

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



ITEM: 3.4
(ID # 28364)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, July 29, 2025

FROM : EXECUTIVE OFFICE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE OFFICE: Approval of the Response to the 2024-2025 Grand Jury Report: Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids? and Directive for the Response to be Sent to the Grand Jury, Presiding Judge, and County Clerk-Recorder.; All Districts. [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve, with or without modification, the attached response to the 2024-25 Grand Jury Report: Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?; and
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to immediately forward the Board's finalized responses to the Grand Jury, the Presiding Judge, and the County Clerk-Recorder.


ACTION: Policy


Kimberly Britt, ASST COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER 7/24/2025

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Perez, seconded by Supervisor Gutierrez and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Medina, Spiegel, Washington, Perez and Gutierrez
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: July 29, 2025
xc: EO, Grand Jury, Presiding Judge, Recorder, COB

Kimberly A. Rector
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
NET COUNTY COST	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A			Budget Adjustment:	No
			For Fiscal Year:	24/25

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BACKGROUND:

Summary

On April 29, 2025 the Riverside County Grand Jury released the Grand Jury Report: Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids? April 29, 2025. Penal Code Section 933(c) requires Board of Supervisors comment on the Grand Jury's recommendations pertaining to matters under the Board's control. In addition, responses must be provided to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court within 90 days of receipt of the report.

ATTACHMENTS:

- ATTACHMENT A. 2024-2025 Grand Jury Report: Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?**
- ATTACHMENT B. Grand Jury Response: 2024-2025 Grand Jury Report: Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?**


Minh C. Tran, County Counsel

7/23/2025


Tina Grande

7/24/2025

2024-2025 Grand Jury Report
Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?
April 29, 2025
Board of Supervisors*

* The Board of Supervisors' response is composed of the required responses to Findings and Recommendations by county departments assigned by the Grand Jury in the Grand Jury report. Responses by Behavioral Health are further noted in the report.

GRAND JURY FINDINGS:

Grand Jury Finding #1: Medical

F-1 There are not regularly scheduled, certified medical professionals on staff at HHCYC. On site behavioral health specialists are on call for emergencies and present less than 24 hours a day.

Response to Grand Jury Finding #1:

Respondent agrees with finding.

HHCYC does not currently have certified medical staff on-site. However, HHCYC has established a partnership with Riverside University Health System (RUHS) to ensure necessary medical care is accessible to youth.

RUHS Behavioral Health: Behavioral Health services are not on-site 24 hours per day. As of March 2025, a Behavioral Health Specialist III is assigned to the site full-time on a 9/80 schedule (9 a.m.–6:30 p.m., RDO Friday), while the Transitional Age Youth Peer Support Specialist is on-site Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. A Senior Clinical Therapist and an additional Clinical Therapist are currently in recruitment to expand this team. Prior to March, Behavioral Health provided evening coverage four days per week (Monday through Thursday) with two staff per evening.

Grand Jury Finding #2: Security

F-2 RSO deputies are assigned to HHCYC from 12 p.m. to 12 a.m. This amount of time is insufficient as the children tend to act out after RSO deputies go off duty at 12 a.m.

Response to Grand Jury Finding #2:

Respondent disagrees partially with the finding.

HHCYC contracts with a round-the-clock private security firm for facility monitoring, crisis de-escalation, and staff support in maintaining safety protocols. However, security personnel must also operate within a trauma-informed framework to prevent an overly restrictive or punitive environment that nullifies a trauma-informed approach. The RUHS Behavioral Health Crisis Response Team is available on call during nighttime and weekend hours and prepared to appropriately respond to youth in crisis. Our priority is to ensure that the necessary behavioral health supports and wrap-around services are readily available to help each and every youth at HHCYC effectively address the traumatic roots of challenges that underpin behaviors.

As a state-licensed therapeutic, home-like center, HHCYC alongside Riverside University Health System and other health and human service collaborators, is expanding on-site and community-based mental health and health resources and supports. These resources provide trauma-informed care for foster youth, many of whom are demonstrating behaviors rooted in the psychological and emotional distress of abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, and placement disruptions. Trained behavioral health staff have increased their presence on campus throughout the week to offer support, interventions, and behavioral management for youth dealing with trauma-related challenges.

At HHCYC, we are actively engaging with the entire behavioral, medical and public health system to ensure appropriate supports are available to meet the unique and complex needs of each youth and child served at HHCYC. Facilities upgrades will incorporate trauma-informed safety-oriented design features that include clear sight lines, visual access to staff and community, clearly defined spaces for people inside and out, appropriate day and nighttime lighting.

As a community of many partners committed to the wellbeing of Riverside County's youth, HHCYC is at the forefront and committed to a sustainable long-term initiative to change the trajectory of foster youth whose complex behaviors add to the challenges of long-term placement but who deserve a nurturing and stable long-term home, and the critical emotional and behavioral health supports they need to prepare them for success in that environment.

Grand Jury Finding #3: Staff Member Oversight and Authority

F-3 Staff members are unable to enforce basic rules due to guidelines contained in Foster Youth Bill of Rights (FYBR), that were passed in California in 2001.

Response to Grand Jury Finding #3:

Respondent disagrees partially with the finding.

The California Foster Youth Bill of Rights (FYBR), outlined in Welfare and Institutions Code § 16001.9 and adopted by the State Legislature, provides essential protections to

ensure foster youth are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. These rights, including privacy, communication, and personal autonomy, are particularly critical for youth who have experienced trauma, displacement, or abuse.

At HHCYC, staff must navigate the complex balance between safeguarding these individual rights and safeguarding the safety of all youth, visitors, and staff. While the FYBR establishes necessary protections, certain provisions pose challenges and require navigation by staff to maintain a consistently secure environment.

For example, under the FYBR youth have the right to refuse psychotropic medication and no punitive actions may be taken. Medication compliance among youth with psychiatric disorders is a recognized treatment challenge. On-site trained behavioral health staff are engaging youth at HHCYC to provide behavioral health interventions and collaborate with staff and youth to develop strategies that respect the youth's autonomy but empower the youth to act in their best self-interest.

