

County of Riverside
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJJPC)
INSPECTION REPORT - JUVENILE FACILITY
2020

Facility Name and Address	Indio Juvenile Hall 47665 Oasis Street, Indio, CA 92201
Date of Inspection	October 19, 2020
Phone	(760) 863-7600
Contact Person and Title	Elias Porras, Division Director
JJPC Inspectors	Laurel Cook and Robert Lippert

Staff Interviewed

	Name	Title	Agency
1.	Elisa Porras	Division Director	Probation
2.	Michael Brinkman	Assistant Director	Probation
3.	Emil Fischer	Supervising Probation Officer	Probation
4.	Tonya Strickland	Senior Clinical Therapist	Behavioral Health

Agency Inspections

Agency	Date of Last Inspection	Comments/ Concerns
JJPC	June 6, 2019	
Building & Safety	October 26, 2020	
Health	July 18, 2019	2020 inspection suspended due to COVID
Court	November 20, 2020	
RCOE	October 28, 2020	
BSCC	January 28-30, 2020	
Behavioral Health	July 18, 2019	2020 inspection suspended due to COVID
Fire Marshall	January 19, 2019	

S – Satisfactory

N.I. – Needs Improvement

	S	N.I.	Comments
Building Exterior	X		
Building Interior	X		
Field(s)	X		
Court yard(s)	X		
Other	X		Postings: Activity Calendar, Programming Safety: Smoke Alarms, Fire Extinguishers, Evacuation Plan

Additional Information

Indio Juvenile Hall houses male youth ages 14 to 20 years of age. There are 50 sworn staff, 18 support staff, in addition to 10 correctional health professionals, and 2 behavioral health therapists.

On October 19, 2020, Commissioners Lippert and Cook completed an inspection of Indio Juvenile Hall where we met with Director Porras, Assistant Director Brinkman, Therapist Tonya Strickland of Behavioral Health and Supervising Probation Officer Emil Fischer.

A walk thru of the facility revealed, although dated, it is well maintained and the youth who we spoke with in casual conversation, appeared to be satisfied with programs provided, educational opportunities, recreation and staff interaction. The youth appeared to be proud that they and their peers had not been involved in a physical altercation for over 60 days and they were invested in continuing that achievement.

Grievances: There were only 2 grievances to date for 2020 and they were about the lack of in person visiting. NOTE: Due to COVID-19 all visitation has been via zoom.

Visiting: It is reported that it has been successful because the youth can visit with sibling, pets, well as, parents and the home. Additional zoom call opportunities are afforded youth as part of their incentives of the behavioral modification program. It is estimated that 95% of the youth receive additional weekly ‘visits’ with family via zoom.

Programs: Youth participate in programs offered and one was thought to be unique and worth mentioning. On Sept. 18, 2020, the registered dietitian provided youth with nutritional education and talked about how food impacts our bodies. Her presentation was followed by a hands-on exercise where the youth learned how to construct a healthy sandwich.

Education: Each youth has a computer and staff monitors the classroom while the teacher instructs via zoom. One of the teachers volunteers to be on site a few days a week for in person teaching. CPO Juan Damian contacted College of the Desert and together they created a program for those youth who have completed their high school requirements and remain detained pending further order of the court. The youth receive an introduction to college, develop ‘soft’ skills, and focus on career development. Mr. Damian

was the recipient of the CPOC award and on behalf of the JJDPC, I congratulate you for a job well done. (see ADDENDUM #1)

Incentives: In addition to additional visiting opportunities with family via zoom, the youth also have the opportunity to participate in the ‘Super Saturday’ party. Youth who have achieved this privilege are rewarded with special activities and menu items prepared by kitchen staff based on feedback from the youth regarding their food preferences. These two incentives are popular with the youth. (see ADDENDUM#2)

Counseling: Two therapists are on site; one behavioral health and one substance abuse specialist. All staff work together and within 72 hours of admission to the facility, the youth has been evaluated by treatment staff. Substance Abuse counseling and Moral Recognition Therapy is provided. Youth come together, as a group of 5. Staff work with motivated youth who are transferred to another facility by allowing the youth to take his books and continue his treatment vs having to start over at level 1. Groups meet weekly.

Correctional Health: Medical staff are available daily. 1 RN is on staff from 6 a.m. – 6: p.m. and another RN is on staff from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. During COVID, staff meet with correctional health daily to develop protocols as needed. Every youth who is detained is tested and housed in the secure hallway pending negative results of their COVID-19 test.

