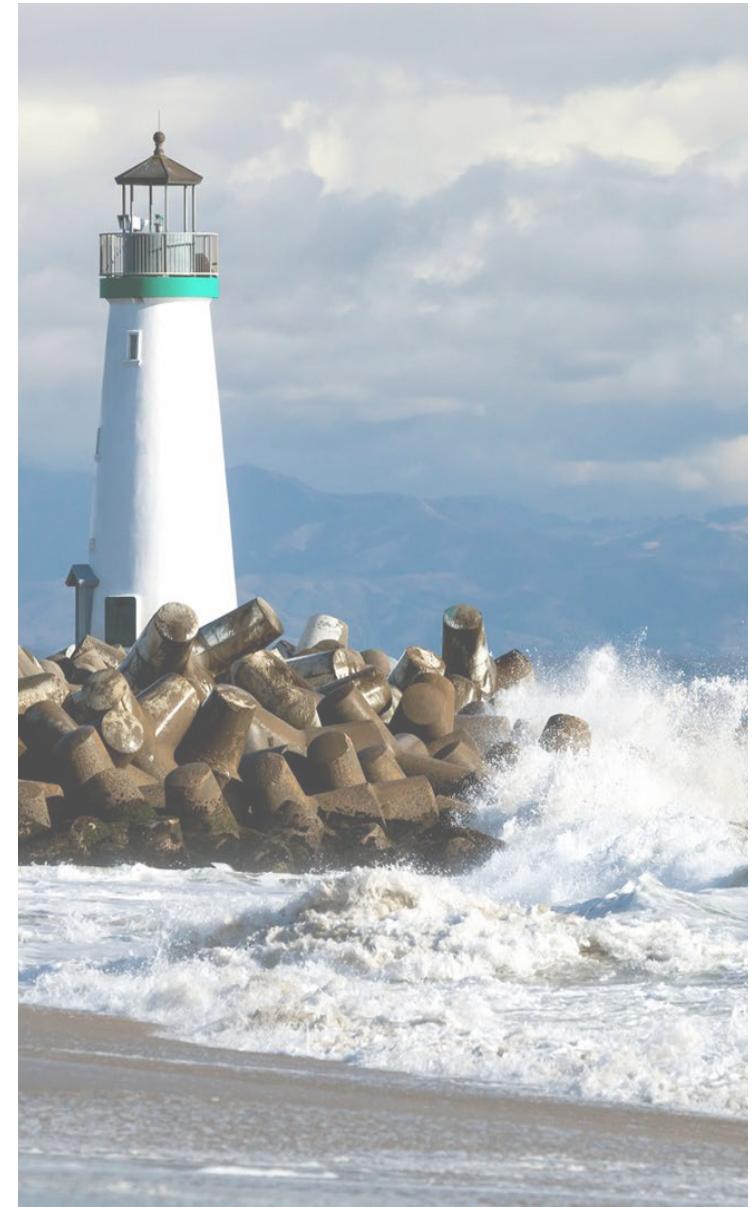
Recovery Residence

- Types of Staff: House managers, certified peer support, ECM
- Services Offered: Supportive housing, meals, long term planning for housing, sober environment, case management
- Janus provides supportive housing in 3 different houses for up to 90 days with concurrent enrollment in outpatient.

Services can be accessed through assessment interview.

Janus Opioid Treatment Program

- Types of Staff: Counselors, Medical Staff, Client Services, Enhanced Care Management, Peer Support
- Services Offered/Levels of Care Offered: Outpatient Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)
- # Beds/ #Clients Served: Licensed Capacity: North 530; South 230
- How to access care: Walk-in, referral, Open access M-F 8am-10am
- General program description: Janus of Santa Cruz provides CARF accredited medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid dependent individuals in MAT clinics located in Santa Cruz and Watsonville. Methadone is the primary medication used in MAT although the program can also provide Suboxone (buprenorphine) and Vivitrol (naltrexone) medications as well. Janus MAT is committed to improving the lives of opioid dependent individuals using medication, counseling, case management and referral services. In addition to those services provided to individuals, Janus strives to educate the community about opioid use disorder and substance use disorders in general and provide opioid overdose prevention through the training and provision of naloxone (Narcan) to community organizations, individuals, and partner agencies.
- MNTP- vans at north and south expecting to launch in late spring/early summer of 2026



Mobile Van



What is The Janus Regional Health Hub

120

Bed Residential Treatment Facility



10

Bed Sobering Center



230 Opioid Treatment Program/ Medication Assisted Treatment Slots



120 Day Treatment, Intensive Outpatient & Outpatient slots

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Janus
of Santa Cruz
The Leader in Addiction Treatment

Summary

This is a November Patients' Rights Advocate Report from the Patients' Rights Advocacy program. It includes the following: telephone calls, reports, and emails. It includes a breakdown of the number of certified clients, the number of hearings, and the number of contested hearings. It also includes a breakdown of Reise Hearing activity, including the number of Riese Hearings filed, the number of Riese conducted, and the number that was lost.

Patients' Rights Advocate Report

November 2025

Not unexpectedly November has been a very light month of case reports. The program continued to respond to community concerns, including failed attempts to contact Santa Cruz residents placed out of the county. As well as working with a parent seeking services for their adult child from Santa Cruz County for mental health services.

The Advocate participated in a remote meeting of all Patients' Rights Advocates impacted by California Senate Bill 43 which broadens the definition of grave disability under the LPS act and will participate in a county sponsored training next month.

We are also preparing to provide advocacy services to the minors hospitalized at the new facility once "Hope Forward," is fully operational.

Reise and Certification Review Hearings

November 2025

1. TOTAL NUMBER CERTIFIED	14
2. TOTAL NUMBER OF HEARINGS	14
3. TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTESTED HEARINGS	5
4. NO CONTEST PROBABLE CAUSE	9
5. CONTESTED NO PROBABLE CAUSE	
6. VOLUNTARY BEFORE CERTIFICATION HEARING	
7. DISCHARGED BEFORE HEARING	
8. WRITS	
9. CONTESTED PROBABLE CAUSE	5
10. NON-REGULARLY SCHEDULED HEARINGS	

**Ombudsman Program & Patient Advocate Program shared 0 clients in this month
(shared = skilled nursing resident (dementia) sent to behavioral health unit or mental
health client placed in skilled at Telecare (Santa Cruz Psychiatric Health Facility)**

Reise Hearings. /Capacity Hearings

Total number of Riese petitions filed by the Telecare treating psychiatrist:

Total number of Riese Hearings conducted: 3

Total number of Riese Hearings lost: 3

Total number of Riese Hearings won: 0

Total number of Riese Hearings withdrawn: 0

Hours spent on conducted hearing representation: 1.75

Hours spent on hearings not conducted:

Hours spent on all Reise hearings:

Reise appeal: 0

Respectfully Submitted: Davi Schill, George Carvalho, PRA

Summary

This is a December 2025, Patients' Rights Advocate Report from the Patients' Rights Advocacy program. It includes the following: telephone calls, reports, and emails. It includes a breakdown of the number of certified clients, the number of hearings, and the number of contested hearings. It also includes a breakdown of Reise Hearing activity, including the number of Riese Hearings filed, the number of Riese conducted, and the number that was lost.

Patients' Rights Advocate Report December 2025

Telecare

On 12,3,25, this writer received a call from a client at the Psychiatric Health Facility. She received a 5250 Notice and requested the services of a Patients' Rights Advocate. This writer returned her call on the same day and discussed the 5250-hearing process including her right to contest the hold and if necessary, request a writ of habeas corpus

Dominican Hospital Emergency Department.

On December 9, 2025, This writer received a call from a psychiatric social worker. A minor had been placed on an additional hold and pursuant to AB 2275 a hearing was scheduled. The hearing included parents, social work staff, the hearing officer, and this advocate. Petition upheld by the Hearing officer

Reise and Certification Review Hearings December 2025

1. TOTAL NUMBER CERTIFIED	26
2. TOTAL NUMBER OF HEARINGS	26
3. TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTESTED HEARINGS	8
4. NO CONTEST PROBABLE CAUSE	18
5. CONTESTED NO PROBABLE CAUSE	2
6. VOLUNTARY BEFORE CERTIFICATION HEARING	0
7. DISCHARGED BEFORE HEARING	0
8. WRITS	0
9. CONTESTED PROBABLE CAUSE	16
10. NON-REGULARLY SCHEDULED HEARINGS	0

Ombudsman Program & Patient Advocate Program shared 0 clients in this month
(shared = skilled nursing resident (dementia) sent to behavioral health unit or mental
health client placed in skilled at Telecare (Santa Cruz Psychiatric Health Facility)

Reise Hearings. /Capacity Hearings

Total number of Riese petitions filed by the Telecare treating psychiatrist: 2

Total number of Riese Hearings conducted: 2

Total number of Riese Hearings lost: 2

Total number of Riese Hearings won: 0

Total number of Riese Hearings withdrawn: 0

Hours spent on conducted hearing representation:

Hours spent on hearings not conducted: 2 hrs.

Hours spent on all Reise hearings: 2 hrs.

Reise appeal: 0

Respectfully Submitted: Davi Schill, PRA

George Carvalho, PRA



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Behavioral Health Director's Report

Dr. Marni R. Sandoval

Behavioral Health Advisory Board Meeting – January 15, 2026

Adults Behavioral Health Update

Adult Mental Health has been excitedly planning for the opening of the BH Bridge House which will provide a safe, community-based setting for treatment, recovery, and transition to long-term housing. The Bridge House is located on Soquel Ave close to the PHF. The program is designed to help people stabilize, begin healing, and exit homelessness in less restrictive care environments. Services will be person-centered, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed. Housing Matters will operate 24/7 on-site resident services, while Santa Cruz County's AMH Integrated Housing and Recovery Team (IHART) will provide comprehensive behavioral health services. Priority access will be given to individuals participating in the state-mandated CARE program. Secondary priority will be for individuals with frequent use of crisis and inpatient behavioral health services and long histories of homelessness. The program is expected to serve 60–80 Santa Cruz County residents annually, with an average stay of six months, though we hope some may transition to permanent housing sooner.

Bridge House



A 32-bed center with temporary housing located at 2202 Soquel Avenue for our clients transitioning out of homelessness.

Children's Behavioral Health Update

Implementing Evidence Based Psychological Practices (EBPP)



Children's Behavioral Health (CBH) Management is engaged with Center of Excellence (COEs) to understand next steps for implementing the following Evidence-Based psychological Practices (EBPP):

- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)
- High Fidelity Wraparound (HFW)

In a recent survey of current CBH contractors (Encompass, PVPSA, Parents Center, Pacific Clinics, Aspiranet), numerous expressed interest in becoming providers of one or more of the EBPP.

Substance Use Disorder Services Update

- County SUDS successfully launched a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify new DUI Program Providers in our community. 2 new providers were identified and will be announced pending BOS approval in January. Once approved, County SUDS will work with the 2 new providers to have their services launched by April, 2026. The RFQ was launched in response to the closure of Encompass Community Services DUI program closure along with the pending closure of Janus of Santa Cruz program.
- Janus of Santa Cruz will be launching new mobile NTP (methadone) services in Spring, 2026. These vans will deliver methadone to unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County increasing access for individuals who live long distances from our NTP clinics.
- County SUDS has partnered with Horizon Services Inc in Alameda County to provide level of care (LOC) 3.3 residential treatment services to individuals who meet medical necessity for this level of treatment. LOC 3.3 is for individuals who have cognitive impairments and/or traumatic brain injuries in such a way that impacts their ability to receive treatment in traditional residential treatment settings. Santa Cruz County does not have any providers locally who are licensed to provide this level of care and we are fortunate to partner with a neighboring county close by in order to ensure Santa Cruz County Medi-Cal beneficiaries are able to access this when needed.

System Quality Improvement Efforts



Recent system improvements include the **Integration of Access** to Services team into one **Integrated Access Program** for Children's Behavioral Health, Adult Mental Health, and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services. This integration aligns client experiences when Medi-Cal beneficiaries request behavioral health services and supports consistent, streamlined workflows for behavioral health staff.

These workflow improvements and aligned client experiences are expected to create operational efficiencies for the Behavioral Health Division and support the following outcomes:

- 1) Timely access to initial care for all requests for services, whether for Mental Health or Substance Use Disorder Services;
- 2) Continued optimization of data quality to support non-clinical Performance Improvement Projects related to Timely Access for both MHP and DMC-ODS;
- 3) Continued efforts towards the “No Wrong Door” approach to behavioral health care

Integrated & Timely Service Experience

While the Department of Health Care Services works toward integrating the MHP and DMC-ODS plans, the Behavioral Health Division aims to ensure that individuals accessing care experience seamless and integrated care.

Additional supporting details regarding Timeliness Performance Improvement Projects:

- Since summer 2025, the BH Division has undertaken extensive data-validation efforts to improve the measurement of timely access to services, including the development and documentation of reliable methodologies for extracting accurate data from the Electronic Health Record (EHR).
- The BH Division has trained mental health plan clinicians on accurate and standardized data entry practices to improve Electronic Health Record (EHR) data quality.
- Refinements to data capture and extraction processes over the past six months have resulted in measurable improvements in performance on this measure.
- For Children's Behavioral Health (CBH) and DMC-ODS (SUD), where multiple agencies serve as entry points to care, the QI team partnered with clinical leadership to train County and contracted provider staff on accurate completion of EHR documentation used to measure timeliness of access to care (Service Request and Disposition Log).
 - CBH programs trained in February 2025
 - DMC-ODS programs trained in June 2025
- Additionally, BH Division leadership and the QI team conducted a needs assessment for this measure through key informant interviews in Fall 2025 (MHP Adult Access, MHP Children's Access, and DMC-ODS leadership) and are currently documenting and formalizing related workflows.





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Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Transition Updates

BHAB Meeting | January 15, 2026

General BHSA Updates

Community Engagement Completed

- Community survey, focus groups, key informant interviews, and public forums are complete
- Feedback from residents, providers, and partners is being compiled and analyzed

System Mapping & Crosswalk in Progress

- Reviewing all current MHSA-funded programs
- Mapping services to BHSA funding categories and requirements
- Identifying programs that will continue, shift, or end under BHSA

Integrated Plan Development Underway

- Community input, population health data, and fiscal/program data are informing plan development
- Drafting the BHSA Integrated Plan to guide implementation beginning July 1, 2026
- Focused on maintaining critical services while meeting new state requirements

Community Program Planning Activities

- 3 **Community Forums** held regionally in north, central and south county
- 5 **BHSA Educational Sessions** 2 held for the community, 2 for county staff and 1 with contracted providers
- 4 **Key Informant Interviews**
- 4 **Informational Meetings** with systems partners
- 8 **Focus Groups** held with priority populations and required community partners
- 1 **Community Needs Survey**

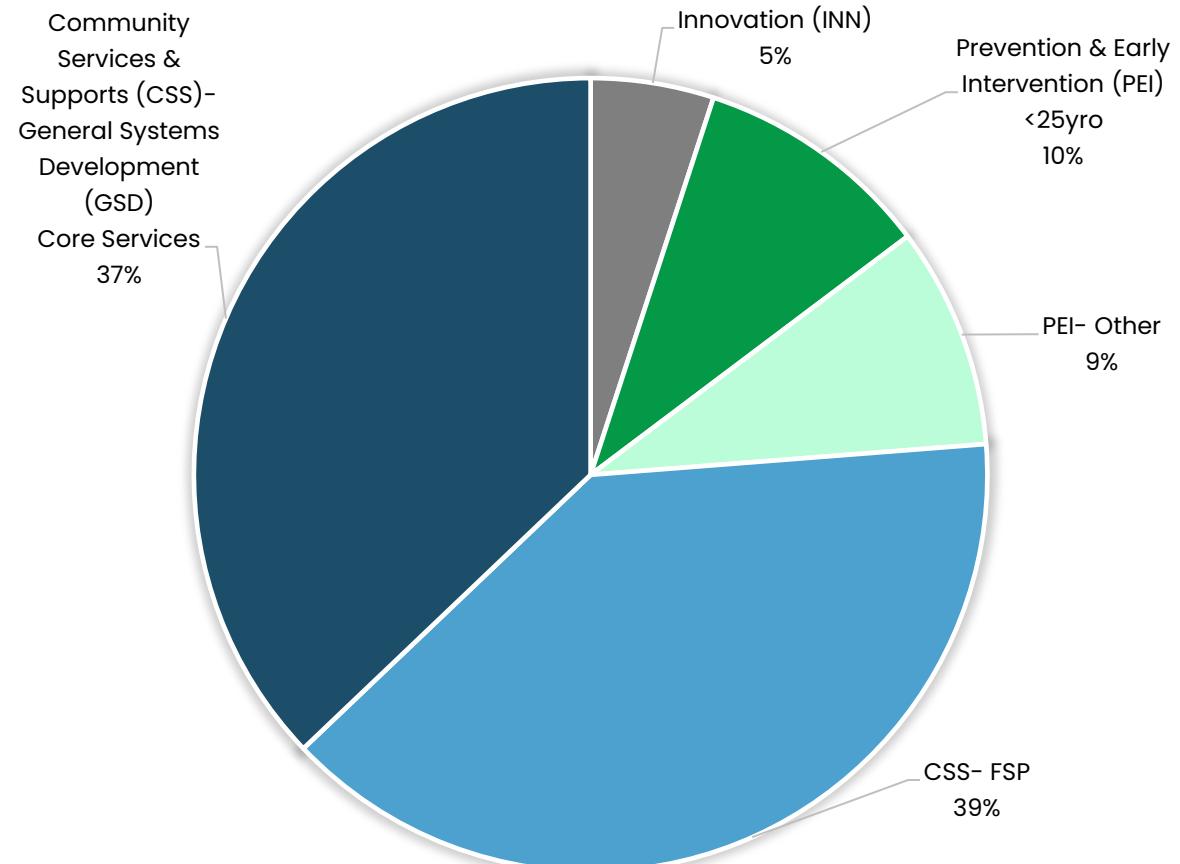
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community members were reached through the forums, educational sessions, key informant interviews and the focus groups