Similarly, limitations on physical searches without particularized suspicion complicate efforts to prevent the introduction of contraband, such as drugs or weapons. The FYBR also guarantees youth the right to communicate freely with family and supportive adults, a principle that staff strongly uphold. Staff at HHCYC exercise reasonable and prudent parenting standards, which permit them to place reasonable limitations on cell phone usage to safeguard the health and safety of a youth.

The FYBR does not explicitly grant foster youth the freedom to leave placements at will, however the FYBR limits actions that staff can take when youth go AWOL, other than notifying law enforcement and child welfare partners. The FYBR emphasizes the importance of treating AWOL cases with care, prioritizing re-engagement and access to appropriate supports. HHCYC staff employ multiple crisis communication tactics to dissuade youth from departing the campus without authorization.

To address these challenges, staff utilize de-escalation strategies, individualized safety plans, high levels of supervision, emotional regulation techniques, and enrichment activities tailored to the needs of each youth in care. With a daily maximum capacity of 48 youth on-site, HHCYC maintains a strong commitment to ongoing improvements in safety and security measures. If staff determine a youth is imminently dangerous to themselves or others, staff will implement de-escalation strategies and call the appropriate authority.

DPSS, alongside our Riverside County partners, fully affirms that the FYBR is grounded in trauma-informed principles designed to uphold dignity, stability, and healing for every youth in care, ensuring services are delivered in the least restrictive environments possible. At the same time, we recognize that a small, highly vulnerable subset of this population may require enhanced safeguards and tailored support structures to protect their well-being, promote positive outcomes, and uphold their best interests. For these youth, blanket approaches fall short. Therefore, we are committed to a more nuanced

response that balances individual needs with the broader values of empowerment, choice, and care inherent in the FYBR.

Grand Jury Finding #4: Transportation

F-4 Presently, HHCYC staff transport children to schools throughout the county and pick them up after school. This is an undue burden on staff members, waste of resources, and potential liability to RIVCO.

Response to Grand Jury Finding #4:

Respondent disagrees wholly with finding.

We respectfully disagree with the assertion that HHCYC staff transporting children to school and other activities constitutes an undue burden, a misuse of resources, or an unacceptable liability to the county. On the contrary, providing transportation is a fundamental and necessary responsibility of staff operating a temporary youth shelter and serving as placement providers, as outlined in the HHCYC Program Statement.

All staff responsible for transporting youth are properly trained in child supervision, behavior management, and vehicle safety. They also undergo background checks and are trained in emergency protocols to ensure youth safety during transport. Staff use county-owned vehicles that are regularly maintained and inspected, and children are transported using age-appropriate safety restraints, in full compliance with California law and county policy.

Staff at HHCYC are caregivers charged with the care and supervision of all youth at HHCYC, responsible for meeting the day-to-day needs of youth in care, including ensuring their timely attendance at school, medical appointments, court dates, and extracurricular activities. Transporting children to these obligations is a standard expectation across licensed foster homes, group homes, and temporary shelters.

Given that HHCYC is designed for very short-term stays, often lasting just a few days, coordinating transportation through local school districts or other external providers is not always feasible. The process of arranging school bus routes or specialized transportation services can take longer than the child's entire stay at the facility. Relying solely on external systems would delay services and disrupt continuity of education or care.

Children placed at HHCYC are often in crisis or transition. Many may be unwilling or emotionally unable to attend school or other appointments without personalized support. HHCYC staff—who have rapport with the youth and training in trauma-informed care—are best positioned to de-escalate resistance, ensure attendance, and supervise behavior during transport. Outsourcing this responsibility could pose greater risks, both for the youth and for any third-party providers unfamiliar with their needs.

While transportation always involves some level of risk, the county minimizes liability through structured training, vehicle safety standards, supervision ratios, and comprehensive insurance coverage. The controlled use of trained staff and dedicated vehicles is often safer and more consistent than relying on external vendors unfamiliar with county procedures or the unique needs of foster youth.

In conclusion, the transportation of children by HHCYC staff is neither excessive nor avoidable—it is a practical, efficient, and necessary function aligned with the mission of HHCYC and the responsibilities of placement providers. Attempting to offload this responsibility would likely cause delays, disrupt essential services, and increase the risk of non-attendance or behavioral incidents. For these reasons, staff-led transportation should be recognized as a best practice, not a burden.

Grand Jury Finding #5: Transportation

F-5 Commercial rideshare companies may well be picking up underage children in violation of company policies.

Response to Grand Jury Finding #5:

Respondent agrees with finding.

We agree that commercial rideshare companies may be picking up underage children in violation of their own company policies.

Most major rideshare providers—such as Uber and Lyft—explicitly prohibit transporting unaccompanied minors under the age of 18 unless the ride is arranged through a specific program that allows for youth transport (such as Uber for Teens, which still has age and consent requirements). However, in practice, drivers may not always verify a passenger’s age or may be unaware of the policy, leading to unauthorized rides involving minors.

This presents safety, legal, and liability concerns, especially in the context of foster youth. Many of these children may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, or other harms. When minors arrange rides, the rideshare companies are exposed to legal risk, and the children may be placed in unmonitored, unsafe situations.

Because of these concerns, HHCYC staff avoid relying on commercial rideshare services for transporting unaccompanied minors, and instead continue using trained personnel, authorized transportation services, or court-approved alternatives to ensure youth safety and compliance with both company policies and child welfare regulations.

Grand Jury Finding #6: Activities

F-6 HHCYC areas such as the gym, farm, and classrooms, are being underutilized for activities.

Response to Grand Jury Finding #6:

Respondent disagrees partially with the finding.

In June 2023, the County of Riverside acquired the 120-acre Childhelp, USA property to establish short-term (72-hour) residential-style accommodations for foster youth in transition. Faced with a shortage of qualified foster homes, the County—like many counties nationwide—sometimes had to place youth in social services offices or hotels under staff supervision overnight. By purchasing a property with four cottages and a total of 48 beds, Riverside County was able to quickly increase its bed capacity and establish a centralized, trauma-informed space, ensuring youth could receive temporary housing in a stable and supportive environment. Harmony Haven Children and Youth Center (HHCYC) became Riverside County's first and only state licensed 72-Hour Transitional Shelter Care Facility for foster youth in March 2024. The scope of HHCYC's licensure does not extend to the entire 120-acre campus.