Some changes as a result of COVID-19:

- *Youth no longer have meals or visiting in the dining hall
- *Visits are via zoom
- *Classroom instruction is primarily via zoom
- *Haircuts have been suspended

Staff are diligent and work to minimize the trauma to youth as a result of COVID-19

Conversation with youth: Commissioners had the opportunity to speak with youth who had graduated their high school program and were in the living unit awaiting time for their college classes. This casual conversation revealed the youth felt secure, free of altercations in the facility, are receptive to programs offered and had positive attitude towards staff. It appears they are striving to achieve positive goals, not only individually but as a group.

Observation: It appears staff are committed to providing a positive environment and work together as a team, to do so. Staff are to be commended, not only, for their continued work with the youth in ‘normal’ times but even more so with the additional challenges they face personally and professionally during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Score Board: a visual board at the employee entrance was explained. Goals are listed for each unit. Staff have a quick visual of goals which are measurable and readily identifiable. Staff work together and the teamwork toward a common goal is evident. At the time of the inspection there had been no physical altercations for 60. The youth and staff reset the goal to 90 days and they are working to achieve that milestone.

Administration advised the cameras will soon be replaced and they are looking to install a new fire alarm system. Although dated, the facility is well maintained and clean.

NOTE: A follow up conversation with Director Porras revealed the youth had reached 120 days without a physical altercation. The 90 days celebration was food purchased at Applebee’s and to celebrate 120 days, outside meat was purchased for BBQ. Staff served street tacos.

ADDENDUM #1

CPOC AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Recognition award given to a probation employee who has made significant contributions that have had a statewide or far-reaching impact on probation.

Juan Damian | Riverside County

Juan Damian has spent the last 20 years of his career shaping the lives of the young people in our community as a stellar Probation Correctional Officer at Indio Juvenile Hall. Since day one, Mr. Damian has demonstrated unwavering levels of dedication and commitment to both the Riverside County Probation Department and the youth he has sworn to serve. To that end, he embodies the essence of the California Probation Officers Award of Excellence as he has made significant contributions to the youth in his care. Currently, the juvenile justice system is undergoing a historic transformation. Mr. Damian has been at the forefront of this change and is resolute on creating a culture that is focused on positive youth development.

In addition to Mr. Damian's primary assignment, he has willingly, without hesitation, taken on the graduate program at Indio Juvenile Hall. He immediately assessed the needs and interests of our youth and began interfacing with representatives from Riverside Community College and College of the Desert to design a program tailored to them. Currently, 10 youth have committed to a 7-week program where they will receive an introduction to college, develop soft skills, and focus on career development. In the partnership with College of the Desert, Mr. Damian is evaluating the hospitality industry and assessing educational pathways that can position our youth for success, to include certification in AC repair. Mr. Damian's vision for the program is limitless. He is also coordinating to have ICEV access available for those youth who are interested in various certificate programs to gain entry level employment upon release. Spearheading this program in and of itself is something to be proud of; however, what truly stands out is the heart and compassion that Mr. Damian puts forth as he works with the youth. At the end of the day, it is the forged relationships and not always the program that change a life. Through a safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment, Juan has allowed these youth to see beyond today. Their conversations around the living unit have been elevated as they speak about their future and contributions to society. The youth now have something they look forward to, one student stated, "The graduate program has helped me realize all the mistakes I've done should not stop me from chasing my true dreams. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue my education. Thank you, RCP." Post-Secondary education is a critical resource for our youth as they look to a new structure that supports them as they assess new opportunities for a meaningful future. Mr. Damian's contributions to the department and the youth of Riverside County have been invaluable.

Chief Probation Officers of California www.cpoc.org

ADDENDUM #2

The positivity, of staff and youth, during the inspection was noticed and it was validated when the following statement was shared on the Facebook page of Riverside County Probation Department.

"We're proud of the dedicated staff at Indio Juvenile Hall who received a note of appreciation from a youth's guardian:

"I appreciate the IJH staff for the care and companionate treatment of my grandson. IJH staff go above and beyond. I am very thankful for the treatment and incentives given to my grandson and wanted staff to know how much I appreciate them."

Kudos to the IJH staff who possess an unwavering commitment to the youth. #ChangingLives"

We wish to thank the Managers and Staff for their assistance with our inspection.

Respectfully submitted by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJJPC).

Robert Lippert

Commissioner / Inspector /

Date

Laurel Cook

Commissioner / Chair/ Inspector / Report

October 19, 2020

Date

cc: Juvenile Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Chief Probation Officer
Chief Deputy Probation Officer of Institutions
Division Director of Facility
Board of State & Community Corrections (BSCC)

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors
County Executive Officer
Director of Behavioral Health Services (RUHS)
Office of Education Executive Director

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