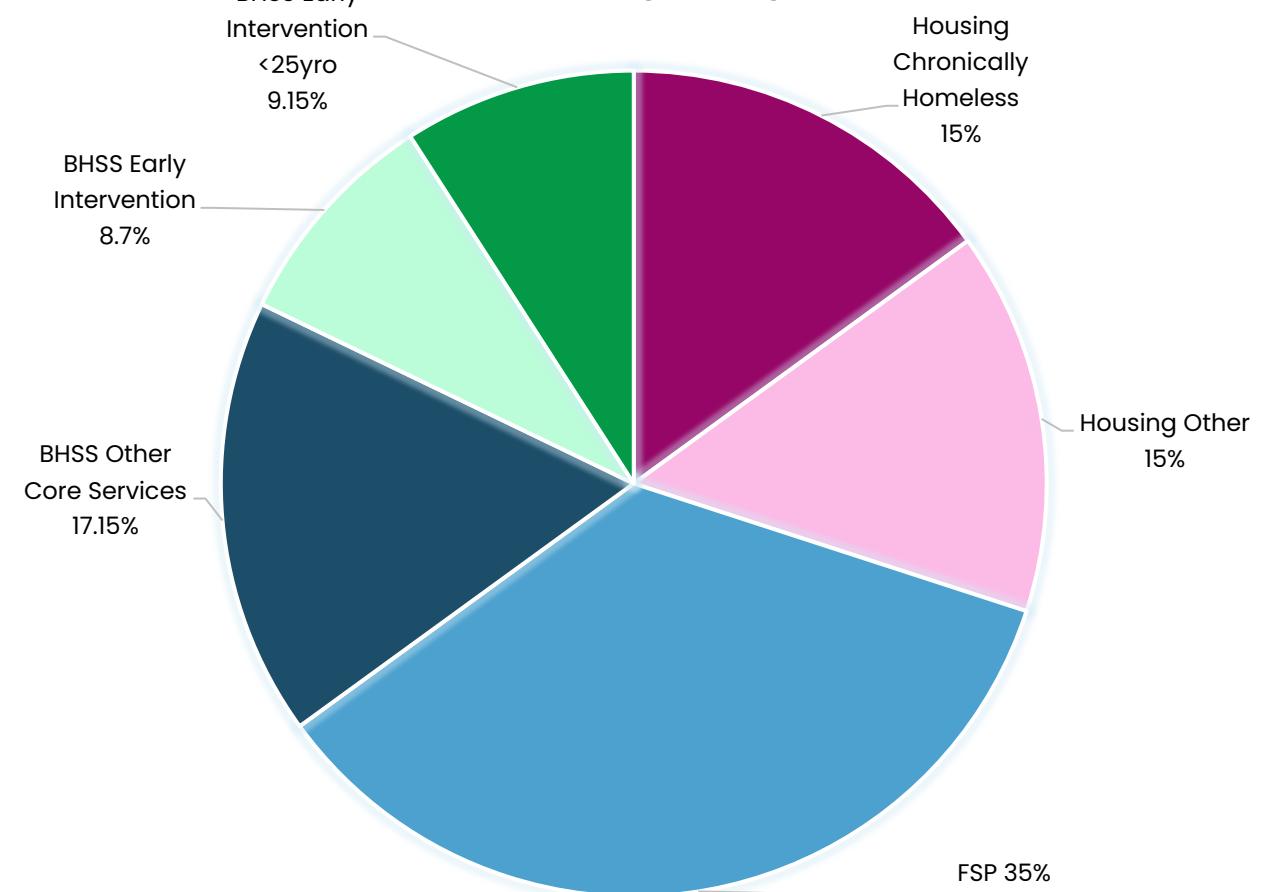
MHSA Funding Components vs. BHSA Funding Categories

Local Allocations at County Level (% of total County allocation)

Current MHSA Funding Components



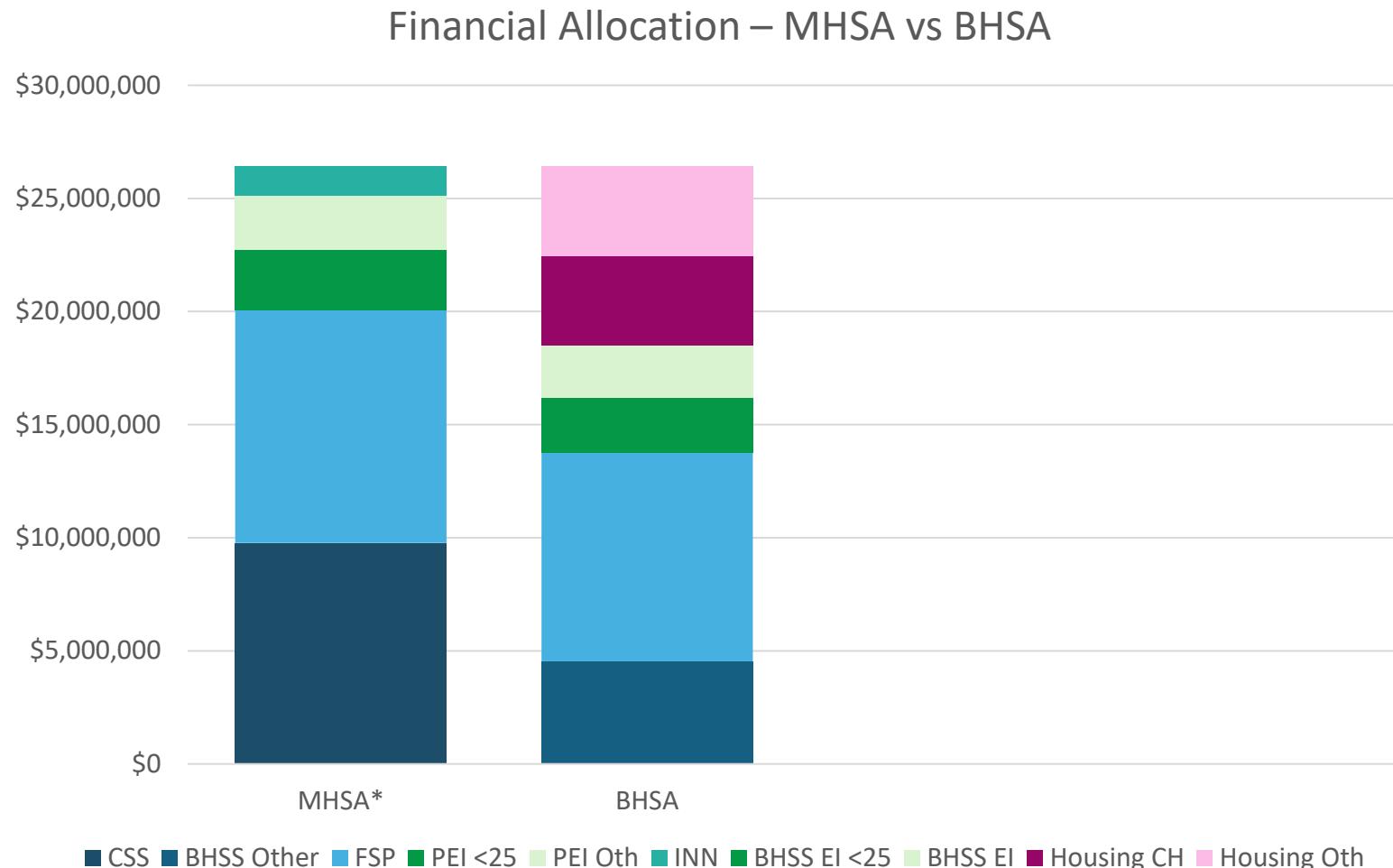
BHSA Funding Categories



Counties currently transfer CSS GSD funds to support Workforce Education and Training (WET) initiatives and Capital Facilities & Technological Needs (CF/TN). Under BHSA this will be funded under BHSS Other.

MHSA Funding Components vs. BHSA Funding Categories

Local Allocations at County Level (financial portion of total County allocation)



Projected
FY26/27
BHSA
Revenue
\$26,416,166

*Representation of FY26/27 BHSA revenue if allocation was under prior MHSA funding components

Overview of the Three-Year BH Integrated Plan (BHIP)

Counties will be **required** to use the BHIP template developed by the state and submit the BHIP via a portal.

Exemption Requests & Funding Transfer Requests	County Behavioral Health System Overview & Populations Served by County	County Service Delivery Landscape	Statewide Behavioral Health Goals & Plans to Improve Outcomes	CPP Process Including Incorporating MCPs & Local Health Jurisdiction Community Assessments
County BH Care Continuum & Capacity	County Provider Monitoring & Oversight	Projected # of Consumers to be Served	BHSA Programs, Use of EBPs, Housing Data	Workforce Strategy
Planned Expenditures for <u>ALL</u> County Behavioral Health Funding Sources	Prudent Reserve Account	Comment Period and Public Hearing	Plan Approval & Compliance	



Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Timeline 2025/2026

BH Staff Write Integrated Plan (IP)

Compile and analyze local population health data and feedback collected during the community engagement. Internal fiscal and program system mapping to identify current MHSA programs that can be funded under BHSA.

Draft IP Due to DHCS

DHCS has 30 days to provide feedback to the county.

BH Staff Edit and Finalize IP

Final edits from DHCS, public comments, and county admin. will be added into the IP.

Final IP Due to DHCS

Final plan is due via DHCS online portal. No extensions will be granted.

Nov. -
Dec. 2025

Jan. -
Feb. 2026

March 19,
2026

March 31,
2026

April 16,
2026

May
2026

June 16,
2026

June 30,
2026

Community Engagement

Provide education about BHSA, gather feedback through focus groups, community forums, key informant interviews, surveys, etc.

Public Comment Opens at BHAB

BH Staff present overview of IP. Public comment officially opens.

Public Comment Closes at BHAB

The public is welcomed to attend in person to submit public comments. The comment period will close at the end of the BHAB meeting on April 16.

BH Staff Present to Board of Supervisors

BOS must approve the BHSA IP before June 30.

List of Acronyms Used:

BH: Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health

BHAB: Behavioral Health Advisory Board

BHSA: Behavioral Health Services Act

DHCS: CA Department of Health Care Services

MHSA: Mental Health Services Act

Public Comment Submission for Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Integrated Plan (IP)



In Person

At Behavioral Health Advisory Meeting
April 16, 2026 | 1400 Emeline Ave. Room 206



By Phone

Leave a voicemail at 831-713-8285



Email

Email your feedback to
MentalHealth.ServicesAct@santacruzcountyca.gov



Online

Visit santacruzhealth.org/BHSA



Mail Feedback to:

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health
Attention: Amy Rhoades
1400 Emeline Ave. Santa Cruz CA 95060

Thank You!

For BHSA information:

Email: MentalHealth.ServicesAct@santacruzcountyca.gov
santacruzhealth.org/BHSA



@CountyofSantaCruz

Accessing Care

Medi-Cal Members



Salud Mental y
Tratamiento del Uso
de Sustancias



Mild – Moderate Level of Care

Managed Care Plan (MCP)

Central California Alliance for Health
(CCAH)



How Members Access BH Care

Member in need of BH Services

- Member can self-refer by calling Alliance directly
- Member can call contracted BH provider directly for services and bypass Alliance
- Member can call/walk into local MHP access for screening and assessment
- PCP can access referral forms online at Behavioral Health - Central California Alliance for Health (will be updated for internal processes come 7/1/25)



MCP or MHP completes DHCS Screening Tool

- If member is referred to Alliance or the Mental Health Plan (MHP), a BH CM staff member will screen member for correct system of care and need and provide appropriate referrals within timely access requirement. The Alliance and our 5 MHPs coordinate daily on these referrals

Member Connected to Care

- Member will be offered appointment assistance and to be connected to a provider with an appointment within timely access requirements

Members can call 800-700-3874
All members will be getting new CCAH ID cards



Mild – Moderate Level of Care Managed Care Plan (MCP)

Central California Alliance for Health
(CCAH)

Behavioral Health CM Referral



Providers can call the alliance case management line 800-700-3874 X5512



Providers can submit a care management referral form directly through the Alliance website. [Care Management Referral Form - Central California Alliance for Health](#) or Referrals via fax to (831)430-5850.



Referral via e-mail to list CM behavioral health team
[ListBHCMintakecoordinators@thealliance.health](mailto>ListBHCMintakecoordinators@thealliance.health)



"CCAHs website is not current for referral pathways until 7/1/25. Current CM referral is on our Provider Care Management landing page [Behavioral Health - Central California Alliance for Health](#)



Specialty Mental Health & Substance Use

Level of Care

Behavioral Health Plan (BHP)

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health
(SCCBH)

**Member can call for screening and assessment/referral anytime Monday-Friday 8:00-5:00
800-952-2335**

Member can self-refer by walking into our offices:
1400 Emeline Ave., Santa Cruz
1430 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville
Monday –Friday 8:00-4:00

Member will talk to a clinician who will offer a screening to determine appropriate level of care
Will be referred to CCAH if screened mild to moderate
Will be scheduled for an assessment with a licensed clinician if screened severe
Will be offered ongoing behavioral health services at the appropriate level of care

Substance Use Services will be screened for and services offered depending on level of care determined



Salud Mental y
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Easy Referral to Care

Mild-Moderate

Managed Care Plan -
CCAH

Online Portal
[https://thealliance.health/
for-providers/care-
management-referral-
form/](https://thealliance.health/for-providers/care-management-referral-form/)

800-700-3874 x5512



Severe

County Behavioral Health
Plan

Access Line
800-952-2335
(24 hour line)



Salud Mental y
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de Sustancias

Crisis



JAIL 101 CUSTODY ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (CAPS) GUIDE

Facing mounting societal and financial pressures to maintain, contain and otherwise “put a cap on” inmate populations in their local Jail Systems, Counties across the state are turning to a wide, and ever-growing array of “alternatives to custody-based-punishments.” Known in the corrections space by many names – including “alternatives to incarceration” or as in Santa Cruz County “Custody Alternative Programs,” – punishments and treatment responses to offenders (minor to medium-level typically) that involve means *other than* confinement in a locked facility have collectively proven themselves to be beneficial for individuals (inmates) involved and for society as a whole. Our own Santa Cruz County Jail’s Custody Alternative/Work Release Program, “CAPS” provides qualified community members – usually at the point of sentencing – with two major alternatives to incarceration: its “Work Release Program” and “Electronic Monitoring Program.” It’s worth briefly mentioning that CAPS *also* include the Santa Cruz County Sheriff Parole Program – a local offering that we’ll choose not to go into too much detail here.

The implementation, general (legal and societal) acceptance and growing utilization of these two impactful and system-shifting custody alternative programs creates a clear path and avenue for (potential) inmates to be held fully accountable for their actions, crimes, and/or offenses while maintaining their dignity, connections with the “outside world,” and completely eliminating the oft-disastrous toll that incarceration can have on their personal, professional, and financial wellbeing.

Santa Cruz County’s CAPS, under the auspices of the Sheriff’s office, currently operates/facilitates two basic alternatives to incarceration – its work release and electronic monitoring programs –but many other California counties in California offer a wider, more expansive array of non-custodial options for their (qualified) residents to choose from during their terms of punishment. After close study, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors authorized local County correctional administers to establish CAPS - and its core of groundbreaking “Work Release” and “Electronic Monitoring” programs. In its research and deep dive into the world of (potential) custody alternative programs, the Supervisors concluded that the Jail’s foundational CAPS avenues could potentially reduce pervasive overcrowding issues, provide significant cost savings to both the County *and* local taxpayers, and enhance public safety by reducing recidivism through rehabilitation.

The pressure to adopt and expand alternatives to custody-based punishment is growing across the state of California, and counties like Santa Cruz have increasingly begun to view programs like CAPS as a cost-effective means of holding offenders accountable while not negatively impacting public safety. Overcrowding in the Santa Cruz County Jail has been a pervasive issue for years, and by keeping potential inmates out of jail, embedded within the community, programs like CAPS help to alleviate the serious strain put on its often overcrowded and otherwise unsubstantial facilities. Jail is expensive – especially in California counties like Santa Cruz – where their costs per inmate are consistently among the highest in the nation. Custody alternatives like CAPS are proven cost-effective solutions – saving correctional systems *and taxpayers* millions of dollars every year. Some contend that releasing low-to-mid level offenders directly (back) into the community is a dangerous proposition, and a threat to overall public safety. But multiple studies have proven that custody alternatives like CAPS – which allow for an array of community-based treatments, rehabilitation, education, support and interventions – cause approved participants to become less likely to reoffend (reducing recidivism) and decrease crime rates within their communities.