Rather the footprint of the transitional 72-hour shelter known as HHCYC is limited to the cottages and a newly renovated intake center on roughly seven acres, which serve as the licensed and designated spaces for youth in foster care transition.

Unlike Childhelp, USA, which offered extensive amenities such as a swimming pool and farm animals for younger children in long-term residential care, HHCYC staff are dedicated to addressing the immediate needs of Riverside County foster youth of all ages during their brief transitional period before placement in a stable home, in accordance with HHCYC's state licensure. HHCYC staff prioritize trauma-informed supervision and smooth daily operations, ensuring youth receive essential emotional and behavioral support.

Currently, and in collaboration with the County of Riverside, select campus facilities, including the gymnasium, basketball courts, and outdoor ball fields are regularly utilized to support a wide range of sports and team-building activities for HHCYC youth. While these spaces remain active, many other on-site facilities are undergoing extensive renovations to meet building and code standards for future uses outlined in the site master plan.

We recognize the essential role that physically and emotionally enriching activities and on-site academic opportunities play in supporting youth at HHCYC. HHCYC is actively working to decrease the length of stay by expanding kinship care outreach and strengthening our processes and communications. To further enhance these resources, we are expanding on-site recreational, social and enrichment activities and programming.

HHCYC hopes to welcome a teacher and teacher's aide from Beaumont Unified School District within the year to facilitate hybrid learning, ensuring continued education for all foster youth during their transitions in care. We are fully committed to providing the very best experiences and outcomes for each youth who comes to HHCYC.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Grand Jury Recommendation #1: Medical

R-1 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that at least one medical professional be assigned at least part time to HHCYC. Dedicated, on-site behavioral health support should be expanded to 24-hours daily.

Based on Findings: F-1

Implementation: January 1, 2026

Financial Impact: Moderate to High

Response to Grand Jury Recommendation #1:

Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

Although this is not warranted or feasible DPSS is exploring options for on-site medical care with medical partners and will continue to partner with RUHS. DPSS has instituted the following processes in partnership with RUHS Medical Center and Clinics:

- **Express Care Services (Urgent Care/Walk-In):** RUHS and HHCYC have collaboratively developed a streamlined protocol to address urgent patient needs. For any acute medical concern, HHCYC staff can call a dedicated line to initiate a same-day video visit with RUHS Express Care. Based on the virtual assessment, the patient may: Require no further care, be scheduled for an in-person Express Care visit or be referred to the nearest emergency department for emergent treatment. Express Care is available Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., and on weekends from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. In-person visits are directed to the clinic on the main hospital campus in Moreno Valley at this time; virtual care is provided from the Express Care clinic in Lake Elsinore.
- **Routine Care:** For non-urgent needs, RUHS operates a specialized foster care clinic staffed by a physician and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). HHCYC has direct access, and appointments are scheduled within seven business days of the request. Routine care is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the pediatric clinic on the main hospital campus in Moreno Valley.
- **After-Hours Care:** For acute medical issues that arise outside of the hours noted above, HHCYC is responsible for ensuring the patient is directed to appropriate medical services based on the urgency and nature of the concern.

Additionally, RUHS Pharmacy Services has worked proactively with DPSS personnel at Harmony Haven to organize, safeguard and ensure proper medication distribution to youth. In April 2025, Pharmacy Services educated Harmony Haven staff on best practices for medication safety and provided guidance on setting up medication

carts. DPSS continues to partner with RUHS for continued training and support in proper medication handling.

RUHS Behavioral Health: DPSS is exploring options to provide 24-hour on-site behavioral health professional support to meet the needs of youth. RUHS-Behavioral Health's staffing model does not include 24-hour on-site coverage at HHCYC. RUHS-BH services are designed around a Monday through Friday schedule and structured to support treatment-focused engagement during regular business hours. RUHS-BH continues to partner with DPSS to ensure interim behavioral health services remain in place while DPSS explores long-term options and partnerships outside of RUHS to support potential 24-hour on-site care.

There is a consistent and structured behavioral health presence on campus during weekdays. RUHS-BH maintains a team of behavioral health staff that includes a Behavioral Health Specialist III (BHS III) and a Transitional Age Youth Peer Support Specialist (TAY PSS), who are physically present throughout the week and embedded as part of day-to-day operations.

It is important to clarify that the Mobile Crisis Management Team (MCMT) is not the primary behavioral health support model for HHCYC, as suggested on page 7 of the Grand Jury report. Although MCMT staff respond frequently to crises at the site, they are not embedded for ongoing treatment or case management services. Behavioral Health support is structured around treatment-focused roles during business hours, with emergency/crisis response support provided separately and coordinated as needed in partnership with HH leadership and RUHS-BH administrators.

Current behavioral health staffing at the Harmony Haven Children & Youth Center (HHCYC) includes a Behavioral Health Specialist III and a TAY Peer Support Specialist, with additional Clinical Therapist positions in recruitment. A 24-hour behavioral health coverage model has not been adopted, consistent with the structure and intent of the emergency shelter. Crisis response services remain available 24/7/365 through RUHS-BH's established Mobile Crisis infrastructure, and direct coordination with shelter leadership occurs regularly during off-hours.

In addition to the on-site team, Harmony Haven youth are supported by clinical staff from other RUHS-BH programs and facilities. The Banning Clinic supervisor oversees the BH team at Harmony Haven and serves as a liaison between the clinic and on-site staff to coordinate psychiatry, individual and group therapy, nursing support, case management, and peer/parent support as needed. Some youth receive services at the Banning Clinic directly, while others are connected to specialized programs based on acuity, including the Youth Hospital Intervention Program (YHIP), Youth Connect, and Youth and Family Community Services (YFCS).

In May 2025, RUHS-BH was awarded a Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) grant through Proposition 1 to build the Harmony Haven Children & Youth Wellness Center on the same campus. This facility is scheduled for completion

in spring/summer 2028 and will be designed to deliver an expanded range of behavioral health services that directly align with the core concerns raised. The new center will include:

- A 16-bed Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility
- A 30-bed Adolescent Residential Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Program
- A 15-station Mental Health Urgent Care for same-day behavioral health support
- A behavioral health outpatient clinic for mental health and substance use services

These services will allow or coordinated, developmentally appropriate care aligned with youth and family needs, without requiring 24-hour embedded behavioral health staffing in the shelter itself. This expansion reflects RUHS-BH's continued investment in strengthening the continuum of care for vulnerable youth in Riverside County.