In addition to their inherent systemic and societal benefits, incarceration alternative programs, like Santa Cruz County’s CAPS, provide a bounty of rewards to participants *themselves*. After being approved by a judge to enter CAPS at time of sentencing, potential enrollees are allowed the opportunity to maintain foundational ties and important connections with their friends, families, and loved ones – while continuing to receive and provide support emotionally and financially. Those granted an opportunity to enter the Jail’s CAPS services – into either the “Work Release Program” or “Electronic Monitoring Program” – are allowed to

satisfy their obligation to the County of Santa Cruz and the justice system while maintaining their employment and education status, and their overall ability (capability) to satisfy important social and financial obligations within the community. The Jail's CAPS programs help keep families together. Period. Instead of spending day, weeks, or months in lockup, individuals are allowed to continue being a mother, father, breadwinner and supporter, and establish a more constructive and established lifestyle. Instead of periods unquestionably traumatic confined punishment, CAPS allows for approved participants to fulfill their obligation to the court and society while breaking long-entrenched cycles of criminal behavior through rehabilitation. The educational, behavioral health, substance use/abuse, and vocational skills that CAPS provides enrollees through modified sentencing are paramount for participants to reestablish themselves and successfully reintegrate into the community.

Santa Cruz County residents who are charged with a criminal offense and deemed "worthy for alternative incarceration" by a sitting judge during their sentencing, are typically referred to the Jail's Sheriff-facilitated CAPS system. And depending on a variety of circumstances and endemic issues, inherent the exact nature and seriousness of their mostly low-to-medium-level charges and crimes, given the valuable opportunity to enter either the "Electronic Monitoring Program" or "Work Release Program." Would-be-inmates who receive sentences of 30 days or less, are typically allowed to serve their alternative sentences in the Work Release Program – where they perform various types of semi-strenuous jobs and community-based service work in lieu of "normal" incarceration in the Santa Cruz County Jail. The ultimate decision regarding approval and exact CAPS placement always rests with the sitting judge during times of sentencing, but most would-be-inmates receiving custody alternative sentences of more than 30 days, are referred to Jail's sophisticated Electronic Monitoring Program. Under comprehensive 24/7 electronic surveillance – usually through a unbreakable ankle monitor - qualified Electronic Monitoring Program participants satisfy their court ordered sentences while continuing their community-based involvement in pre-approved activities such as treatment programs, schools and classes, volunteerism, religious events, and various forms of employment.

It's worth noting that there are certain instances when a judge's (the Court's) recommendation for CAP acceptance doesn't guarantee enrollment in any of its programs. The ultimate decision to enroll charged and sentenced persons, rests on the Sheriff's Office and County CAP officers. If an individual is denied entrance into CAP by a judge at their time of sentencing, they *will have to* serve their full sentence in the Santa Cruz County Jail. That's the deal.

We'll more-than-happily break down, closely examine, and analyze the operations, policies (including costs relating to), participant obligations, and important processes inherent to both the Electronic Monitoring Program and the Work Release Program below. Due to their proven efficacy, and potential rewards for qualified participants - and society as a whole - the Jail and Sheriff's foundational custody alternative options (programs and possibilities) are certainly worth a full investigation - for those who find themselves enmeshed within the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system at any level.

CAPS INFORMATION: HOURS AND LOCATION

The Custody Alternative Program (CAP) is headquartered within the Santa Cruz County Main Jail. The Main Jail Lobby has two windows to choose from – the CAP office is on the left as you enter. Those interested in CAP and any of its services (programs including Electronic Monitoring and Work Release) can visit the CAP Office's "Service Hours" from 8:00AM to 6:00PM Monday through Wednesday - and during the same time every other Thursday.

The CAP Office is located at the Main Jail here:

239 Water Street, Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

The CAP Office phone number is:

(831) 454-7814

CAPS: ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM

The “Electronic Monitoring Program” functions as a vital custody alternative geared towards Santa Cruz County low-to -mid level offenders who (generally) pose minuscule risk to society, yet whose patterns and behavior still warrant close surveillance and supervision. The program is generally designed for those who require a larger amount of attention than its sister “Work Release” program can typically provide. Those who qualify for the CAP’s Electronic Monitoring Program, following approval and referral from a judge (the Court) during time of sentencing (and an ultimate “OK” from CAP officers and the Sheriff’s Office) are generously provided the opportunity to “serve their time” and pay their debt to society under what’s collectively known as “house arrest.” It’s worth explain that “house arrest” doesn’t mean just “houses;” Electronic Monitoring Program participants can serve sentences in a variety of settings – treatment centers, behavioral health and substance abuse programs, and a variety of structured residential environments. Instead of spending long and arduous days in the dark and cavernous cell blocks within the Santa Cruz County Jail, those enrolled in the Electronic Monitoring Program are allowed to remain in the community - comparatively free - but with restricted movement and the required-wearing of a non-removable, tamper-resistant anklet.

Program participants must wear their sophisticated GPS-equipped ankle monitoring device 24/7, for the duration of their court ordered sentence. They’re still legally considered to be “in custody,” and clients’ movements are closely surveilled and severely restricted with different rules, requirements and stipulations. Those participating in the Sheriff’s Electronic Monitoring Program are allowed to leave their place of residence, and enjoy *some* environments and community-based resources– such as schools, places of employment, counseling services, treatment programs, medical care, and other activities – following an individualized plan and rigidly established schedule approved by the Sheriff’s Office. Under general stipulations, those in the Electronic Monitoring Program are not allowed to attend non-scheduled (or approved) functions and environments – like parties, sporting events, or any type of vacations. The enormous amount of GPS data generated their tiny little, virtually indestructible ankle devices allows CAP officers to monitor their step-by-step movements and general habits, and to pinpoint wearers’ exact location any time of the day or evening. CAP administrators stress that those involved in the Electronic Monitoring Program, though they are relatively free to move about society, are still considered to be “in custody.” This means that CAP officers can perform all manner of random searches, evaluations, and interventions to ensure that (all) Program participants are following set forth rules and adhering to their specified schedule at any time. Totally “out of the blue” house visits and random blood tests are the norm for CAP participants, with different types and extents of monitoring generally depending on the nature and seriousness of their current and past convictions.

CAPS officers and the Sheriff’s Office closely monitor and evaluate the progress and compliance of those participating in the Electronic Monitoring Program; ensuring the adherence to the specific details set forth in each individual’s unique conditions of release. While electronic anklet wearers are free to explore parts of the community at certain times and under specific conditions, many areas are off limits and deemed “restricted” – especially in cases where victims or serious infractions are involved. There is no set limit on the duration of a (custody alternative) sentence to participate in either CAP Program. And there definitely are situations, crimes or legal matters cases that eliminate a perspective participant from being accepted into them as well. While enrollees in the Electronic Monitoring Program are generally “free” to move about the community on a limited bases the CAP service isn’t free in and of itself; and comes with a rather sizable financial obligation. Those approved and deemed worth for the Electronic Monitoring Program must pay an application fee of \$125 up front. To cover device, cell contract, and administrative costs, anklet wearing participants must also shell out a substantial \$35 each day. These fees, which can quickly add up over time,

must be paid on a weekly basis. Fees aside, the alternative custody and community-based confinement options and that the Jail's CAP and Electronic Monitoring Program allow for seem worth it in the end – at all levels.

CAPS: WORK RELEASE

Like the Electronic Monitoring Program, the Jail-centered and Sheriff-facilitated “Work Release Program” provides another important non-custodial option for approved low-level offenders in Santa Cruz County. After satisfying certain established criteria, those given the “go” to enter the Work Release Program are able to serve their sentence and pay their court-ordered debt to society through the placement in and performance of community-based service work assignments. As opposed to Electronic Monitoring Program, the majority of Work Release assignees have behavior and charges for offenses that don’t warrant the need for close supervision and surveillance. Once a convicted (typically) low-level offender is sentenced by a judge in court, and deemed “fit” by him/her for (possible) alternative custody sentencing, an application is quickly sent to the Work Release Program (CAP Officers and Sheriff) to determine if one’s charges, current behavior and state, and criminal history are enough for them to serve their “time” in the program. With approval and direction from CAP and the Sheriff’s Office, Work Release participants can begin assignments (not to their choosing) at specific worksites throughout Santa Cruz County. It’s worth highlighting that the Work Release Program is specifically designed for low-level offenders with sentences of *30 days or less* – who pay their debt with periodic (not constant) days of community service in lieu of incarceration inside the Santa Cruz County Jail.

Those who are convicted and sentenced to perform community-based labor at designated sites in Santa Cruz County, as assigned by a CAP officer (under the direction of the Sheriff), perform unpaid work to avoid being “locked up.” Not only are Work Release Program participants not paid for their hours and days of court-ordered work, they must pay a pretty penny *themselves* just to do so. The Program involves an initial application fee of \$125 and a daily fee of \$13.25 after that. The total amount required varies depending on the sentence and number of required days and hours but can be considerable for someone struggling just to maintain and reestablish themselves (socially and financially) after being charged and convicted of a crime. However, there’s no doubt that most given the opportunity to enter alternative incarceration avenues like Work Release, in lieu of long periods of separation and lockup, would jump to do so. The Work Release Program may seem like forced, almost slave labor in some regards, but participants are given time to reestablish themselves and reintegrate back into the community. They are not court-ordered to perform community-based labor each and every day – as some would expect (given the serious situation and the fact that they are technically, still “in custody”).

Program participants can continue to go to work, support their families, go to school, and complete their sentences by doing court-ordered obligations on weekends and their days off. Depending on an individual’s life and work schedule, he or she can choose to work a minimum of 2 days a week, up to 5 days a week. Convicted, low level offenders given the powerful opportunity to perform community-oriented service work instead of entering the Jail might not know what to expect when they show up to the job site on the first day. In contrast with normal “court ordered service” for minor, rather mundane infractions, the work sites, roles, and exact tasks assigned in the Work Release Program are not cherry picked from the long list of available, assistance-seeking community-based organizations managed by the Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County. After being assigned to a job site by the CAP officers and the Work Release Program, new enrollees are given a fixed day and start time – usually 8:00AM – to begin serving their sentence.

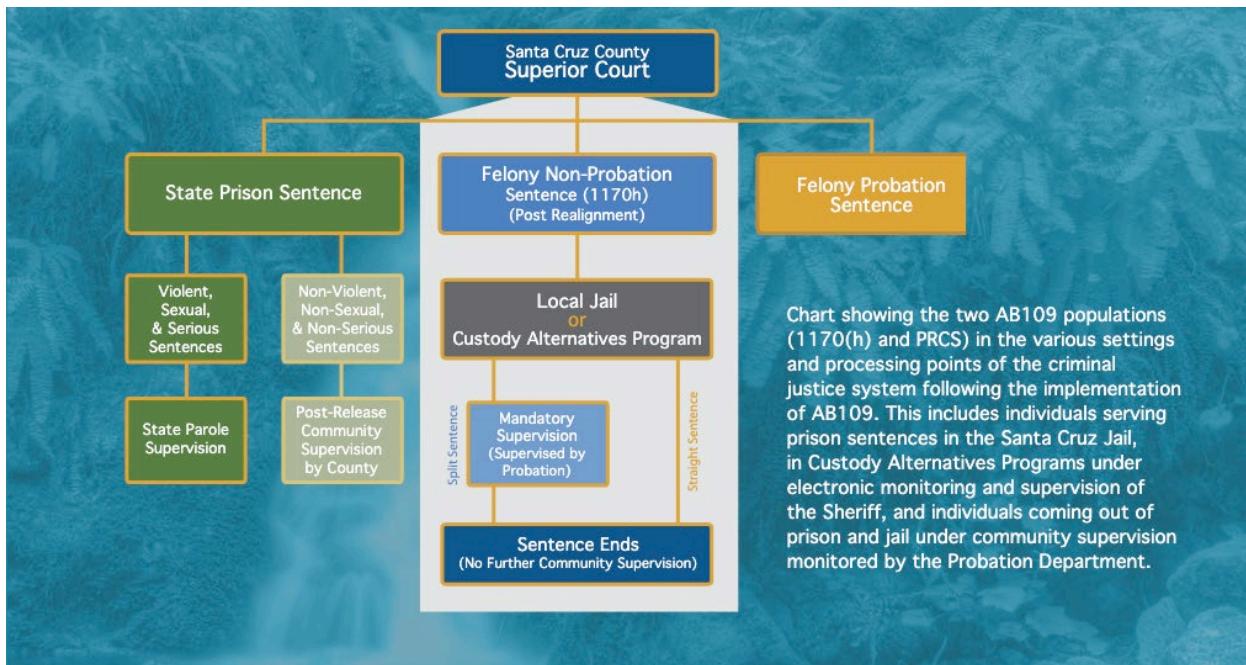
After a brief check-in a monitoring site supervisor, covering the new position’s rules, job responsibilities, required tasks and role specifics, participants can expect to work for at least 7 hours. Lunch breaks are always given, but are taken onsite – so bringing snacks, food, and beverages is a must. Unless serious issues arise, or

important conflict of interest, once a work environment is chosen by CAP officers, the decision assignment is final. Personal preferences and general wants are only accommodated and granted on rare occasions. Due to the flexibility and potentially life-changing freedoms inherent to the Work Release Program as an alternative to in-custody incarceration, most Santa Cruz residents who find themselves charged, convicted, and eventually sentenced for a crime in local courts, will ask the judge to grant them admittance – and experience incredible relief and gratitude if and when approved.

AFFECTS OF “REALIGNMENT” IN THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY JAIL

California’s Public Safety Alignment, or simply “Realignment” was implemented almost 15 years ago as an innovative way to slam the revolving door and ever-troublesome recidivism of low-level offenders (inmates) cycling in and out of the state’s jail and prison systems. Resting squarely on the shoulders of Assembly Bills AB109 and AB117, Realignment paved the way for the development and eventual launch and implementation of a bounty of innovative and cost-effective custody-alternative programs, or alternatives to incarceration – including CAPS in Santa Cruz County. Programs like the Santa Cruz County Probation Department’s Custody Alternative Programs (CAPS) – that include offerings like expansive pretrial services, work and supervised release opportunities, Warrant Reduction Advocacy Projects (WRAP), electronic monitoring systems, and a collection of other post-sentence custody-alternatives – allow Jail systems like our own to have the choice, flexibility and ability to dramatically reduce pervasive overcrowding, while providing an avenue for low-level offenders to avoid the potentially traumatic conditions of confinement – and ensuring that the required housing, supervision, and correctional services for perpetrators of more serious crimes and offenses are given as needed.

Santa Cruz County’s Alternative Sentencing Structure Under “Realignment” (AB 109)



Through the Santa Cruz County Probation Department’s CAPS – including its two foundational Work Release and Electronic Monitoring Programs – the Santa Cruz County Jail’s population has been cut by an estimated average of 50 inmates (or beds) per day. These Realignment-inspired local CAPS programs have proven

themselves to be cost-effective solutions to maintaining overall public and Jail safety, while providing a smooth road and seamless transition - from incarceration to community – to qualifying (typically low-level) offenders. Early on, as a part of California’s Realignment of jails and prisons, Santa Cruz County’s Custody Alternative Program (CAP) established itself as one of the State’s finest custody-alternative frameworks – receiving a highly-prized California State Association of Counties (CSAC) “Challenge Merit Award.” The often-dramatic move from in-to-out-of-custody is realized and facilitated through a structured framework of (first) risk assessment, comprehensive case management, and close community supervision. Before being allowed to participate in any of the Probation Department’s Custody Alternative Programs (CAPS), and given the official “green light” from the Jail and Court for a release and attempted re-integration (back) into society, current and potential inmates (typically offenders of low-level crimes) must first endure an in-depth evaluation, case review, and overall need and risk assessment.

Under California’s Public Safety “Realignment” – the Santa Cruz County Jail assumed full responsibility for two (mostly low-level) offender populations that had previously been under the purview of the State’s prison system (under the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation). If the term “low-level offender” (which we’ve used repeatedly throughout) seems broad or somewhat nebulous to you ... it can be. Typically, though, this inmate population - widely known in the corrections space as “Non-Non-Nons” – largely consists of lower-level felony offenders who are sentenced for non-violent, non-serious, non-sexual offenses. Examples of crimes and low-level felony offenses typical of the “Non-Non-Non” group include auto theft, drug possession, possession or receiving of stolen property, burglary, and possession of controlled substances for sale.

Realignment created a framework that allows for Non-Non-Nons in the criminal justice system to do two things: First, it establishes an avenue for lower-level felony offenders being released from state prisons to enter (directly) into custody-alternative programs like Santa Cruz County’s CAPS (officially known as Post Release Community Supervision). Second, it allows for non-serious, non-violent, non-sexual felony offenders who are sentenced to new prison terms to serve their time locally, within the confines of Santa Cruz County Jail instead. The court’s “split sentencing” program – which allows for Non-Non-Nons charged with and sentenced for low-level offenses to serve portions of their time in custody, and then under community supervision – will be discussed further below. Combatting recidivism and shutting the endlessly revolving door ushering low-level offenders in, out and then back into the correctional system, was a chief focus and force behind California’s sweeping Public Safety Realignment. The development of custody-alternatives like CAPS allows for low-level offenders – Non-Non-Nons facing sentences for chronic drug/substance abuse and property crimes – a group that empirically recidivates at the highest rate among all offender populations – to safely rehabilitate and remain actively engaged and accountable in non-correctional environments while creating vital space and resources for those charged and sentenced for more-serious crimes.

During the time when inmates are awaiting trial - prior to entering the court for their sentencing - extensive pretrial evaluations are conducted by the CAP team in order to determine program eligibility. The Santa Cruz County Probation Department’s “Pretrial Services Division” uses an intricate and rather expansive validated risk assessment system in to determine whether a defendant (with an upcoming trial) needs to be incarcerated in the Santa Cruz County Jail, or could potentially qualify for CAPS and “safely” serve their time (under supervision) in the community. Based upon perceived risk factors – current state/condition and previous criminal history – CAP Team recommendations may be made for ongoing incarceration (for an inmate’s entire term of sentence), probation supervised release (including Work Release Program), admission into the Electronic Monitoring Program, and in some cases immediate release under one’s own recognizance. The multi-disciplinary partnership between the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office and the Probation Department, the “CAP Team” allows for low-level offenders – who meet certain criteria, specific classifications and certain program requirements - to serve all or a portion of their sentences in the community - under law enforcement supervision - in lieu of correctional housing.

The collection of alternatives to incarceration endemic to the Santa Cruz County Probation Department's CAPS, as a component of AB 109 and California's larger Public Safety Realignment, have dramatically curbed the Jail's pervasive problem of recidivism, helped to alleviate the impact of local budget deficits and financial stresses, and have helped to ease the physical and emotional toll and associated traumas that incarceration could potentially exert on hundreds of individuals and their families. The Santa Cruz County's Probation Department plays an instrumental role in the administration of CAPS and the local Jail's Realignment plans under AB109. And Probation Department Officers provide comprehensive case management services that assess the specific needs of individuals, ascertain associated risk levels and recidivism potential, manage service referrals in and outside of the Jail, and provide foundational support to (eventual CAPS qualifying) offenders that ensure they stay actively engaged, motivated, and totally accountable (and available) through the dramatic process of reentry - back into their communities.

Through proper risk assessments (for recidivism), ono-on-one case planning, support and management, in depth interviewing, and constant monitoring, CAPS evidence-based probation supervision and criminal justice interventions collectively work to ensure the ultimate success of qualified participants without jeopardizing the overall safety of the general public.

"SPLIT SENTENCING:" WHAT IT MEANS FOR INMATES IN THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY JAIL SYSTEM

California's system-shaking Public Safety "Realignment" didn't *just* shift the way Jails and court systems treat Non-Non-Nons and low-level offender populations. It also changed the way that judges can impose and deliver structured sentences as well. Currently judges, including those presiding in Santa Cruz County courts, have complete discretion to deliver "split sentences" – highly structured hybrid devices allowing for low-level offenders to effectively "split" their sentences between terms in the Santa Cruz County Jail (or state prison system), and mandatory periods of community-based supervision (CAPS). As a whole, Realignment, and custody-alternative innovations like CAPS, were established to help ease the considerable (physical and financial) strain on California's overcrowded and bottlenecked jail and prison systems – to ensure that the necessary space and resources remain available for an ever-growing number of more-serious, more-violent criminal offenders who (truly) require them. The ultimate goal of "split sentencing" is to reduce pervasive problems of recidivism by combining the impact and deterrence of incarceration with the supportive and rehabilitative structure of community-based alternatives (like the Probation Department's CAPS).

Repeat offenders of low-level felonies and other non-serious crimes shuffle in and out of the Santa Cruz County Jail at a dizzying rate – and sometimes it is appropriate, necessary even, to enact an in-custody deterrent and/or punishment before a referral to CAPS and community-based supervision. Judges can create a detailed plan and cohesive structure that allows for qualified individuals to begin their rehabilitation efforts during their days and weeks in jail, and effectively continue during their supervised release and transition (back) into society. A presiding judge has complete discretion regarding how to split a potential CAPS-qualifier's sentence between community supervision (including Electronic Monitoring and Work Release Programs) and incarceration – with tailored plans designed to uphold the punitive side of the law while allowing for community-based monitoring, rehabilitation, and societal reintegration.

Of course, not every individual, even the most-obvious Non-Non-Non case, will qualify for split sentencing - or any of Santa Cruz County's CAPS offerings for that matter. Judges, the courts, and CAPS officers themselves must carefully consider an individual's offense severity, chance and likelihood of compliance with community-based supervision decrees, criminal history, and other case-specific circumstances. A judge's split-sentence ruling may include weeks or months of incarceration within the Santa Cruz County Jail followed by weeks or months enrollment in CAPS-oriented probation programs – in which certain conditions, requirements and step-by-step

stipulations must be met throughout. The structure, intricacies, and specific policies endemic to the Sheriff's and Probation Department's Custody Alternative Programming have been discussed previously (CAPS Intro) – but split sentencing could be a an intriguing prospect and potential avenue for new or low-level criminal offenders – and their friends and family members supporting them– attempting to make sense of and navigate through the complicated levels of Santa Cruz County Jail and criminal justice systems. For current inmates and affected friends and family members alike, having at least a rudimentary understanding of CAPS and associated split sentencing potentials could prove helpful in mapping out a reentry and rehabilitative plan among yourselves and legal counsel.

TYPES OF SENTENCES PRESIDING JUDGES IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY COURTS CAN IMPOSE (INCLUDING PROBATION AND CAPS-ORIENTED CUSTODY ALTERNATIVES)

In addition to having a complete understanding of the way the Santa Cruz County's Probation Department's Custody Alternative Programs (CAPS) for qualified new and current inmates in the County Jail and criminal justice system, it's worth quickly breaking down the types of sentencing conditions– from probation and community based alternatives for low-level crimes, to determinate, indeterminate, and other "split sentences" for more serious crimes – typically imposed by judges in the Santa Cruz County criminal court system. Sentencing is always a dramatic, sometimes traumatic, time for all parties involved – those facing charges themselves, victims, parties affected by a crime, and friends, family members, and loved ones. It can also be incredibly confusing and horrifying not knowing what to expect – or even where parties involved may be the day, year, or even hour. A judge's ruling and a criminal sentence passed down can have life disrupting, at times ruining consequences and far reaching implications on one's personal, financial, and communal future. Here are the basic types of sentences one can expect to find and receive in Santa Cruz County criminal courts: loosely depended upon a crime or incident's severity, offender's criminal past/inclinations/history, and the presiding judge's assessment and interpretation of aggravating, applicable, and mitigating factors:

BASIC, NON-ALTERNATIVE, SENTENCING OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTS:

Determinate Sentencing: A presiding judge can impose a fixed sentence for incarceration in a prison or county jail.

Indeterminate Sentencing: For some very serious criminal offenses, including charges of murder, a judge can levy a sentence of a term of "life in prison with the possibility of parole." An offender is only released from incarceration if and when a decision is made by a parole board.

Split Sentencing: As previously covered, the split sentencing option allows certain (mostly low-level) felony offenders to split and serve parts of their levied sentence in the Santa Cruz County Jail, with the remainder served under mandatory, structured supervision by the Santa Cruz County Probation Department (including CAPS and associated programming).

Consecutive and Concurrent Sentencing: In cases when a criminal defendant is convicted of multiple crimes, a judge can give them sentences to be served consecutively (one following the other) or concurrently (at the same time).

ALTERNATIVE AND COMMUNITY-BASED CRIMINAL SENTENCING OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTS

The following "Alternative Sentencing" scenarios include instances and avenues in which an individual convicted of a criminal offense, is allowed, as ordered by a judge, to complete his or her sentence in a community-based environment or program (including home) rather than in the Santa Cruz County Jail. Some alternative sentences are awarded as part of a "no contest" or "guilty" plea or are incorporated into what's known as a "plea agreement" between a defendant and judge (the court). Alternative sentencing programs, as previously documented at length,

allow for community-based solutions and programs that keep low-level offenders out of the Jail and prison system while allowing them (in many cases) to maintain employment, connections with friends and families, maintain their societal reputation, keep their home and possessions, and avoid substantial financial hardship.

Probation (Felony or Misdemeanor): Generally, a judge-levied sentence for “probation” allows an offender to serve his or her sentence under mandated community-based supervision in lieu or incarceration in prison, or the Santa Cruz County Jail. (Could be a component of Split Sentencing). While under or sentenced to (felony or misdemeanor) probation, qualifying offenders are subject to a (often substantial) list of conditions and protocols imposed by a residing judge. It’s worth noting a few common conditions and requirements - of either felony or misdemeanor probation – that may be included by a sitting judge at time of sentencing: A defendant may have to complete treatment programs, submit to random drug testing, abstain from all substance and alcohol usage, seek gainful employment or pursue educational advents, pay court costs, fines, and restitution for victims, show up to all court dates, complete community service, and not violate any laws or have further arrests or altercations with law enforcement agencies. If and when an individual violates the conditions and stipulations of their probation, a judge can choose to overlook the violation, modify the terms (with often harsher conditions), or revoke their probation and alternative sentence altogether – remanding an individual into custody (jail or prison). The following are the two basic classes of probation offered in Santa Cruz County courts of law:

Felony Probation: Also known as “formal probation,” sentences for felony probation can include strict rules, policies and conditions such as regular drug and alcohol screenings (testing), 24/7 check ins with a probation officer, financial conditions, required treatments/groups/programs/therapies, and community service work. In most cases, probationary periods capped at two years – except in rare cases.

Misdemeanor Probation: Known in the court system as “summary probation,” misdemeanor probation is obviously, generally connected to sentences for misdemeanor criminal offenses. With less stringent supervision, requirements, and court ordered conditions of community-based release.

Custody Alternative Programs: As forementioned (thoroughly) these programs for typically low-level, low-risk individuals allow for the completion of community-based sentences lieu of incarceration and other punitive measures. Judges mostly refer those deemed qualified or worthy to the Sheriff’s and Santa Cruz County Probation Department’s CAPS Programs – usually the “**Electronic Monitoring Program**” or “**Work Release Program**” – which have each been fully explored and analyzed in previous sections of the Guide.

Diversion Program: Mostly low-level offenders, with charges often relating to drug or substance use-oriented crime and/or offense can be referred to and required to successfully complete a court-ordered program or treatment plan. The full compliance of a judge’s order and an offender’s successful program completion can ultimately result in their charges being dismissed - allowing them to avoid any negative mark or life-altering blemish on their criminal records.

Drug Diversion: Under Penal Code 1000 PC, some eligible first-time offenders with non-violent illegal substance and drug charges can participate in a court-ordered drug diversion program that allows for them to have their case and charges dismissed after full completion. The similar conditions hold true for those sentenced to court-ordered drug treatment programs per Proposition 36. It’s worth noting a few of the key differentiators between “drug diversion” under Penal Code 1000 and court ordered “drug treatment” programs under Proposition 36 though. The state of California’s “Pretrial Diversion Program was established by Penal Code 1000 PC for low-level drug crimes (simple drug possession for example). In a program similar to the former “deferred entry of judgement” Penal Code 1000 PC allows for eligible defendants to have their entire case dismissed – avoiding a criminal record with the successful completion of drug treatment. The key difference between drug treatment statutes in Penal Code 1000 PC and Proposition 36 – simply known as “Prop 36” today – is that the former (Prop 36) requires that defendants enter a “guilty” plea – after which he or she is placed on formal probation and given a collection of terms, conditions, and protocols to follow. In addition, while drug-related charges under Penal Code 1000 PC often include a case’s ultimate dismissal and expungement of all criminal records, a judge has complete and total discretion in determining whether or not to dismiss a defendant’s charges under Prop 36 – even after they have successfully completed all mandated treatment modalities.

Collaborative Courts: In Santa Cruz County, the Superior Court offers a collection of specialized “collaborative courts” for eligible (mostly low-level) offenders with specific service-related issues including substance use and mental health problems/diagnosis. The details, policies, and eligibility requirements of this important collection of alternative court environments, including Santa Cruz County’s Behavioral Health Court and Veterans Court will be detailed in a forthcoming section below.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Santa Cruz County Probation Department

Felton

Juvenile Probation
3650 Graham Hill Rd., Felton, CA 95018
Ph: 831-454-3800 Fax: 831-454-3827

Juvenile Detention Facility
3650 Graham Hill Rd., Felton, CA 95018
Ph: 831-454-3800 Fax: 831-454-3824

Santa Cruz

Adult Probation
303 Water St., Suite 9, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Ph: 831-454-2150 Fax: 831-454-3327

Watsonville

Adult and Juvenile Probation
1430 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville, CA 95076
Ph: 831-763-8070 Fax: 831-763-8233

Mailing Address for All Locations
P.O. Box 1812
Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1812

<http://sccounty01.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/prb/index.asp>
Email: prb.info@co.santa-cruz.ca.us

Jail 101 Guide: Criminal Justice Reform and the Case for Collaborative Courts

In recent years (especially) – despite a tumultuous political environment fraught with bitterness and animosity - Democrats and Republicans across the nation have joined together in a collective push and demand for criminal justice reform. The bipartisan, nationwide support that criminal justice reform (and associated initiatives) has garnered in just the past decade has resulted in the birth and establishment of a wide array of important programs and reforms at all levels of the criminal justice system – from community policing, sentencing in court, and incarceration. Here in California, voters from all sides of the aisle recently aligned to push forth a series of instantly impactful state-wide initiatives- including marijuana decriminalization (and ultimate legalization), a sweeping public safety realignment, and bail reforms (to name a few). Many of the most common (new) criminal justice reform practices revolve around what's known as "diversion" – diverting some of those (defendants) charged with a crime or criminal offense from traditional or "normal" criminal justice proceedings (settings) to alternative (or collaborative) out-of-custody programs that offer social (or rehabilitative) services- to focus on and/or address underlying drivers, foundations, and circumstances of criminal justice system involvement, and zero in on and treat patterns of potentially destructive behavior. The foundation of these reforms and criminal justice "diversion programs" rests upon the identification and (yes) diversion of eligible criminal defendants who might (are determined to) be better served and/or rehabilitated through programs and services outside of the "normal" sphere (jail, court, prison, probation e.g.) of a municipality's criminal justice system. In Santa Cruz County, the largest and most impactful (jail) diversion programs are (collectively) known as the **"Collaborative Courts."**

Those with no previous criminal justice system involvement and/or experience probably wouldn't understand the true size, scope, intricacies, and rehabilitative potential of Santa Cruz County's Collaborative Courts (alternative court system and associated programs). Under the direction of the Superior Court of California, the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts operates as a group of smaller, specialized, (unique, but integrated) alternative courts that allow select criminal defendants to be removed or "diverted" from the county's "normal" or usual court (and jail/custody) process and procedures. This diversion, available in certain circumstances and cases, is designed to allow eligible defendants to avoid new convictions and damaging blemishes on their criminal records, address unmet needs (such as mental/behavioral health challenges, drug and substance abuse disorders, unemployment or houselessness e.g.) that contributed to past or immediate criminal behavior – and ultimately foster desistance from future contact with law enforcement and the justice system. According to the Superior Court of California County of Santa Cruz own website, the municipality's Collaborative Courts programs are meant to improve treatment outcomes, reduce recidivism, and address public safety and victims' rights concerns while efficiently utilizing public resources. The mission is to enhance the quality of life for participants by providing a supportive environment that adopts recovery and rehabilitation. This is achieved through a collaborative, team-based approach involving multiple agencies and community partners."

In the legal and criminal justice space, Collaborative Courts are also known as "alternative courts," "specialized courts," "collaborative justice courts," or "problem solving courts." Whatever their exact name, design, structure, or eligibility requirements, these courts promote (defendant) accountability by combining judicial supervision with intensive and closely monitored treatment and (community based) rehabilitative services in lieu of detention (in a jail or prison). Each collaborative court (most municipalities offer multiple programs) has a dedicated judge and calendar for specific type of (eligible) defendant and criminal offender. Somewhat obviously, drug courts are designated rehabilitative and (normal) justice system alternative spaces for offenders with substance abuse issues and challenges. And collaborative "mental health courts" provide judicial stomping grounds for defendants and those living with mental illness and/or behavioral health challenges. All of the collaborative courts established in the state of California (at least in theory) follow a model based on the "Ten Key Components of Drug Courts" – but each and every specialized or alternative court tends to function and operate in a slightly different way. Each court – and each municipality's unique version or interpretation of the specific court (categorically) – carries with it varying requirements (legal and otherwise), length of required time, eligibility criteria, programs and services offered, types of incentives or sanctions inherent to the court process, and eventual graduation criteria. Most collaborative courts exist as, at least typically, alternative judicial avenues for high risk/high needs criminal

defendants – and utilize recovery-focused, evidence-based practices to further rehabilitative efforts and effective community reentry.

There are a number of different – and completely unique - alternative courts operating under the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts legal umbrella – including the **Behavioral Health Court, Intensive Support Court, Veterans Court, the Family Preservation Court, and Truancy Court**. We will provide important details and information regarding the structure, eligibility factors, potential legal impact, and policies endemic to each specific court below – but, here we'll go deeper into the Collaborative Courts as a whole (operation, issues, and impact). It might not be shocking, but each of Santa Cruz County's distinct Collaborative Courts are centered around one thing: "Collaboration!" Following an evidence-based drug court model, the local alternative courts offer clients (defendants) supportive services through a fairly comprehensive team-based approach involving the Court, Public Defender, Probation, Parole, County Behavioral Health, the County Substance Use Department, Family and Children's Services, and the District Attorney. For complete information regarding team structure, scope, and involvement in each of the County's collaborative courts, click on the following link to quickly review and reference: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/collaborative-courts-flyer.pdf>

A defendant's eligibility for any one of Santa Cruz County's collaborative (alternative) court settings is determined on a case-by-case basis. Entrance and participation in the "candy courts" (an affectionate name awarded for their more-relaxed atmosphere and sugary incentives/handouts) is strictly voluntary – an option awarded by the judiciary – but most defendants jump at the opportunity to avoid the often-traumatic "real" court system instead. Local collaborative courts are mostly for lower-level non-violent offenders, and all involved individuals must be amenable and responsive to programs and associated rehabilitative treatment. in order for defendants to participate (in any type of alternative court) there must be a nexus and established causality between a defendant's condition (underlying issue like mental illness, substance use disorder e.g.) and his/her charge, crime, or offense. Ultimate eligibility for any of the local Collaborative Courts is at least partially determined by the details of a defendant's filed charge, but the overall charge-based eligibility factors don't exactly tend to be excessively strict or limiting. There can be some degree of leeway.