The expansion reflects a system-wide investment in improving care delivery and bridging service gaps for vulnerable youth, ultimately supporting the goals outlined by the Civil Grand Jury in this recommendation.

Grand Jury Recommendation #2: Security

R-2 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that RSO expand their presence to 24 hours per day and increase the number of deputies by two for a total of four on rotating shifts.

Based on Findings: F-2

Implementation: January 1, 2026

Financial Impact: High

Response to Grand Jury Recommendation #2:

Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The vital role our law enforcement partners fulfill in the safety of foster youth, staff, and guests at HH CYC is critical. The presence of law enforcement should be reserved for high-risk situations, critical incidents, or times of peak census. HH CYC remains committed to a collaborative relationship with law enforcement, engaging as needed. DPSS is working with behavioral health partners to secure a behavioral health professional for 24/7 on-site coverage to assist with de-escalation, recognizing that youth at HH CYC often display behaviors rooted in trauma and emotional distress.

HH CYC is designed to be a nurturing safe haven, staffed by social service and behavioral health professionals equipped to support youth who have experienced abuse, trauma, neglect, and exploitation. When a youth displays behaviors that may lead to harm to themselves or others, HH CYC staff initiate trauma-informed de-escalation strategies. RUHS Behavioral Health staff, when on-site, support these efforts

based on clinical need rather than functioning as a crisis response team. During evenings and weekends, RUHS-BH's 24/7 Mobile Crisis Response Team remains available to respond when clinically appropriate. On-site behavioral health services continue to expand toward a more robust array of clinical supports tailored to the needs of youth in care.

All HHCYC and RUHS staff who engage with youth are professionally trained in trauma-informed care. RUHS-BH staff receive training in non-violent crisis intervention (NCI) and evidence-based practices that support youth facing behavioral and emotional challenges rooted in trauma. Private on-site security guards are available 24/7 to provide additional support to youth and staff as needed. These guards receive crisis de-escalation training to help them identify signs of potential escalation, notify appropriate staff, and assist in managing situations with sensitivity and minimal disruption.

Grand Jury Recommendation #3: Staff Member Oversight and Authority

R-3 DPSS should contact the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to identify any flexibilities in following the provisions of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights. Providing staff members with the ability to limit the children's use of cell phones, reject their refusal to receive prescribed medications, or attend school, will give them greater influence in preventing disruptive episodes. DPSS should provide all communications between CDSS on this matter to provide evidence that they have pursued this issue.

Based on Findings: F-3

Implementation: January 1, 2026

Financial Impact: Minor to Moderate

Response to Grand Jury Recommendation #3:

Recommendation has been implemented.

The Foster Youth Bill of Rights (FYBR) is a crucial and important safeguard for youth in foster care, yet it remains a complex state law to operationalize in child welfare. Ensuring youth receive the respect, protection, and opportunities they deserve requires ongoing communication and collaboration with key stakeholders at a statewide level and, ultimately, legislative action.

One of the most complex and frequent challenges is when a youth in care refuses to take their prescribed psychotropic medication. While the Foster Youth Bill of Rights protects their autonomy and decision making, refusing necessary treatment can have profound adverse effects on a youth's well-being, their behaviors, and the overall foster care environment.

Social workers, often the strongest advocates for youth in care, must navigate the difficult balance of honoring each youth's individual experiences and decisions, while recognizing that a decision to forego needed medication is not in a youth's best interest.

In its daily operations, HHCYC will continue to consistently consult, and problem solve, with CDSS through regular technical assistance calls regarding complex-care youth. Examples of topics discussed during these calls include placement preservation, emergency removals, hospital release, 14-day notices soon to expire or expired. When issues arise, CDSS also provides tailored training to HHCYC to assist in developing protocols and harm reduction techniques.

In addition, the Catalyst Center is a technical assistance and capacity-building hub that is authorized by CDSS to conduct the Youth Resource Workgroup. This workgroup is designed to help Riverside County problem solve issues surrounding our most complex youth. Riverside County Children's Services and HHCYC representatives routinely utilize the Youth Resource Workgroup. These meetings are orchestrated to develop effective harm-reduction techniques, solve medication non-adherence, decrease at-risk behaviors and curtail the inappropriate use of cell phones.

CDSS representatives also regularly participate in HHCYC's "Think Together Thursdays." This weekly platform provides the opportunity for an open dialogue to communicate issues and concerns and receive feedback directly from CDSS.

As a result of our regular consultation with CDSS, HHCYC is expanding implementation of a motivational system to modify behaviors including mitigating the inappropriate use of cell phones, refusing to attend school, AWOLing, medication non-adherence and youth behaviors that present a danger to themselves and others. HHCYC is updating its Standard Operating Procedures to reflect these efforts.

Riverside County remains committed to ongoing advocacy and collaboration with state lawmakers, CDSS, and the courts to develop meaningful legislative solutions that strike a balanced approach—upholding the rights of youth while ensuring their safety and the safety of those around them. We are forging impactful alliances with regional and statewide associations to advance thoughtful, equity-driven policy priorities that illuminate and untangle the ambiguities in the FYBR. As one voice we continue to convene with state policymakers and legislative champions to elevate awareness, generate dialogue, and co-create practical, compassionate pathways that honor the dignity and unique lived experiences of foster youth. This unified and strategic approach ensures that every foster youth is empowered with the clarity, protection, and opportunity they deserve.

Grand Jury Recommendation #4: Transportation

R-4 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that DPSS pursue the use of outside transportation services for taking children to school. DPSS should provide documented evidence of contact with at least two transportation services. In the interim, there should be an avoidance in using personal vehicles for transporting children.