Presiding judges have the de facto authority to admit or deny criminal defendants, exceptions can be made by criminal prosecutors, and defense attorneys can advocate for his or her client's program placement even if they don't satisfy official eligibility criteria. Of course, defendants (in the know) can ask for their own legal counsel to push and press for a specific collaborative court placement during any time in their legal proceedings. Whether or not the judiciary feels like that setting is ultimately appropriate, beneficial, or rehabilitative is another matter entirely. Defendants in Santa Cruz County can receive a direct referral (and admission) to a diversionary collaborative court at (pretty much) any point of their case and criminal justice system involvement. But collaborative court referrals are usually made during a defendant's first arraignment in a county court, after the local Santa Cruz County District Attorney's has filed criminal charges. Collaborative court referrals are truly collaborative in nature – again, that buzz word – and a defendant's final involvement in either the **Behavioral Health Court, Intensive Support Court, Veterans Court, Truancy Court, and the Family Preservation Court** is determined by a joint decree by a presiding judge, the defense team, prosecutors, program staff, and other involved parties. .

The important process of matching (eligible) defendants with an appropriate diversion program (or exact alternative court) can be difficult and potentially problematic – a portion of all defendants referred to diversion programs are referred to more than one (as time progresses). After a first collaborative court referral, as necessary, admitted defendants can move to another court (or diversion) program to more adequately support and address their issues and needs, or has a different set of inherent participation requirements. Movements between programs, in the majority of cases, tend to be from a less intense program or setting to a more intensive and involved one. Though each one of Santa Cruz County's collection of Collaborative Courts exist as separate entities - with different protocols and program requirements - they are in fact collaborative and cooperative amongst themselves too. The overall intention and overarching goal of the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court system is to prioritize the social service and rehabilitative needs of enrolled individuals – with a complete understanding that all criminal defendants referred to diversion can (and often do) have multiple, often-complicated co-existing needs.

Each of Santa Cruz County's Collaborative Courts has specific eligibility requirements (which we'll detail in depth below), but on the whole, are designed to work individuals (and families) in both the criminal justice and child welfare systems who have faced challenges and serious issues with mental/behavioral health, substance use/abuse, and a list of other social welfare issues. Defendants granted access into any one of the county's alternative/collaborative court programs are supported, guided, and (yes) monitored in a true team and collaborative effort (by parties involved at all levels of the criminal justice system and community). Judicial officers supervise and oversee clients' treatment and rehabilitation progress through regular court hearings (typically held in a small annex of the Santa Cruz County Main Jail) – which can include the assignment of immediate sanctions or (more-common) incentives (candy!). The system-to-community partnerships and multi-level collaborations established in local diversionary programs (courts) provide defendants (and their families and support networks) with vital access to essential substance abuse and mental health treatment programs – along with a myriad of other community-based academic, vocational, and social service programs and resources to keep them healthy and stable as they continue in their rehabilitative, recovery, and community-reentry efforts. Here are the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts sacrosanct goals, and what the designers and architects of the local court diversionary program hope to achieve through its ongoing effective operation and implementation:

Goals of the Collaborative Justice System:

- **Reduce Jail Bed Days:** Minimize the need for incarceration by providing alternative solutions that address the root causes of criminal behavior.
- **Decrease Recidivism:** Lower the likelihood of repeat offenses and probation/parole violations through effective treatment and support.
- **Reduce Psychiatric Inpatient Bed Days:** Decrease the need for inpatient psychiatric care by providing community-based mental health services.
- **Lower Homelessness:** Address factors contributing to homelessness and help participants secure stable housing.
- **Increase Treatment Compliance:** Ensure participants adhere to treatment plans, contributing to their overall recovery and stability.
- **Promote Pro-Social Activities:** Encourage engagement in positive, constructive activities that support personal growth and community integration.
- **Achieve Sobriety:** Support participants in maintaining sobriety when substance use is a factor.
- **Resolve Legal Issues:** Assist in resolving outstanding fines, fees, and other legal matters.
- **Reduce Harmful Behaviors:** Address and reduce behaviors that negatively impact participants and their communities.
- **Enhance Safety:** Improve safety for families and the public through effective supervision and support.
- **Boost Overall Wellbeing:** Enhance the physical, mental, and emotional health of participants, leading to improved quality of life.

As mentioned earlier, most criminal defendants will jump at the opportunity to enroll and officially participate in any one of Santa Cruz County's alternative, collaborative, and 100% voluntary courts if given the opportunity. Systemic design dictates (or proves) that men and women who enroll in a collaborative court diversion program experience lower rates of criminal conviction (on initial case and charges) than non-diverted cases. That being said, it's important to highlight that participation in a diversion program or time in a collaborative court doesn't necessarily guarantee a quick and easy resolution of a defendant's criminal case or resolution of charges. It's actually the opposite. Yes, those in Santa Cruz County diversionary courts and associated programs do in fact complete criminal sentences and mandated responsibilities in far less-restrictive settings (than those in "normal" courts and custody) but their average length of time to disposition (ultimate case resolution) is actually (typically) longer compared to non-diverted individuals. Does this sound bad on the surface? Well, it really might not be. Successful participation and completion of a diversion program (collaborative court) can also mark the total closure of a defendant's criminal case and eradication of any involvement with the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system and associated supervision. To put things in a bit of contrast, cases for non-diverted defendants in typical or "normal" courts are frequently resolved with terms of probation or even periods of incarceration (that can continue for months, even years, after resolution of their respective cases). Many Collaborative Court participants who eventually complete their court-ordered program can expect to have all records of their contact with the criminal justice system erased and entirely expunged. This ability to effectively clean a defendant's slate makes participation in collaborative courts like those in Santa Cruz County an enticing and desirable prospect for those arrested and charged with a crime, locally.

The completion of a court-ordered diversionary program (in a Collaborative Court) is usually a boisterous and entirely positive affair – for all parties involved (program staff, attorneys on both sides, and even the presiding judge). Some of the terms, conditions, and requirements set forth and established in alternative courts and diversion programs can require immense strength, resiliency, and courage for defendants embarking in a journey towards recovery, rehabilitation, and ultimate community reentry. Collaborative Court graduation ceremonies are designed and meant to reflect and honor this prodigious work and effort from a criminal defendant – who receives genuine respect and approval from multiple parties instrumental in helping he or she through the laborious process. Successful justice system diversions are marked by a program graduation, when the court record reflects a program/framework completion, or the outright dismissal of a criminal case. Of course, program completion is the chief marker of a successful jail and justice system diversion, but even those with unsuccessful, non-diversionary efforts can experience successful (process) outcomes. Sometimes, a failure or systemic termination from one collaborative court (diversion program) can lead to a quick (at times) referral to another program deemed a more cohesive fit for a defendant. If and when an individual can't shoulder his weight of a bargain and fails to meet the requirements and provisions laid out at the beginning of his or her diversion program, they can be effectively terminated from the respective program and reenter regular legal and justice processing and proceedings. In some cases, though, this point marks the time in which some parties may be referred to a different (usually more intensive) program that may meet their needs in a more enhanced or complete way. Because participation in any one of Santa Cruz County's Collaborative Courts is always entirely voluntary, self-determination at the behest of individual defendants – those who after consideration opt out of a program at any point in the process to return to regular systemic processing – is always a viable option (though infrequently utilized).

UNDERSTANDING THE SIZE AND SCOPE OF CALIFORNIA'S COLLABORATIVE (ALTERNATIVE) COURT AND JUSTICE SYSTEM

Throughout the state of California there are over 400 collaborative courts – providing criminal justice system alternatives to tens of thousands of residents each year. All but two (diminutive) jurisdictions (Alpine and Calusa) have collaborative court programs, with many larger municipalities boasting ten or more distinct judicial units. The widespread establishment, adoption, and systemic integration to alternative, specialized, or “Collaborative Courts” is part of an increasingly powerful statewide bipartisan push for broad criminal justice reforms – at all levels of the justice system (from community policing to the judicial and probation systems, sentencing processes, and eventual conditions of incarceration). The general public has grown increasingly boisterous in its demand for reforms focused on identifying and diverting (eligible; especially low-level) criminal defendants – who might be better served and rehabilitated by programs and services outside of the standard or “regular” criminal justice system – into alternative and collaborative court environments. In most California counties, there are distinct (but at times deeply integrated and intertwined) diversional and “collaborative” court systems available to divert defendants from the typical judicial and trial process, and instead provide them with potentially life-changing rehabilitative (non-punitive) programming designed to help them to address the factors and circumstances that led to (or have led to in the past) their criminal activity and justice system involvement.

The exact (legal and judicial) names of collaborative courts established in the state of California can vary considerably - but may be grouped, associated and separated into a number of different types and categories: “Adult Drug Courts” are the most numerous collaborative court offerings throughout the state -with 84 counties providing such programs (criminal justice system alternatives for eligible participants). 55 California counties have established “Adult Mental Health Courts,” (programs) and 47 jurisdictions offer specialized “Veteran’s Courts.” “Dependency Drug Courts” are offered to eligible participants in 35 counties, and “Juvenile Drug Courts” are established in 24 large and small California counties. Rounding out the list of established collaborative court programs are “DUI Courts” (offered in 22 locations), “Reentry Courts” (offered in 20 jurisdictions), “Homeless Courts” (offered by 18 counties), “Community Courts” (12 counties), and “Juvenile Mental Health Courts” (in 12 California counties). There is really no limit or imaginary cap on the types, categories or endemic structures of the

alternative, specialized, and collaborative court offerings that California counties can establish and provide to (qualified and eligible) residents and criminal defendants in their respective jurisdictions. A new, and slightly edgy movement for “Girls Courts” and alternative “SCEC” courts (for commercially exploited sexually exploited children) is growing stronger. And collaborative courts providing diversionary, reentry, and rehabilitation programs for defendants with dual diagnosis issues (co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders), “Truancy Courts,” and “Family Law Drug Courts” are evolving and in increasing use throughout the state as well.

For a county of its size, Santa Cruz is sort of middle of the proverbial pack in-regards-to the expansiveness and scope of the (justice system) diversionary and Collaborative Courts programs (and associated) services it provides (offers) to eligible criminal defendants. But as diversionary avenues, existing in concert, the five distinct Collaborative Courts established here in Santa Cruz County - **Behavioral Health Court, Intensive Support Court, Veterans Court, the Family Preservation Court, and Truancy Court** - provide life-altering, potentially life-saving criminal justice system alternatives to hundreds of eligible local residents (defendants) each and every year. Before going into too much depth regarding each specific Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts (program) further below – including each court’s functioning, eligibility factors, defendant responsibilities, team/program structure ect. – feel free to explore the true size, scope, and overall availability of Collaborative Courts throughout the state of California. It’s fascinating stuff: who has what, and where. Attached to this section of the Jail 101 Guide is a data compilation and assessment from the California Association of Collaborative Courts (CACC) that captures the true extent of California’s important Collaborative Court system.

Superior Court of California,
County of

<u>Superior Court of California, County of</u>		<u>COMMUNITY</u>	<u>DRUG-ADULT</u>	<u>DRUG-JUVENILE</u>	<u>DRUG-DEPENDENCY</u>	<u>DUI</u>	<u>ELDER ABUSE</u>	<u>GIRLS/CSEC</u>	<u>HOMELESS</u>	<u>MENTAL HEALTH- ADULT</u>	<u>MENTAL HEALTH- JUVENILE</u>	<u>REENTRY - ADULT & JUVENILE</u>	<u>TRUANCY</u>	<u>VETERANS</u>
Number of Courts by Case Type	12	84	23	32	20	3	10	19	63	12	19	10	46	
Alameda		X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Alpine														
Amador														X
Butte		X			X									X
Calaveras														X
Colusa														
Contra Costa								X	X					X
Del Norte		X												X
El Dorado					X					X				X
Fresno		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Glenn		X	X							X				
Humboldt		X							X		X			
Imperial		X								X				X
Inyo		X										X		
Kern		X							X	X				X
Kings		X								X				X
Lake			X	X										X
Lassen		X												
Los Angeles	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X			X
Madera		X								X				X
Marin	X	X	X							X				
Mariposa		X								X				
Mendocino		X			X					X				
Merced		X			X					X	X	X		X
Modoc		X	X							X				
Mono		X												
Monterey		X	X			X				X	X		X	X
Napa		X		X						X				
Nevada		X	X		X					X				
Orange	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	

COLLABORATIVE COURTS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY – EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Superior Court of Santa Cruz Collaborative Courts



Under the direction of the Superior Court of California, the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts operates as a group of smaller, specialized, (unique, but integrated) alternative courts that allow select criminal defendants to be removed or “diverted” from the county’s “normal” or usual court (and jail/custody) process and procedures. This diversion, available in certain circumstances and cases, is designed to allow eligible defendants to avoid new convictions and damaging blemishes on their criminal records, address unmet needs (such as mental/behavioral health challenges, drug and substance abuse disorders, unemployment or houselessness e.g.) that contributed to past or immediate criminal behavior – and ultimately foster desistance from future contact with law enforcement and the justice system.

Each of Santa Cruz County's Collaborative Courts has specific eligibility requirements (which we'll detail in depth below), but on the whole, are designed to work individuals (and families) in both the criminal justice and child welfare systems who have faced challenges and serious issues with mental/behavioral health, substance use/abuse, and a list of other social welfare issues. Defendants granted access into any one of the county's alternative/collaborative court programs are supported, guided, and (yes) monitored in a true team and collaborative effort (by parties involved at all levels of the criminal justice system and community). Judicial officers supervise and oversee clients' treatment and rehabilitation progress through regular court hearings (typically held in a small annex of the Santa Cruz County Main Jail) – which can include the assignment of immediate sanctions or (more-common) incentives (candy!). The system-to-community partnerships and multi-level collaborations established in local diversionary programs (courts) provide defendants (and their families and support networks) with vital access to essential substance abuse and mental health treatment programs – along with a myriad of other community-based academic, vocational, and social service programs and resources to keep them healthy and stable as they continue in their rehabilitative, recovery, and community-reentry efforts.

In this important section of the Jail 101 Collaborative Courts we'll dive as deeply as possible into the structures and operations of the various alternative, specialized, collaborative court programs available to (eligible) defendants in the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system. We'll start with the **Behavioral Health Court**, and then investigate and explore the **Intensive Support Court**, **Veterans Court**, and finally, **Family Preservation Court**. We hope that as many people as possible find this in-depth compilation useful – especially families and friends of incarcerated individuals who could (potentially) benefit (legally, financially, and emotionally) from involvement (and ultimate enrollment) in these ground-breaking alternatives to the “normal” and often quite traumatic, Santa Cruz County criminal justice system and associated processes. ☺

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COURT

Time: Behavioral Health Court takes place every Monday at 10:30 AM - In Department 4 of the Santa Cruz County Court House.

Presiding Judge: The Honorable Leila Sayar

Address: 701 Ocean Street, Room C-1122352, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Phone: 831-420-2360

Email: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org

Website and Online Presence: www.santacruzcourt.org

BHC "Official" Brochure: https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/bhc-brochure_0.pdf

BHC

Behavioral Health Court offers: Comprehensive support with a strong focus on treatment, recovery, and community reintegration. to ensure participants receive the services and supervision they need to succeed.

Eligibility Criteria for BHC:

- Eligible for Santa Cruz County Medi-Cal
- On Formal Probation with Mental Health Terms
- Diagnosed with significant and persistent mental illness
- Significant impairment in functioning because of mental health
- Under MOST Team Probation Supervision or assigned to Specified Formal Mental Health Probation Caseload
- Amenable to participation in BHC

Team Members:

BHC Team:
The Collaborative Courts, County Behavioral Health, and Probation.

Primary Court Staff:
Shanee Martin

Behavioral Health Court Background:

Collaborative or “problem solving” courts like Santa Cruz County’s Behavioral Health Court (BHC) are specifically designed to “divert” eligible participants (defendants) from the “normal,” and often-traumatizing criminal justice process (including incarceration) into alternative, recovery-focused and rehabilitative programs and settings. The Behavioral Health Court addresses the complex needs of criminal defendants living with severe mental illness and/or co-occurring substance use disorders – utilizing collaborative principles to provide comprehensive support in a multi-disciplinary team-based approach: with the Court, Probation Department, Behavioral Health Department, District Attorney, Public Defender, and Law Enforcement officers working in concert during the entirety of any person’s participation in order to guide and help them reach their personal and legal goals and aspirations. During their time in the Superior Court of the County of Santa Cruz’s Behavioral Health Court, program participants (eligible defendants) are encouraged to maintain and expand their community-based support networks and avoid the unhealthy or destructive habits, patterns, and behaviors that led to their recent arrest and/or criminal behavior. The Behavioral Health Court is designed to foster a more understanding, supportive, compassionate, and collaborative environment than most defendants (many repeat offenders) typically experience in the “normal” criminal justice system- especially for program participants whose previous relationships with the jail and court system negative or adversarial.

Behavioral Health Court: Eligibility and Participation Standards

Participation in the collaborative Behavioral Health Court (BHC) is strictly voluntary. And all individuals navigating through the various stages and internal programs (and conditions) inherent to the BHC must first, be eligible for Santa Cruz County Medi-Cal. The Behavioral Health Court is designed and intended to serve and provide justice system alternatives to individuals (criminal defendants) on formal probation (with Santa Cruz County’s “MOST Team” or “mental health diversion” program) - who are living or dealing with serious mental health conditions that

are significantly impairing their mental and/or physical health, and daily functioning. All Behavioral Health Court defendants (participants) must be connected with the County's MOST team in some way, be eligible for (and ultimately accept) for a county case coordinator assignment based on an in-depth "access assessment," be amenable to fully engaging in various psychiatric treatments (and taking psychiatric medications as prescribed or necessary), and maintain regular communication with the Collaborative Courts (and Coordinator) to ensure proper court and (internal and external) program scheduling. In their journeys towards eventual BHC program completion and "graduation," defendants are expected to follow established probationary terms and conditions, attend all court dates as directed, and to work with and closely collaborate with an assigned case manager – and all members of the BHC "team" – to develop and follow individualized, tailored "case plans" to meet their specific needs. Each Behavioral Health Court participant's unique case plan (let's call it a legal "road map") will include a considerable amount of foundational structure, terms, conditions, and requirements that must be strictly adhered to. BHC enrollees may need to attend pro-social activities such as participation in AA, NA, or DRA meetings (really any "anonymous program), and if appropriate be subjected to random drug and alcohol (urinalysis) testing during the maintenance of regular appointments with case coordinators, psychiatric providers or probation officers. Some defendants' case plans may require them to maintain (permanent) residence at specific approved housing – and outpatient or residential treatment programs. Through all of this, the key word is "structure" – in addition to, of course "collaboration."

Behavioral Health Court Graduation and Program Completion

The exact length of time that participants actually spend in (and navigating the programs and requirements of) the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court can vary considerably – based upon an individual's (defendant's) terms of probation and unique ongoing needs and requirements. Participants become eligible to graduate or leave the BHC if they fully adhere to established probationary terms for a designated, decided-upon time period and reach their individualized rehabilitative goals. Graduation ceremonies can be special, enthusiastic, and often emotional affairs for those who complete established case and legal goals – and those helping them through the often long and laborious rehabilitative process. Judges and assembled Behavioral Health Court teams may consider an early (non-contracted) termination of probation based on a defendant's ongoing positive behavior, and unwavering commitment and adherence to court-mandated conditions requirements, achievement of recovery-based goals, and overall success of treatment efforts (psychiatric and otherwise). At the end, graduation from the Behavioral health Court, and potential early termination of charges (and BHC program release) is at the discretion of the presiding Judge – in the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court's case, Leila Sayar. Designers, architects, and those involved in the collaborative Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court boast that potential benefits to program participants can include fewer days in the hospital (psychiatric and otherwise), fewer days in incarceration or jail, protracted periods of homelessness, and increase in days of sobriety and effective work days, and increase in medication compliance (and stability).

Those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court should contact their attorney or legal representative and request, or express interest in a "Collaborative Court Referral Packet." Once received, a Behavioral Health Court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis. Here are the links to the Behavioral Health Court's official, internally published "Brochure" and the aforementioned "Collaborative Court Referral Packet" for your review and perusal.

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Court Brochure: https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/bhc-brochure_0.pdf

Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court Participant Packet: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

VETERANS COURT

Time: Veterans Court takes place on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 10:30 AM in Department 7 of the Santa Cruz County Court House.

Presiding Judge: The Honorable Stephen Siegel

Address: 701 Ocean Street, Room C-112, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Phone: 831-420-2352

Email: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org

Website and Online Presence: www.santacruzcourt.org

VC "Official" Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/veterans-brochure-2025-new.pdf>

VC

Veterans Court offers: VC connects participants with treatment and support services to improve their quality of life. Each participant receives individualized treatment plans and a peer advocate.

Veterans Court Eligibility Criteria :

- *Served in the U.S. Military, regardless of length of service, combat experience, or characterization of discharge*
- *Struggles with a diagnosis of PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), substance use, or other mental health symptoms directly related to military service*
- *Able to participate in VC and voluntarily agree to all conditions, including treatment for their qualifying conditions*

Veterans Court Team:

The Collaborative Courts, pre-trial/probation, CAFES, Veterans Justice Outreach Program, County Veteran Services, and their volunteer peers.

Primary Court Staff:
Shanee Martin

Veterans Court: Background and Purpose

Santa Cruz County's collaborative **Veterans Court** provides alternatives to typical sentencing (and criminal justice processes) for eligible and qualified veterans with service-related mental and behavioral health issues and challenges. The overarching mission, and collective goal of this innovative peer-support based collaborative court environment is to connect justice involved American veterans (and their families and community-based support systems) with opportunities, and necessary support and structure, to maintain and improve their quality of life and access rehabilitative treatments to address mental, emotional, and physical health concerns. In a true collaborative effort and structured team-based approach – among justice system partners (judge, district attorney, public defender, probation department, veteran peer support), community-based organizations, and local and national veteran's service providers – the Veterans Court is designed to provide sentencing alternatives, structure, and invaluable guidance support to individuals (veterans) who have a desire to engage in treatment and utilize (available) programs and/or services - but have been largely unsuccessful in doing so on their own.

Potential participants in Santa Cruz County's innovative Veterans Court process and legal framework may be dealing with mental/behavioral illnesses and/or disorders, substance use challenges/disorders, or other physical (or emotional) health-related issues in direct (or indirect) correlation to their military service (that created or contributed to their instability, charges, and eventual justice system involvement). Just like the invaluable, heroic, and potentially traumatizing service for their country, potential participants must "volunteer" for the Veterans Court program (and alternative legal process) and express a willingness and desire to make necessary and instrumental changes. Most service veterans will jump at the opportunity to participate in the collaborative Veterans Court when given the chance – and enter the less-punitive, more-supportive, and recovery focused sentencing alternative (approach, plan, and program) in lieu of incarceration. The typical Veterans Court process and team-based rehabilitative approach is far from easy – and takes considerable time, effort, and courage to

actually complete – but for many struggling veterans, the end results can be lifechanging – and potentially lifesaving.

Veterans Court: Design and Functioning

Ex-American service veterans who agree (or request) to participate in Santa Cruz County's collaborative (diversionary) Veterans Court are supported by a varied and comprehensive team throughout their court-ordered program (and eventual completion of alternative criminal sentence). Upon acceptance, eligible veterans collaborate with a Collaborative Courts Representative or Veteran Justice Outreach representative to develop a structured, comprehensive, individualized (personalized) **treatment plan**. All program participants are assigned a highly trained Peer Support worker (or program volunteer – usually a veteran themselves) to guide and advise them in reaching established goals and metrics in their journey towards eventual program graduation. This one-on-one empathetic, compassionate, and invaluable support is an important component of Veterans Court – and for many veterans struggling with substance use or behavioral health challenges, who also may mistrust or fear the legal and criminal justice system (and associated processes), can become an important resource, close relationship and programmatic rock they can turn to and rely upon to complete their daily affairs. Defendants involved with the Veterans Court are required to attend regular court sessions – held on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 10:30 AM in Department 7 of the Santa Cruz County Court House – for judicial reviews of their treatment plans, team updates, reviews, and coordination, and for encouragement and ongoing support.

The foundational, comprehensive, and highly-structured personalized treatment plans developed (in a team-based approach and framework) for all eligible Veterans Court participants serve as systematic roadmaps to allow and help them achieve stability, improve their emotional and physical health and wellbeing, develop positive habits to avoid future incarceration and recidivism, and to successfully reintegrate into the community. Typical treatment plans (developed and guided by a team of passionate court and community-based parties and organizations) drive the plans, actions and decision making processes of Veterans Court participants on a daily basis – providing the necessary structure and support to allow them to access important substance abuse and/or mental health treatments, obtain medical care, connect to Veterans Administration services and valuable community-based resources, and receive job training and/or assistance in securing gainful employment. Each Veterans Court enrollee is tasked with setting goals for (eventual) recovery and systematic personal growth and are given the ability and legal opportunity to rebuild and form new, healthier relationships with friends and family, and the community at large. Each and every highly-tailored treatment plan developed by-and-for participants in Santa Cruz County's Veterans Court can and will differ considerably – and there is no set time limit or required/mandated duration of participation – and eventual graduation – endemic to the innovative alternative court setting. Each Veterans Court case centers around participant's ongoing goals and needs, and their ability to adhere to and make progress on their respective treatment plans. Treatment plans are identified and revisited regularly as defendants' progress through the Veterans Court program – and are monitored in a relatively strict and structured environment that allows program enrollees to receive the ongoing foundational support, services, and legal and community resources necessary to achieve their personal goals and aspirations, and graduate from the Veterans Court and finally leave the legal and criminal justice system.

It takes tremendous courage, honor and strength for individuals to make the life-altering decision to sign up for American military service - to defend their (and your) country from threats foreign and domestic. And it can take an equal dose of strength and courage for those men and women to attempt to deal with the often traumatizing physical and psychological after-effects – and brutal social, legal, and financial implications – of the service itself. Ex-American soldiers and United States military deserve collective societal respect – and ongoing support – when their heroic service ends, their military duties are officially relieved, and they attempt to reintegrate (back) into "normal life" and reenter their communities. In many cases though, American veterans – for whatever reason – are overlooked, neglected, and/or systemically blamed or forgotten about. Many are demonized and/or pushed to societal margins as they struggle to cope and deal with serious substance abuse challenges, and mental behavioral

health challenges and illnesses such as PTSD, military sexual trauma, and traumatic brain injury – directly related to their military service (for us all). Partners and team members at all levels of Santa Cruz County's collaborative Veterans Court understand this dynamic to well – many have volunteered for their own military service.

Veterans Court: Rewards, Sanctions, and Program Completion

One of the chief goals of the entire Veterans Court team is to provide guidance, reassurance and support while celebrating and applauding the strength and courageous efforts and accomplishments of participants – every step of the way. Perks and rewards are handed out when Veterans Court enrollees are “doing well – adhering to their case and treatment plan, meeting the conditions of the court-ordered supervision, staying clean and sober, looking for (or eventually securing) employment, engaging in pro-social community activities or educational pursuits, and simply remaining violation and arrest-free. Many veterans, and Veterans Court participants in particular, valiantly struggle to maintain their basic needs on a daily basis; so the judge and court-awarded bonuses (and kudos) such as free bus passes and cash (or gift cards) for community-based programs and pro-social activities/pursuits can prove instrumental in maintaining happiness, direction, and overall health. Other rewards for “jobs well done” in the collaborative Veterans Court include less-restrictive treatment environments (and recommendations), less-frequent mandated court appearances, and converting veteran defendants’ court ordered (at times considerable) fines and fees to more-manageable service hours. Even the strongest and most-driven veteran participant in the alternative court can (and often does) get off track though, and judges and Veterans Court team members often must levy penalties or sanctions to ensure further program compliance (and eventual alternative sentencing completion). When Veterans Court defendants are failing to meet the expectations of or mandated obligations to the court; not following their established case or treatment plan, incurring violations or citations while released, or not fulfilling the recommendations or decrees of their appointed case manager or parole agent, they can be legally and criminally chastised in multiple ways. Some judge-levied sanctions may include an increase in required court appearances, an increased frequency of drug and alcohol testing (and random urinalysis), or in some sad cases, an outright termination from the Veterans Court and return to the “regular” legal and criminal justice system. The support, compassion, and empathetic professionalism of the entire collaborative Veterans Court team cannot be understated though – and the diversion program is really geared around and designed to ensure overall program completion, success, and graduation for all involved American veteran participants.

Those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Veterans Court should contact their attorney or legal representative and request, or express interest in a “Collaborative Court Referral Packet.” Once received, a Veterans Court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis. Here are the links to the Veterans Court’s official, internally published “Brochure” and the aforementioned “Collaborative Court Referral Packet” for your review and perusal.

Santa Cruz County Veterans Court Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/veterans-brochure-2025-new.pdf>

Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court Participant Packet: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

FAMILY PRESERVATION COURT

Time: Family Preservation Court is held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2:00PM in Department A of the Watsonville Court House.

Presiding Official: Commissioner Gregory Peinado

Address: 701 Ocean Street, Room C-112, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Phone: 831-420-2352

Email: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org

Website and Online Presence: www.santacruzcourt.org

FPC "Official" Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/fpc-brochure-new.pdf>

FPC

Family Preservation Court Offers: aims to preserve and reunify families by addressing issues leading to court involvement and providing access to necessary treatments and services. The to provide wraparound care and support.

Eligibility Criteria for FPC:

- An open dependency case or a Non-Minor Dependent
- Struggles with substance use disorder
- Voluntarily willing to participate in FPC

Family Preservation Court team:

Collaborative Court, The Parents Center, Leaps and Bounds, Family and Children Services, County Behavioral Health Substance Use Disorder Services, Sobriety Works, and Parent Mentors

Primary Court Staff: *Shanee Martin*

Family Preservation Court: Background, Functioning and Purpose

For over 10 solid years, Santa Cruz County's collaborative Family Preservation Court has been dedicated to enhancing participant and community wellbeing by prioritizing the health and safety of families (and loved ones) in the dependency system. As a diversionary program, the strictly voluntary Family Preservation Court is a County and court-backed program focused on families (and criminal defendants) involved in dependency cases and non-minor dependents in child welfare. The chief aim and overarching goal of the innovative collaborative court system and associated programs is to preserve and reunify local families by addressing the inherent issues that (eventually) led to court and criminal justice system involvement, while providing vital access and easily accessible avenues to necessary treatments and key service components (on a personalized, case by case basis). Most defendants (with associated criminal cases) who end up taking up and enrolling in the alternative court and sentencing paradigms established within the Family Preservation Court involve substance use/abuse and behavioral health issues. In a collaborative, team-based approach the Family Preservation Court (team) works to empower local families by providing structured, coordinated supports and service referrals, fostering overall participant accountability, and urging positive behavioral changes – all to avoid future justice system involvement and ensuring familial health and wellbeing. Voluntary participation in the alternative court is offered to families and family members with substance use disorders who have an open dependency case and non-minor dependents in the child welfare system.

Through all of its extensive policies, programs, and procedures, the strength-based (assembled) teams operating within the Family Preservation Court – including the defendant, commissioner Gregory Peinado, county substance use disorder staff, child welfare staff, and community partners and treatment providers such as Janus, Sobriety Works, and the Parents Center – collectively work to encourage a commitment to a healthy lifestyle of stability,

recovery, and long lasting familial stability. The collaborative court offering is designed to preserve and reunify families by addressing the core and root causes of a defendant's court and criminal justice system involvement. Yes, the main focus is on family rebuilding and eventual reunification – healthy and stable for all parties involved. Through involvement with the court, participants receive fully-backed and court-supported expanded access to a range of treatments and services – including foundational support for substance use/abuse, mental and behavioral health, trauma, and parent-child relationships. Assembled Family Preservation Court teams also emphasize participant accountability through a range of supervised treatments and services to support participants' achieving eventual reunification goals and long-term stability.

Family Preservation Court: Program Structure and Completion

All of Santa Cruz County's collaborative court offerings are designed to enhance the quality of life for participants by providing a structured and supportive environment that adopts recovery and rehabilitative principles. The specialized courts are designed to improve treatment outcomes, reduce recidivism, and address public safety concerns while efficiently utilizing legal and community resources. Using a team-based approach, involving multiple agencies and community partners, the Family Preservation Court is designed and structured in such a way to allow for the progressive reunification of families (of loved ones involved in the justice system) and addressing the root causes of case and criminal justice involvement. The Family Preservation Court is structured in three main phases – in which the intensity of offered treatment services, alcohol and drug testing (urinalysis mandates), and required court appearances gradually decrease as participants advance in the process. Each case and defendant situation is unique though, so the duration of each specific programmatic phase varies with the completion of individual (personal and court/ordered) goals and metrics. During the first official "phase" of a typical participant's Family Preservation Court program and legal process, they are required show up to court (in Department A of the Watsonville Court House at 2:00PM on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month) to identify treatment and rehabilitative needs, carefully review and modify case and treatment plans, and, if caring for a child under the age of 5, enroll (and eventually complete) the "Leaps and Bounds" program (offered by a community partner). Phase two of the Family Preservation Court process and proceedings involves monthly (not bi-weekly) court attendance and effective engagement in court-established case and treatment plans (mandated programs and treatment services). During phase three of a typical Family Preservation Court alternative sentencing process, program participants meet with team and judicial officials once every two months (every six weeks) as they transition to continuing care, and ultimate stability and potential reunification.

Those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Family Preservation Court should contact their attorney or Child Welfare worker and request, or express interest in a "Collaborative Court Referral Packet." Or, simply Send your contact information to collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org and someone will respond to your inquiry. Once received, a Family Preservation Court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis. Here are the links to the Family Preservation Court's official, internally published "Brochure" and the aforementioned "Collaborative Court Referral Packet" for your review and perusal.