Based on Findings: F-4

Implementation: January 1, 2026

Financial Impact: Moderate to High

Response to Grand Jury Recommendation #4:

Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

HHCYC ensures a well-structured staffing schedule that allows staff to transport youth to school and offsite appointments while maintaining appropriate on-site staffing ratios and supervision. All staff providing transportation have received thorough training in child supervision, behavior management, emergency protocols and vehicle safety to prioritize youth safety, skills that marketplace rideshare drivers are neither trained in nor equipped to provide for this specialized youth population. County-owned vehicles are exclusively used for transportation, receiving regular maintenance and inspection, while children are secured with age-appropriate safety restraints, fully compliant with California law and county policy.

Furthermore, contracting with supplemental transportation providers for day-to-day needs is neither cost-effective nor a best practice due to the short-term stays at HHCYC—many lasting fewer than 72 hours. Experience has demonstrated that by the time transportation agreements are finalized and appropriate arrangements are made with school districts, the youth has transitioned out of HHCYC to a permanent home. Upon admission, youth are advised to refrain from contacting commercial rideshare services and instead to communicate their transportation needs directly to HHCYC.

Grand Jury Recommendation #5: Transportation

R-5 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that DPSS issue letters to the major rideshare companies notifying them that there are unaccompanied underage children at foster care facilities thereby suggesting drivers screen the riders before accepting the fare at these locations.

Based on Findings: F-5

Implementation January 1,2026
Financial Impact: Minimal

Response to Grand Jury Recommendation #5:

Recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented. The implementation time frame is noted in the response.

A more effective approach to unaccompanied minors accessing ride share services is to strengthen internal HHCYC protocols by educating youth about the risks of unauthorized rideshare use, limiting unsupervised phone access when necessary, and ensuring that staff handle all transportation needs. In addition, staff transporting youth and when needed partnering with vetted, youth-approved transportation providers or using court-authorized methods remain the safest and most compliant options.

We will explore sending letters to the major rideshare companies requesting screening of riders from HHCYC campus.

Even with advance notice, rideshare companies maintain clear policies that prohibit transporting unaccompanied minors unless under specific, approved programs. Reminding companies of this policy would not change the fact that violations typically occur due to drivers either misunderstanding the policy or choosing not to follow it. Issuing letters would not meaningfully change driver behavior, nor would it shield the companies or county from liability if an unauthorized ride occurs.

Implementation date September 30,2025

Grand Jury Recommendation #6: Activities

R-6 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the following activities be considered at HHCYC:

- **Gym – offer children various sports such as basketball, volleyball, and table tennis as well as dance, exercise, movies, lectures, and guest speakers.**
- **Classrooms – offer instruction on computer use, art, and music, as well as life fundamentals such as, how to create a resume, present oneself at a job interview, and develop proper speaking skills.**
- **Pool (once refurbished) – offer swimming lessons, water polo, exercise classes.**
- **Farm – place animals such as sheep, goats, therapy horses, chickens, and ducks on the property to teach children about the responsibility of feeding, grooming, and basic care of animals. Invite animal rescue organizations to bring in their animals for the day**
- **Occupations – Invite guests who can speak about different trades that the children can pursue.**
- **Assign murals throughout the grounds that children can design and paint.**

Based on Findings: F-6 Implementation

Starting January 1,2026
Financial Impact: Minimal to Moderate

Response to Grand Jury Recommendation #6:

Recommendation has been implemented.

HHCYC organizes a range of structured, engaging activities to keep youth active, stimulated, and socially connected. Youth participate in programming both on-site and off-site, with a focus on holistic development. Currently, HHCYC is coordinating with Beaumont Unified School District to implement on-site education opportunities for students who do not wish to attend their former schools. HHCYC has also engaged an Activities Coordinator to support expansion and support for programming. Regular activities include but are not limited to:

Friday Night Live (FNL): This dynamic and fun substance use prevention program facilitated by RUHS Behavioral Health staff offers a safe and supportive environment for youth to socialize, build friendships, and develop leadership skills. With a lively DJ, popcorn stand and accessible activities for all youth, FNL promotes positive peer interactions and offers alternatives to substance use and other risky behaviors. HHCYC and FNL are collaborating to expand our partnership for the 2025 program year, with plans to bring even more opportunities for social, recreational, and skill-building activities.

Youth have regular access to the on-site gym, which plays a crucial role in promoting physical fitness, peer friendships and overall wellness. The weekly "Open Gym" sessions have also become an essential tool for building trust between staff and youth, providing a welcoming space for connection and mutual understanding. Additionally, behavioral health staff are present in an informal capacity at Open Gym, fostering positive engagement and strengthening trusted relationships. Their presence encourages youth to feel more comfortable expressing themselves and seeking support when they face challenges or crises.

Off-site excursions also keep youth engaged and can also incentivize positive behaviors. Offsite group activities include trampoline jumping, bowling, and rock climbing. These activities promote physical fitness, strengthen peer relationships and build self-confidence.

Growing support from community and county partners is also creating opportunities for "pop up" special events such as the Summer Fun Day in July. With sponsorship from an inland home builder and public health leaders from Loma Linda University Health, more than 20 HHCYC youth joined in a full day of pickleball with staff from the university. The day included a catered Italian lunch, Kona Ice truck and gift cards to local eateries and coffee shops.

Deputies and staff from the Riverside Sheriff's Department also hosted a "pop up" event, cooking a barbecue meal for youth and offering picnic-style activities in the campus green space.

As part of the overarching master plan's cornerstone, a \$149.7 million state grant to RUHS Behavioral Health announced in May 2025 will fund behavioral health services at the campus for all youth up to age 18. Services at the Harmony Haven Children & Youth Wellness Center will include the county's first 30-bed Adolescent Residential Substance Use Disorder (SUD) facility, a 16-bed Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility, a 15-station Mental Health Urgent Care, and an outpatient clinic for behavioral health and substance use services. The trauma-informed settings will include indoor and outdoor spaces for art, recreation and physical activities, community gardening, supervised walking and exercise circuits, biophilic elements to connect to nature, and quiet spaces for reading and journaling. At its completion in spring/summer of 2028, the five buildings in the behavioral health campus will encompass 120,000 sq-ft area, leaving a large part of the campus for future development of services that support Riverside County children, teens and transitional-age youth. These efforts reflect Riverside County's commitment to maintaining a dynamic, supportive environment for foster youth, even as facility renovations continue and as program expansion unfolds. Underutilized space today is being purposefully developed for tomorrow's needs, and HHCYC remains focused on maximizing every opportunity to enrich the lives of the youth we serve.