Santa Cruz County Family Preservation Court Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/fpc-brochure-new.pdf>

Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court Participant Packet: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

INTENSIVE SUPPORT COURT (and Mental Health Diversion)

Time: Intensive Support Court is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 11:00AM in Department Two of the Santa Cruz County Court House.

Presiding Official: The Honorable Syda Cogliati

Address: 701 Ocean Street, Room C-112, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Phone: 831-420-2352

Email: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org

Website and Online Presence: www.santacruzcourt.org

BHC "Official" Brochure: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/fpc-brochure-new.pdf>

ISC

Intensive Support Court offers: Assistance to individuals with significant mental health and/or substance use issues who are **not** connected to the MOST team, providing integrated support to help them achieve their treatment goals.

Eligibility Criteria for ISC:

- Individuals who are granted Mental Health Diversion
- Those living with mental health and/or substance use issues that are negatively impacting their lives
- Individuals who have a significant need for case management, a past criminal history, and are at risk of reoffending

Intensive Support Court Team:

The Collaborative Courts, pre-trial/probation, CAFES, and community partners.

Primary Court Staff: Sarah Scott

Intensive Support Court: Background and Purpose

Routinely called the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system's "problem solving court," the collaborative (and/or alternative) **Intensive Support Court** is designed to connect eligible defendants to vital community-based services, resources, and programs – to establish (and maintain) overall health, wellness, wellbeing, identify and achieve (established and manageable) goals and aspirations, enhance their support networks and community ties, and to avoid the unhealthy and destructive patterns of behavior that resulted in their incarceration (in the first place). Participation in the Intensive Support Court – like all of the County's collaborative court settings – is strictly voluntary. And any potential participant must express a core and intrinsic desire and full commitment to engage in (court-mandated) mental/behavioral health and/or substance use treatments - and to utilize decided-upon programs and services that they were (largely unsuccessful in completing (on their own) in the past.

Multidisciplinary and collaborative teams – including presiding judges, district attorneys, public defenders, probation officers, and pretrial collaborative courts case managers – work in concert to connect (court-eligible) defendants to community-based programs and rehabilitative services and ensure their complete compliance adherence to established (court mandated) case plans to keep them out of jail (and further time behind bars). Many participants (first time or otherwise) in the Intensive Support Court have had multiple brushes with law enforcement and the criminal justice system in the past – with especially challenging court and sentencing experiences. The Intensive Support Court is designed and intended to foster a more collaborative, less impersonal, and more trauma-informed

environment – with an assigned court team working together to ensure criminal defendants receive the services, programs, and supports they need and require to stay on track - and completely adhere to conditions of their case and established treatment plans.

Intensive Support Court: Eligibility and Participation

Not all defendants and those charged with a crime or criminal offense will necessarily qualify and be allowed to participate in the County's collaborative (alternative) Intensive Support Court setting. Potential Intensive Support Court participants must present an established case and criminal history of mental/behavioral health issues and/or illnesses that are (or have been) negatively impacting their daily lives. In this strictly voluntary program and alternative court environment, all defendants who "sign on" must be completely amenable to participate and follow the specific case plans created by their interdisciplinary team of supporters. And ready to complete all established goals and treatment metrics from start to finish (to avoid further incarceration and more serious punitive measures). From the beginning, all ISC program/court enrollees must show a significant need and requirement for comprehensive case management, a previous criminal history (and rap sheet), and are believed to be at risk of reoffending – experiencing recidivism and continuing through their revolving door process within the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system.

The large majority (almost entirety) of eligible (eventually accepted) participants in the Intensive Support Court must have already been granted what's known in the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system as "[Mental Health Diversion](#)" (**MHDA**). As a supportive pre-adjudication program designed around helping male and female defendants facing substance use disorders and mental health issues (and illnesses), the Intensive Support Court's comprehensive, collaborative team-based approach should provide integrated levels of support and structure facilitating mental health diversion and guiding participants towards their treatment goals and post-custody aspirations. Foundationally built upon AB 1810, "Mental Health Diversion" gives the judiciary (presiding judges in criminal cases) discretionary powers to "divert" qualified individuals who have (or are believed to have) committed a crime (or crimes) because of an existing mental health disorder.

Diversion – [Mental Health Diversion](#) in this specific case – may be ultimately granted at any time during a defendant's pretrial proceedings; after the filing of an accusatory pleading. To be deemed eligible for Mental Health Diversion, a criminal defendant (or their chosen legal representatives) must present that his or her mental health (illness or condition) was a significant factor in a charged offense, and they must have a recent mental health diagnosis from a qualified mental health treatment "provider." To qualify for Mental Health Diversion, individuals must prove that they do not "pose an unreasonable risk of danger of public safety if treated in the community" (as defined in Section 1170.1) and are willing and able to effectively respond (and adhere to) court-ordered treatment goals and plans. Those wishing to participate in this alternative justice setting under Mental Health Diversion must also (initially) waive the right to a speedy trial, agree to fully comply with (individual and provider) treatment goals and metrics on an ongoing basis.

Not every arrested and charged individual will immediately qualify for Mental Health Diversion, hardly so – referrals are made selectively, after great deliberation on a case-by-case basis. Exclusionary factors include a charge or offense of murder or voluntary manslaughter, a diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder or borderline personality disorder, any "290" offense, and offense of a possession on a weapon of mass destruction. Many defendants totally innocent of any and all of these serious, slightly dramatic caveats, are denied entry and enrollment in the Intensive Support Court (by the judiciary or otherwise) for other reasons and circumstances as well. Collaborative, diversionary, and alternative court settings are not for everyone. And much thought goes into exactly who is ultimately admitted and supported (in a team-based effort) throughout the inherent, often labor and systemically intensive process.

Once an eligible defendant is accepted into the Santa Cruz County court system's [Mental Health Diversion](#) program, he or she is illegible for placement into the collaborative [Intensive Support Court](#) environment. The Intensive Support Court's pre-adjudication program is designed to help those facing mental illness and substance

use disorders (sometimes co-occurring) to achieve their goals and post-custody aspirations in a highly structured team-based approach to criminal justice. To ultimately enroll and accept the judicial terms, conditions, and treatment plans of the I.S.C. participants must show a significant need for highly structured case management, a history of criminal behavior (related charges), and demonstratable risk of reoffending.

Those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Intensive Support Court should contact their attorney or request, or express interest in a "Collaborative Court Referral Packet." Or, simply Send your contact information to collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org and someone will respond to your inquiry. Once received, an Intensive Support Court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis. Here are the links to the Intensive Support Court's official, internally published "Brochure" and the aforementioned "Collaborative Court Referral Packet" for your review and perusal.

Santa Cruz County Intensive Support Court Brochure:

<https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/isc-brochure.pdf>

Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court Participant Packet: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>



Referral Process and Entry into the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court System – Veterans Court, Intensive Support Court, Family Preservation Court, and Behavioral Health Court

Santa Cruz County's Collaborative (alternative) Court environments aren't for everyone – even though almost every (potentially) qualified inmate would jump at the opportunity to voluntarily participate in one of the rehabilitative settings (and the alternative sentencing and punitive options entailed/offered). As stated previously, those who are at-all interested in potentially joining or participating in the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court system should contact their attorney or request (or express interest in) a "Collaborative Court Referral Packet." Or, simply Send your contact information to collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org and someone will respond to your inquiry. Once received, a collaborative court team member will review completed applications to determine whether defendants are eligible or sufficiently qualified for the alternative/collaborative court – on a case by case basis. This information should provide the backbone and direction for potential (criminal defendant) entry and enrollment into any one of Santa Cruz County's alternative court environments and associated programs.

Friends, family members, and involved service providers of inmates in the Santa Cruz County criminal justice system hoping to alert and educate Jail staff re: a defendant's immediate mental health (or SUDS) needs can fill out (to the best of their ability) a Jail Crisis Intervention Referral Form online (here):

<https://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/BehavioralHealth/AdultMentalHealthServices/CoordinatedCareTeamsandSpecializedServices/JailCrisisInterventionTeamReferral.aspx> or send a direct email (with relevant information including inmate's name, Jail ID (#), date of birth, known conditions including medications ect.) to CIT@co.santa-cruz.ca.us. Direct, in-person correspondence can be dropped off (in the form or written letter) to the Jail Reception Center at the Santa Cruz County Main Jail location as well. Lastly, direct contact with the Jail

Behavioral Health Team can be made at (831) 454-865 – to speak personally with an internal crisis worker - or leave a detailed message regarding an inmate's condition and potential future in Santa Cruz County's collaborative court system. Due to HIPPA requirements, contacted Jail staff are prohibited from giving concerned friend and family members much information re: at risk (detainees) clients without a signed release of information from the individuals themselves. So this process can be beyond frustrating at times. It's important for those outside of the criminal justice system to encourage those within – having located inmates and established safe and consistent contact – to submit requests for "Jail Behavioral Health" services themselves. This may take guidance from parties in the know, but these forms are readily available on inmates' personal tablet systems or from individuals' housing unit officers. Further information – from outside of custody – regarding alternative or collaborative sentencing options and associated programs and connecting with a justice involved attorney can be found by contacting the Jail Discharge Planner at (831) 454-5171.

Official collaborative court referrals can be made by the Santa Cruz County Jail's Probation Department, parole officers, the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, Public Defenders, County Mental Health Department, and assortment of community treatment providers. To refer prospective collaborative/alternative court participants, all interested parties must fill out the appropriate part of the Collaborative Court Referral Packet (found here):

<https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

We'll include screen shots of the types different forms and documents required throughout the Referral Packet below – but all referring individuals and agencies should definitely include any and all additional mental health records and documents with each submitted defendant referral packet. And if a client is currently incarcerated, request a formal Court Clinician Screening from the Santa Cruz County Court itself. In case you were wondering what the heck a Court Clinician actually is – they will assess each prospective participant's eligibility and needs. and share their findings directly to court and judicial officials in confidential correspondence. Admission to any one of Santa Cruz County's collaborative court environments does take time – sometimes significant periods – and is a gradual process of calibration and recalibration to eventuality. Anyone at all interested in the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Court system of justice can send inquiries directly to: collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org. And review the Collaborative Court Referral Packet that contains the following (referral) forms and documents here: <https://www.santacruz.courts.ca.gov/system/files/forms-and-filings/cc-packet-april-2025.pdf>

SUPCR 1131 Collaborate Courts Referral Information Sheet

SUPCR 1132 Collaborate Courts Contact and Information

SUPCR 1133 Collaborative Courts Release of Information (Substance Use)

SUPCR 1134 Collaborative Courts Release of Information (Mental Health)

BH 306 Authorization to Release / Share Confidential Information

Veterans Release of Information

Veterans SF180 Military Records

CAFES Release of Information

The above documents are the foundations of the Santa Cruz County Collaborative Courts referral, and ultimate detainee enrollment process. Here are snapshots of the most important/impactful forms/documents on the official Collaborative Court Referral Packet:



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
COLLABORATIVE COURTS OFFICE
701 OCEAN STREET
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 420-2498
www.santacruzcourt.org

Collaborative Courts Contact and Information Form

Penal Codes: 1001.8 1170.9 1001.36 1001.35

Client Name: _____ Date of Referral: _____
DOB: _____ Sex: _____ Phone number: _____
Referral Source Name: _____ Referral Source Phone Number: _____
Case Number(s) _____
Offense(s) _____

Charge Level: Felony Misdemeanor

Violation of Supervision Other

In Custody: Main Jail Rountree Blaine St.

R&R Out of Custody

Military Service: Yes No Unknown

If yes, provide SSN _____

Military Service Types of Discharge:

Honorable General Other than honorable

Bad conduct Dishonorable

Enrolled in VA Services: Yes No

Has been declared PC 1368: Current Past

No Unknown

Healthcare Insurance: Yes No

Insurance Provider: _____

County: _____

Primary Care Provider:

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Psychiatrist:

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Therapist:

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Mental Health Diagnosis:

1) _____

Current Past Documented Self-Report

2) _____

Current Past Documented Self-Report

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

SANTA CRUZ BRANCH
701 Ocean Street, Room 120
Santa Cruz, CA 95060



WATSONVILLE BRANCH
1 Second Street, Room 300
Watsonville, CA 95076

**Authorization for Use, Exchange, and/or Discharge of Confidential Substance Use Disorder
Information for entry and participation in the Collaborative Courts**

I _____, _____ (print name of client or client's representative) (print date of birth) hereby authorize the Superior Court of Santa Cruz Collaborative Courts, to disclose

Mental Health information, Health information, Substance Use treatment history,
 HIV test results and status, Written Assessments Other (specify): _____

to:

Santa Cruz County Department of Probation:
 (Name) _____

Santa Cruz County District Attorney Representative:
 (Name) _____

Santa Cruz County Public Defender Representative:
 (Name) _____

Department of Veterans Affairs:
 (Name) _____

Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency:
 (Name) _____

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department:
 (Name) _____

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:
 (Name) _____

Goodwill of Central Coast
 (Name) _____

Other: _____

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

SANTA CRUZ BRANCH
701 Ocean Street, Room 120
Santa Cruz, CA 95060



WATSONVILLE BRANCH
1 Second Street, Room 300
Watsonville, CA 95076

Authorization for Use, Exchange, and/or Discharge of Confidential Mental Health and Medical Information for entry and participation in the Collaborative Courts

I _____ (print name of client or client's representative) _____ (print date of birth) hereby authorize the Superior Court of Santa Cruz Collaborative Courts, to disclose Mental Health information, Health information, Substance Use treatment history, HIV test results and status, Written Assessments Other (specify): _____ to:

Santa Cruz County Department of Probation:
(Name) _____

Santa Cruz County District Attorney Representative:
(Name) _____

Santa Cruz County Public Defender Representative:
(Name) _____

Department of Veterans Affairs:
(Name) _____

Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency:
(Name) _____

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department:
(Name) _____

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:
(Name) _____

Goodwill of Central Coast:
(Name) _____

Other: _____

1	1400 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 Phone: (831) 454-4170 Fax: (831) 454-4663	 1430 Freedom Blvd. Ste F, Watsonville, CA 95076 Phone: (831) 454-4170 Fax: (831) 454-4663	
Client Legal Name:		Avatar No:	
Nickname/Alias:		Date of Birth:	
Address:		City:	State:
Zip:			
2	AUTHORIZATION for the RELEASE/SHARE of CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION		
I, _____ (PRINT NAME of LEGAL AUTHORIZOR) authorize Behavioral Health Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MHP or <input type="checkbox"/> SUDS (check appropriate box) Staff to share (give and/or receive) the below identified information to: (AGENCY/ENTITY) authorized to receive my treatment information. [CARES Act permits "organization/agency" for SUD disclosures.] Recipient Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ <small>[FOR Children's Mental Health (CBH) staff (minor ownership): My signature below confirms that I have assessed this 12-17 year old minor and determined the minor <input type="checkbox"/> does <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> does not have the capacity to authorize the release of her/heis/this protected health information.] _____ / _____ (CBH Staff Signature/Date)</small>			
3	The purpose for the communication, disclosure and exchange of this information is: <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate treatment/payment/operational coordination <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Summarize treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify reason): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Claims Assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Care Review/Complaint <input type="checkbox"/> Appointment Support/Scheduling Help		
4	I permit staff to <u>release/share</u> the following sensitive information: [please check appropriate boxes]: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Mental Health Treatment Information: FROM _____ TO _____ [Optional: Specify Unique Date Limit] <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Substance Use Disorder Treatment Information: FROM _____ TO _____ [REQUIRED for SUD: Specify Unique Date Range Limits – 42 CFR section 2.31] <input type="checkbox"/> Only the following information (can specify any type and/or date range): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diagnosis <input type="checkbox"/> Only treatment enrollment confirmation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Psychiatry treatment, including medications <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS Test Results (A separate authorization is required for each disclosure & required signer initials): _____		
5	DURATION: This authorization is valid until: _____ (Date or event) or one (1) year from the date this form is signed, whichever date is earlier.		
6	MY RIGHTS: (1) I may refuse to sign this Authorization. My refusal will not affect my ability to obtain treatment or eligibility for benefits. (2) I understand that this is a communication release. (3) I understand if I authorize disclosure of my protected health information to someone who is not covered by confidentiality laws (such as a family friend) it is possible that my information may be re-disclosed by that person to someone else. (4) I may revoke this authorization at any time by submitting a written revocation to: Quality Improvement, 1400 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 to activate the revocation effective date. (5) I have the right to a copy of this authorization form and was offered a copy. (Initial: _____)		
7	Client Signature:	Date:	
8	Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____ <small>(If signed by someone other than the client, state your legal relationship to the client): _____</small> Behavioral Health Staff (Print/Sign): _____ Date: _____ <small>Legal Guardian or Conservator must provide a copy of current legal appointment papers to receive information</small>		

Client Name: _____ Client #: _____

SUDS



Santa Cruz Office
1400 Emeline Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Phone: (831) 454-4170
Fax: (831) 454-4663

Watsonville Office
1430 Freedom Blvd. Suite F
Watsonville, CA 95076
Phone: (831) 763-8200
Fax: (831) 763-8231

SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES CONSENT FOR ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD EXCHANGE

County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services, and Network Providers utilize a secure, shared Electronic Health Record (EHR) system called Avatar to store your Protected Health Information (PHI). PHI that is stored in the shared EHR system includes but is not limited to your personal identifying information, payment information, assessments, treatment plans, progress notes, medications, and drug testing results. Having your PHI stored in the shared EHR system provides many benefits to you by allowing your care providers faster access to your health records and enabling them to better coordinate your care to ensure the best possible treatment for you. In the event of an emergency or disaster, consenting to allow your treatment providers to access your PHI in the shared EHR allows your care providers to give you faster, more effective, timely treatment when it matters most. County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services and Network Providers are committed to upholding the confidentiality of all EHR stored in Avatar in accordance with both federal and State privacy regulations including Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), 42 CFR Part 2 and the CARES Act. Only providers directly involved with your care have authorization to access your EHR for the purposes of treatment, payment, or healthcare operations.