RIVERSIDE COUNTY GRAND JURY

(951) 955-8990 OFFICE • (951) 955-8989 FAX

April 29, 2025

Riverside County Clerk of the Board
4080 Lemon Street, 1st Floor
Riverside, CA 92501

Subject: 2024-2025 Grand Jury Report: Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?

Dear Board of Supervisors:

Please note that Penal Code Section 933 et seq. specifies that you file a response with the following agencies within ninety days.

Jacqueline Jackson, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of Riverside
4050 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92501

Riverside County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 829
Riverside, CA 92502

Riverside County Clerk-Recorder
2720 Gateway Drive
Riverside, CA 92507

Further, it specifies that this report be kept **confidential for a minimum of two working days** prior to public release. The contents of this report will be made public after the close of business **May 2, 2025**

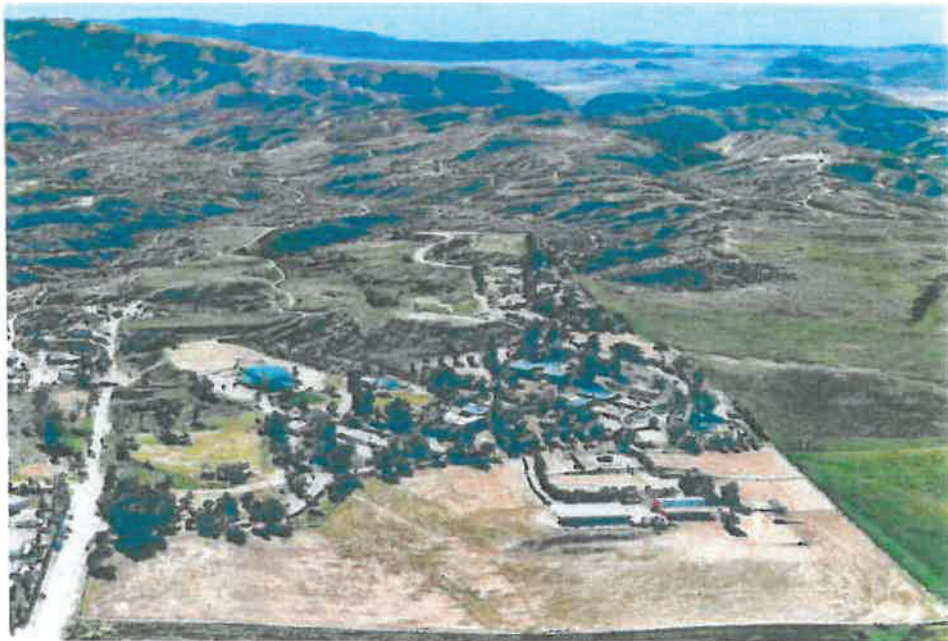
Sincerely,

Tom Cordova, Foreperson
2024-2025 Riverside County Civil Grand Jury

P.O. Box 829 – Riverside, California 92502



Riverside County Civil Grand Jury
2024 - 2025
Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?



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SUMMARY

Due to the shortage of quality housing for foster care children in Riverside County, the Board of Supervisors (the Board) approved the purchase in 2023 of a facility to be used as a short-term transitional housing for children awaiting placement. The sense of urgency to locate a suitable facility was prompted by the evidence of children sleeping in offices or short-term housing while awaiting placements.

The 121-acre property formerly known as Childhelp, in Beaumont, was purchased for \$26 million by Riverside County to be used as transitional housing for foster children. This facility is now known as Harmony Haven Children and Youth Center (HHCYC). It is a 48-bed residential campus providing short term care and therapeutic support for youth impacted by abuse and neglect.¹ HHCYC is licensed to house children for 10 days or less. Unfortunately, some children at HHCYC exceed this time frame due to the inability to quickly place them in a suitable foster home.

Since its opening, HHCYC has evolved in its operations to strengthen security, increase staffing, and improve transportation modes for children among other operational procedures. While there have been operational improvements, there is room for more enhancements and efficiencies. The purpose of this report is to address deficiencies in the current operation of HHCYC along with recommendations for improvement.

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BACKGROUND

In January 2018, the Nation learned that the 13 children of David and Louise Turpin had been removed from a Perris home where they had been neglected, starved, and tortured by their parents. In the days that followed, Riverside County activated and employed extensive services for the Turpin siblings; including law enforcement, social workers, medical professionals, teachers, therapists, foster parents, guardians, attorneys, and more.

¹Press Enterprise, 8/31/23 [New Riverside County home for foster children expected to end office sleepovers – Press Enterprise](#)
Accessed on 3/31/25

In October 2021, on behalf of the Board of Supervisors, the Riverside County Executive Office retained and commissioned Larson LLP to assess the County's care of the Turpins, and more broadly, the services provided by the County to all children in foster care, transitioning youth, and adults under conservatorship.²

In their final report issued in June 2022 to the Board titled [Riverside County Program and Services for Children in Foster Care, Transitioning Youth and Adults under Conservatorship](#), Larson LLP noted, that there was a lack of temporary shelters for displaced children.³

Among their recommendations:

*Develop a receiving center for short-term transitional stays for children awaiting placement. Receiving centers give placement workers time to identify kin placements as well as to identify placements that best meet the needs of children. On-site mental health services and pediatrician assessment offices could help meet multiple needs at a single point of entry.*⁴

Compounding the lack of short-term housing was the passage in 2023, of Assembly Bill (AB) 153: Phasing Out Out-of-State Residential Facility Placements for Children in Foster Care. Incidents of deaths, injuries, and other serious concerns in out of state foster facilities led to the decertification in December 2020 by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). All youth placed in those facilities were returned to California.⁵

According to the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), as of 2022, 129 out-of-state foster children had returned to California, 17 of whom were in Riverside County. This contributed to additional foster children needing homes.⁶

After investigating several locations for a short-term housing facility for foster children, the Board selected the former Childhelp facility in Beaumont, California. This site is now known as Harmony Haven Children and Youth Center (HHCYC). The campus is designed to provide therapeutic support while the best and most appropriate placement for foster youth is coordinated.⁷

The decision to establish HHCYC as a short-term foster care home is because it is considered temporary, with the goal of returning children to their family home. Long-term foster care is more permanent, where children stay with their foster family until they turn eighteen and are ready to live independently.

² Letter to Board of Supervisors contained in report entitled, [Riverside County Program and Services for Children in Foster Care, Transitioning Youth and Adults under Conservatorship](#), Accessed 3/31/25

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid, Page 7

⁵ Youth law center.org [AB-153-Phasing-Out-Out-of-State-Residential-Facility-Placement-August-2021.pdf](#); Accessed 3/31/2025

⁶ Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, email 2/27/25

⁷ Press Enterprise, 8/31/23 [New Riverside County home for foster children expected to end office sleepovers – Press Enterprise](#) Accessed 3/31/2025

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METHODOLOGY

Various methods were used to gather data, information, and procedures. Those methods are outlined below:

INTERVIEWS

The Grand Jury conducted the following interviews:

Representatives from Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

Representatives from Riverside County (RIVCO) Executive Office

Representative from Riverside University Health Services (RUHS), Behavioral Health (BH)

Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) Deputies

Members of local law enforcement in Banning and Beaumont

COMMITTEE TOURS

Harmony Haven Children and Youth Center

Hemet Ranch Foster Care Facility

Orangetown Children and Family Center (Orange County)

TELEPHONE CALLS

Multiple calls to various other foster care facilities within Riverside County as well as San Diego County, Orange County, and San Bernardino County; Local Law Enforcement Offices, RIVCO Executive Office, DPSS and RUHS.

EMAILS

Foster Care Facilities

DPSS

RUHS

RIVDCO Executive Office

San Bernardino County

San Diego County

DOCUMENTS, RULES AND REGULATIONS

Foster Youth Bill of Rights

Various State Laws, Rules and Regulations

State of California Complaint Investigation Reports

Budget information from Harmony Haven Children and Youth Center

Face to face discussions with various Foster Care facilities staff

County and local laws and regulations for Foster Care

Harmony Haven Children and Youth Center Master Plan
Statistical data from RSO and Beaumont PD
Newspapers including Press Enterprise, and Record Gazette, and LA Times, Desert Sun, and
Youth Law Center.Org
Rideshare company corporate procedures

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DISCUSSION

Riverside County Foster Care Program

The Riverside County Children's Services Division provides out-of-home care for children and youth in need of protection. It relies heavily on partnership with 68 Foster Family Agencies for placement and provision. These agencies are responsible for all non-kin-out-of-home placement which constitute almost one-third (31.4%) of all children in out-of-home-care. ⁸

Children with behavioral problems which require more services are especially difficult to place in foster homes. ⁹ Riverside County urgently needs more quality foster homes. The placement shortage for children with complex needs is acute. To minimize children sleeping in offices or short-term housing while awaiting placements, a center for short-term transitional stays was urgently needed to accommodate these children.

Harmony Haven Children and Youth Center

Riverside County closed escrow on a compound in Beaumont, California in mid-August 2023 where the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) was already housing 12 difficult-to-place foster children with the plan to expand capacity to 48. At the time, the county's application for a license to operate had been pending. The facility was sold to the county for \$26 million by an organization, Childhelp that once housed 124 children. ¹⁰

History of Childhelp - After 45 years of operations in Beaumont, the 121-acre Childhelp Merv Griffin Village that provided shelter and referrals for abused and at-risk children closed in May 2023. The pandemic sounded a death knell for the institution, as Childhelp lost staff and was restricted in how many children could live within its facilities, which included several residential cottages, a dining facility, an equestrian therapy ranch, a library and a chapel, as well as a non-public school. At its height, Childhelp was equipped to house up to 82 children, with a four-to-one staffing ratio, who had access to a

⁸ Executive Summary, Pg. 2-3, [Riverside County Program and Services for Children in Foster Care, Transitioning Youth, and Adults under Conservatorship](#). Accessed 3/31/2025

⁹ Press Enterprise, 8/31/23 [New Riverside County home for foster children expected to end office sleepovers – Press Enterprise](#). Accessed 3/31/2025

¹⁰ Press Enterprise, 8/31/23 [New Riverside County home for foster children expected to end office sleepovers – Press Enterprise](#). Accessed 3/31/2025

consortium of therapists, behavioral health specialists and other professionals associated with the foster care industry.¹¹

The HHCYC property is set in a park-like setting, and consists of several buildings and 4 cottages that can house four to eight children each. There is a gym, pool (closed for renovation), animal stables and areas to walk around.

The site is staffed by employees of DPSS as well as employees of Riverside University Health System (RUHS), Behavioral Health (BH). The types of positions at HHCYC include Social Service Practitioners, Social Service Supervisors, Office Assistants and Eligibility Technicians. All on-call staff are vetted via fingerprint clearance and trainings are provided in the form of monthly in-service programs.¹²

Master Plan for Harmony Haven Children and Youth Wellness Center

After the purchase and startup of the HHCYC site, a project proposal outlining plans for the development of the Harmony Haven Children and Youth Wellness Center was delivered to Riverside County by the Gensler Architecture firm on June 13, 2024. The plan is projected to begin March 2025 with completion slated for November 2027 (subject to RIVCO funding for construction).

The plan encompasses the entire property where HHCYC is currently housed and will include the addition of several new facilities on the campus as well as the renovation of existing buildings.

New Buildings – Master Plan
Children’s Crisis Residential Program
Mental Health Urgent Care Facility
Children’s Short -Term Residential Therapeutic Program
Adolescent Substance Use Disorder Residential Program
Adolescent Detox Unit
Transitional Age Youth Housing
Transitional Age Youth Center

¹¹ BY DAVID JAMES HEISS, Record Gazette, June 24, 2023, [Merv Griffin Village ceases foster operations recordgazette.net](#) Accessed 3/31/2025

¹² Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, email 1/16/2025

Renovations – Master Plan
Administration
Classrooms
Library/Cafeteria/Lounge
Swimming Pool
Barn
Maintenance storage Facility

Project Purpose:

Create a supportive and community-oriented environment that is connected to nature, is welcoming, safe, durable, and promotes healing and well-being for successful recovery.¹³

While this plan is notable and clearly aligned with some of the recommendations that are outlined in this report, there is an obvious gap in the current standard of care and resources that are available to HHCYC children and staff. It is imperative that these gaps be addressed in the short term to ensure at risk children do not fall through the system due to substandard care or oversight.