Current List of Avatar Providers

County of Santa Cruz Mental Health Treating Providers • County of Santa Cruz SUD Treating Providers
Encompass Mental Health Treating Providers • Encompass Community Recovery SUD Treating Providers
• Janus of Santa Cruz SUD Treating Providers • Sobriety Works SUD Treating Providers • New Life
Community Center SUD Treating providers • Volunteer Center Mental Health Treating Providers • Front
Street Mental Health Treating Providers • Pajaro Valley Prevention & Student Assistance Mental Health
Treating Providers • Pajaro Valley Prevention & Student Assistance SUD Prevention Treating Providers •
Haven of Hope Mental Health Treating Providers • Parent Center Mental Health Treating Providers •
Telecare Crisis Stabilization Program • Horizon Service Providers

How Is My Privacy Protected?

County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services and participating Network Providers use a combination of safeguards to protect your PHI. Technical safeguards include encryption, password protection and the ability to track every viewer's usage of the system. All participating providers must agree to follow written policies controlling access to information through the shared EHR system. Participating providers must follow federal 42 CFR Part 2, CARES Act and HIPAA regulations; in addition to federal and State privacy laws. Please reference our Notice of Privacy Practices that was provided to you for more information.



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

POST OFFICE BOX 962, 1060 EMELINE AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-0962

SANTA CRUZ HEALTH CENTER
1060 EMELINE AVE.
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 454-4100 FAX (831) 454-4298

WATSONVILLE HEALTH CENTER
1430 FREEDOM BLVD.
WATSONVILLE, CA 95076
(831) 763-8400 FAX (831) 763-8237
TDD: (831) 454-4123

OUTPATIENT MEDICAL CLINICS DIVISION

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION FROM MEDICAL RECORDS

I, _____

Hereby authorize

To furnish to

(name and address of person or organization)

(name and address of person or organization)

any and all records obtained in the course of my diagnosis and treatment, which pertain to and may include the mention of alcohol and/or drug abuse, psychiatric illness, HIV+, AIDS Related Complex (ARC), and/or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), concerning:

(patient's name)

(patient's social security number)

(patient's date of birth)

(patient's medical record number)

The disclosure of records is required for the following purposes: _____

The disclosure shall be limited to the following specific types of information: _____

This consent shall expire: _____
(date)

I understand I have a right to receive a copy of this authorization upon my request.

Copy requested and received: Yes _____ No _____ Initials _____

A copy of this consent is just as valid as an original.

Patient signature

(date)

Witness name and title

Parent, guardian or authorized representative of patient

PROHIBITION ON REDISCLOSURE: This information is being disclosed to you from records which confidentiality is protected by federal law. Federal regulations (42CFR part 2) prohibit you from making any further disclosure of this information except with a specific written consent of the person to whom it pertains.



REQUEST FOR AND AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE HEALTH INFORMATION

PRIVACY ACT AND PAPER WORK REDUCTION ACT INFORMATION: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires us to notify you that this information collection is in accordance with the clearance requirements of section 3507 of the Act. We may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. We anticipate that the time expended by all individuals who must complete this form will average 2 minutes. This includes the time it will take to read the instructions, gather the necessary facts and fill out this form. The execution of this form does not authorize the release of information other than that specifically described below.

The information requested on this form is solicited under Title 38 U.S.C. The form authorizes release of information in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164; 5 U.S.C. 552a; and 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 7332 that you specify. Your disclosure of the information requested on this form is voluntary. However, if information needed to locate records for release is not furnished completely and accurately, VA will be unable to comply with the request. The Veterans Health Administration may not condition the provision of treatment, payment, enrollment in the VA Health Care Program, or eligibility for benefits on the signing of an authorization, except for research-related treatment where an authorization for the use or disclosure of individually-identifiable health information for such research is required. VA may disclose the information that you put on the form as permitted by law. VA may make a "routine use" disclosure of the information as outlined in the Privacy Act system of records notice identified as 24VA0007 "Patient Medical Record - VA", 08VA005 "Employee Medical File System Records (Title 38)-VA" and in accordance with the Notice of Privacy Practices. VA may also use this information to identify Veterans and persons claiming or receiving VA benefits and their records, and for other purposes authorized or required by law.

TO: DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (Name and Address of VA Health Care Facility)

VA Palo Alto Health Care System
3801 Miranda Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94304

LAST NAME- FIRST NAME- MIDDLE NAME

DATE OF BIRTH (mm/dd/yyyy)

PATIENT'S MAILING ADDRESS (including City, State and Zip Code)

NAME AND ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION, INDIVIDUAL, OR TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL TO WHOM INFORMATION IS TO BE RELEASED
Santa Cruz Veterans Court (701 Ocean St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060), all affiliated individuals, agencies, attorneys, and court evaluator - see attached listing.

PURPOSE(S) OR NEED: Information is to be used by the requestor for:

TREATMENT BENEFITS LEGAL EMPLOYMENT OTHER (Please specify) _____

INFORMATION REQUESTED: Check applicable box(es) and state the extent or nature of information to be provided:

HEALTH SUMMARY (Prior 2 Years): _____

INPATIENT DISCHARGE SUMMARY (Dates): _____

PROGRESS NOTES:
 SPECIFIC CLINICS (Name & Date Range): _____
 SPECIFIC PROVIDERS (Name & Date Range): _____
 DATE RANGE: _____

OPERATIVE/CLINICAL PROCEDURES (Name & Date): _____

LAB RESULTS:
 SPECIFIC TESTS (Name & Date): All drug tox screens as deemed relevant by the court
 DATE RANGE: _____

RADIOLOGY REPORTS (Name & Date): _____

LIST OF ACTIVE MEDICATIONS: _____

FLU VACCINATION (Dose, Lot Number, Date & Location): _____

OTHER (Describe): All relevant medical record information needed for court supervision

REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

Requests can be submitted online using eVetRecs at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

To ensure the best possible service, please thoroughly review the accompanying instructions before filling out this form. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY OR TYPE BELOW.

SECTION I - INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS (Furnish as much information as possible.)

1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (last, first, full middle) 2. SOCIAL SECURITY # 3. DATE OF BIRTH 4. PLACE OF BIRTH

5. SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT (For an effective records search, it is important that ALL service be shown below.)

	BRANCH OF SERVICE	DATE ENTERED	DATE RELEASED	OFFICER	ENLISTED	SERVICE NUMBER (If unknown, write "Unknown")
a. ACTIVE				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. RESERVE				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. NATIONAL GUARD				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. PLEASE LIST LAST FOUR DUTY STATIONS, IF KNOWN: 1. _____

2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

7. IS THIS PERSON DECEASED? NO YES - MUST provide Date of Death if veteran is deceased: _____

8. DID THIS PERSON RETIRE FROM MILITARY SERVICE? NO YES

SECTION II - INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

1. CHECK THE ITEM(S) YOU ARE REQUESTING:

DD Form 214 or equivalent: Year(s) in which form(s) issued to veteran (Date of Separation):
This form contains information used to verify military service. An UNDELETED DD Form 214 is ordinarily required to determine eligibility for benefits. If you request a DELETED copy, the following items will be blacked out: authority for separation, reason for separation, membership eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and, for separations after June 30, 1974, character of separation and dates of time lost. Please note - recent veterans may be able to request a DD Form 214 through milConnect by visiting: <https://www.va.gov/fevers/get-military-service-records>
An UNDELETED copy will be sent UNLESS YOU SPECIFY A DELETED COPY by checking this box: I want a DELETED copy.

Official Military Personnel File (OMPF): The OMPF may include duty stations and assignments, training and qualifications, awards and decorations received, disciplinary actions, administrative remarks, retirement and/or discharge information (including DD Form 214, Report of Separation, or equivalent), and other personnel actions. Detailed information about the veteran's participation in battles and their military engagements is NOT contained in the record.

Medical Records: Includes health (enrollment), extended ambulatory, and dental records. If inpatient/hospitalization records are requested, please specify below:
 I request inpatient/hospitalization records from _____ (facility), last treated in _____ (year). (MDTE: Fields are required)
If available, you may receive copies of inpatient narrative summaries, operative reports, discharge summaries, etc. contained in the record.

Dental Records: Please check this box if ONLY dental records are needed from the medical record.

Other (Please Specify): _____

2. PURPOSE: (Providing information about the purpose of the request is voluntary; however, it may help to provide the best possible response and may result in a faster reply. Information provided will in no way be used to make a decision to deny the request.)

Benefits (explain) Employment VA Loan Programs Medical Genealogy Connection Personal Other (explain)

Explain here: _____

SECTION III - RETURN ADDRESS AND SIGNATURE

1. REQUESTER NAME: _____

2. RELATIONSHIP TO VETERAN: _____

3. I am the MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER OR VETERAN identified in
Section 1, above.

I am the VETERAN'S LEGAL GUARDIAN (MUST submit copy of Court
Appointment) or AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (MUST submit copy of
Authorization Letter or Power of Attorney)

OTHER (Specify): _____

4. SEND INFORMATION/DOCUMENTS TO:

(Please print or type. See item 4 on accompanying instructions.)

Xavier Bianchi Veteran Advocate Santa Cruz County

Name _____

842 Front St. _____

Street Address _____

Apt. # _____

Santa Cruz _____

State _____

ZIP Code _____

City _____

831-281-0388 _____

831-458-7116 _____

Daytime Phone _____

Fax Number _____

xavier.bianchi@santacruzcountyca.gov _____

Email Address _____

5. AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE: I declare (or certify, verify, or state)
under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that
the information in this Section 3 is true and correct and that I authorize the release
of the requested information. (See items 2a or 2b on the accompanying instructions
above. Without the Authorization Signature of the return, next-of-kin or deceased
veteran, veteran's legal guardian, authorized government agent, or other authorized
representative, only limited information can be released under the request is
denied. No signature is required if the request is for archival records.)

Signature Required - Do not print _____

Date _____

* This form is available at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html> or the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) website.⁴

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

FERNANDO GERALDO, CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER
MAILING: P.O. BOX 1112, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061
PH: (831) 454-2159 • FAX: (831) 454-2127 • PH: (831) 766-8771 • FAX: (831) 763-8233

"A Safe and Thriving Community with Justice for All"

Authorization for Use, Exchange, and/or Discharge of Confidential Information

Purpose of disclosure: To help assess and determine progress and compliance while under supervision.

 General Release**Signature:** _____

General Consent: This consent remains in effect until my evaluation for or participation in services. Recipients of this information may re-disclose and use this information only in connection with their official duties.

Check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> Bantos Unidos	<input type="checkbox"/> ALL	<input type="checkbox"/> Encompass	<input type="checkbox"/> Janus	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Discipline
<input type="checkbox"/> County Office of Educ.		<input type="checkbox"/> First 5 Santa Cruz County	<input type="checkbox"/> Leaders in Community Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sobriety Works
<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Court		<input type="checkbox"/> Goodwill	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentors	<input type="checkbox"/> Streets to Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution Center		<input type="checkbox"/> Hope Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarch Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Center
		<input type="checkbox"/> Health Services Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> New Life Community Svc.	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

 Mental Health (MH)/Medical **Signature:** _____

For Mental Health/Medical Consent: A recipient of medical information pursuant to this authorization may not further disclose the medical information except in accordance with a new authorization that meets the requirements of California Health and Safety Code section 56.11, or as specifically required or permitted by law.

Check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> Bantos Unidos	<input type="checkbox"/> ALL	<input type="checkbox"/> Encompass	<input type="checkbox"/> Janus	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Discipline
<input type="checkbox"/> County Office of Educ.		<input type="checkbox"/> First 5 Santa Cruz County	<input type="checkbox"/> Leaders in Community Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sobriety Works
<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Court		<input type="checkbox"/> Goodwill	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentors	<input type="checkbox"/> Streets to Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution Center		<input type="checkbox"/> Hope Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarch Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Center
		<input type="checkbox"/> Health Services Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> New Life Community Svc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

 Substance Use Disorder (SUD) **Signature:** _____

For Substance Use Disorder Consent: Substance use disorder records are protected under the federal regulations governing Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records, 42 C.F.R. Part 2, and cannot be disclosed without my written consent unless otherwise provided for in the regulations.

Check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> Bantos Unidos	<input type="checkbox"/> ALL	<input type="checkbox"/> Encompass	<input type="checkbox"/> Janus	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Discipline
<input type="checkbox"/> County Office of Educ.		<input type="checkbox"/> First 5 Santa Cruz County	<input type="checkbox"/> Leaders in Community Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sobriety Works
<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Court		<input type="checkbox"/> Goodwill	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentors	<input type="checkbox"/> Streets to Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution Center		<input type="checkbox"/> Hope Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarch Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Center
		<input type="checkbox"/> Health Services Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> New Life Community Svc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

I, _____, _____, _____

(Print name of client or client's representative)

(Print date of birth)

hereby authorize the Santa Cruz County Probation Department to disclose and receive confidential information contained in their file to the agencies indicated above.

I understand that any of this information may be used by the Probation Officer in any report to the Court and, therefore, be available to the District Attorney and my attorney.

I may revoke my consent verbally or in writing at any time (except to the extent that action has already been taken), and if not earlier revoked, it shall terminate one year from today on (date): _____.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of client or client's representative

Witnessed by: _____

Signature

Legal relationship of above signer: _____

Date: _____

□

□

□

Collaborative Courts Referral packet forms:

[Collaborative Courts Referral packet](#)

Dr. Marni Sandoval, Director
Behavioral Health Division
Health Services Agency
County of Santa Cruz

DRAFT Re: Letter of Recommendation for 2026–2032 AI Training Initiative

Dear Dr. Sandoval,

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board recommends a six-year AI training initiative (2026–2032), with approximately \$75,000–\$100,000 per year in 2026–27 and 2027–28 for a "build-out" phase, followed by lower maintenance funding, to train 60–70 Behavioral Health administrative staff in the safe, ethical use of AI. This will increase service delivery, reduce stress and burnout, and lessen the need for additional administrative hiring.^{[1][2][3]}

AI tools can reduce documentation time by 40–50%, saving 800–1,000 hours per FTE annually while improving job satisfaction. A conservative 25–30% efficiency gain for Behavioral Health administrative staff could yield 10–12 "effective" FTEs over six years, avoiding \$720,000–\$1.1 million in hiring costs at \$90,000–\$110,000 per FTE (excluding overtime savings).^{[2][3][4][5]}

Two-Year Build-Out (2026–27, 2027–28): \$75,000–\$100,000/year

Train 60–70 staff in two tracks:

- **Intensive (25–30 staff):** 2–3 UCSC Extension courses (Generative AI Fundamentals, healthcare AI) plus BH-specific workshops on workflows, privacy, ethics.^{[6][7]}
- **Foundational (35–40 staff):** 1 UCSC course plus tailored half-day sessions.^[6]

At ~\$625/course, 85–100 enrollments cost \$53,000–\$62,500 total. Remaining funds cover curriculum adaptation, staff time, UCSC/Cabrillo partnerships, and implementation support.^{[7][8][6]}

Four-Year Maintenance (2028–29 to 2031–32)

Lower annual funding for:

- Refresher/advanced training
- New staff onboarding
- Workflow optimization with new EHR and regulations^[11]

Six-Year Service Delivery Targets

- **2027–28:** 20–25% faster turnaround, 10–15% more throughput (contracts, reports, credentialing)^{[4][9]}
- **2028–30:** 30–35% faster, 20–25% more throughput^[3]
- **2030–32:** 35–40% faster, 25–30% more throughput with full integration^[9]

These gains mean timelier services for clients despite constrained staffing.^[1]

UCSC's AI Center and certificates provide technical depth; Cabrillo offers accessible workforce training. With governance, equity safeguards, and metrics (turnaround time, overtime, satisfaction), this initiative enhances service delivery and protects staff from burnout.^{[8][10][11][2]}

The Board urges including this \$75,000–\$100,000/year build-out (2026–27, 2027–28) in Behavioral Health's budget to generate 10–12 effective FTEs, save \$720K–\$1.1M, and improve service timeliness over six years.^{[2][3][1]}

Sincerely,

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board

1. <https://www2.santacruzcountyca.gov/CAO/StrategicPlan/Budget/2025-26/dept/24>
2. <https://drchrono.com/blog/2025/11/how-to-reduce-administrative-burden-in-healthcare-with-technology/>
3. <https://www.inquira.health/en/blog/the-roi-of-ai-powered-care-administration-reducing-costs-while-improving-care>
4. <https://thebioscan.com/index.php/pub/article/download/3223/2714/5803>
5. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38499053/>
6. <https://www.ucsc-extension.edu/courses/generative-ai-fundamentals>
7. <https://www.ucsc-extension.edu/series/artificial-intelligence>
8. <https://pulivarthigroup.com/californias-behavioral-health-crisis-addressing-workforce-shortages/>
9. <https://kissflow.com/workflow/impact-of-ai-workflow-automation-on-healthcare-efficiency/>
10. <https://admissions.ucsc.edu/programs/artificial-intelligence>
11. <https://genai.ucsc.edu>