List of Identified Deficiencies at Harmony Haven Children & Youth Wellness Center

The Civil Grand Jury identified the following areas of most concern:

1. Medical Treatment and Behavioral Health Support

There is not a separate infirmary at Harmony Haven Children & Youth Wellness Center. Psychotropic medications prescribed by a physician, as well as over the counter medications are provided to the children by staff members. Most staff members do not have a background in the various medications, the dosage levels often associated with the children’s age and any other possible contraindications. The staff are trained in emergency remedies such as CPR and treating minor cuts, scrapes, and other problems.

Two other foster care facilities visited by the Civil Grand Jury handle health care and intervention differently.

One is a much smaller campus with a resident capacity of 12 or less. They have a registered nurse visit the facility several times a week to give ongoing training to staff members and to review any medical incidents that occurred prior to their visit.

The second campus is much larger with a population often exceeding 80 residents. This campus has a registered nurse present daily. In addition, there is a building on site that contains a physician group.

¹³ Genslar/County of Riverside -Harmony Haven Children & Youth Wellness Center Proposal, June 13, 2024

While administration of medications such as ibuprofen or aspirin appears relatively harmless, the person distributing the medication should be knowledgeable about age related dose amounts, allergies to medications, treatment of lacerations or abrasions, etc. These problems are better diagnosed and treated by a licensed professional including a registered nurse, a licensed vocational nurse or a licensed emergency medical technician. The aforementioned professionals are better able to rapidly make diagnoses and determine the severity of a condition or injury which would require the emergency transportation of the resident to a local hospital or clinic.

HHCYC does not have a bed or cot in a dedicated infirmary area where a sick child can lie down and be supervised by the medical professional on staff.

The Riverside University Health System, Behavioral Health department is responsible for intervention in cases of disruptive or dangerous acts by an unstable child. Behavioral Health provides such intervention and care by stationing a Mobile Crisis Management Team (MCMT) at HHCYC. This team consists of four separate teams of Clinical Therapists, Behavior Health Specialists, and a Peer Support Specialist. While this team is designated to be permanently stationed at HHCYC, they are not present 24 hours a day and are required to respond to needs outside of the facility. Since most interventions occur during evening hours, this could minimize their ability to intervene during an emergency.

Those times when MCMT are not present, they are “on call” to the campus. There is limited information on where team members are located when they are not on the premises, as well as how long it will take for them to return to HHCYC during an emergency.¹⁴

The continual presence of behavioral health professionals is critical in helping staff address the variety of emotional and psychiatric behaviors demonstrated by the children. Presently, there are children on site who have remained on the property longer than the licensed 10 days. For example, a child was on site for over 90 days. These situations are due to the inability to place unstable children. There are also instances where more difficult to handle children are housed instead in local hotels with 24-hour monitors. This is done in order to prevent them from unduly influencing the other children’s behavior, i.e., use of drugs, engaging in prostitution, or theft.

2. Security

The nature of the children housed at HHCYC require several security modes to help deal with problems that may occur. Such problems include unruly behavior, physical altercations between residents or attacks on staff members. Children must be under continuous observation to ensure that they have not left the premises without permission. HHCYC has employed a private security company and the Riverside County Sheriff’s Office (RSO) to provide security for the campus. According to DPSS, the private security company is HSS/Tarian Group. (Budget as of the date of this report stands at \$2,921,580). HSS deploys officers to each of the cottages where they remain for their entire shift, except when called to help with another cottage’s problem, or when on a lunch break.

¹⁴ The Riverside University Health System – Behavioral Health Department, email 2/10/25

HSS also provides one officer to control access to the property, as well as one to two officers roving the premises in an HSS/Tarian vehicle. The roving patrols continually monitor the entire premises within assigned zones and rotate zones during their shift. Every HSS vehicle is equipped with dash cameras which are running at all times. These recordings are kept confidential and only shared with law enforcement officers.

All HHS officers are required to carry radios and cell phones and to respond when called. In addition, officers are asked to assist staff with electronic wandings of children when required. They also check and ensure all emergency and exterior doors are closed.

The second type of security for HHCYC is RSO. Their contract began on July 1, 2024 and will end on June 30, 2025. As of this writing DPSS has initiated a new contract with the RSO to extend its support until June 30, 2030. RSO is currently in negotiations with DPSS on the terms of this contract.

The RSO currently provides two deputies on duty from 12 p.m. to 12 a.m. daily. This allows for one deputy to be present each day. Prior to arriving at HHCYC, deputies must report to the Cabazon Sheriff's Office to check in and later check out at the end of their shift. These activities reduce the amount of time they are present on site at HHCYC.

The deputies make rounds of both interior and exterior buildings. They intercede in altercations or other incidents when required. In addition, they spend time interacting with the children, and often deter them from going Absent Without Leave (AWOL). The deputies are an asset to the facility as they have a quieting effect on the children. This is attributable to the training they have received in dealing with children in foster care facilities. These officers have proven to be an integral part of HHCYC as they are able to frequently engage with the children often gaining their attention and cooperation. Without their presence, the campus would be less secure.¹⁵

There is one concern regarding the RSO deputy's presence. The Civil Grand Jury found that the deputies are only on site for 12 hours a day. An RSO deputy should be on site 24 hours per day. There are many instances where the children at HHCYC wait until the RSO deputy goes off duty at 12 a.m. to go AWOL or engage in illegal or disruptive activities.

The Sheriff's Office budget with HHCYC for 2024-2025 is \$735,000, not to exceed \$770,000. The total annual security budget for HHCYC is \$3,656,580. This represents 15% of the entire annual HHCYC budget.¹⁶

In spite of security, there have been recurring episodes at HHCYC requiring the intervention of law enforcement personnel with the children. According to data received from the Riverside County Sheriff's office and the City of Beaumont PD respectively, incidents of Runaway Juveniles or children being AWOL, are a frequent occurrence.

¹⁵ Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, email 3/24/25

¹⁶ Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, email 1/21/25

HHCYC Resident Incidents RSO & BPD Data¹⁷

TYPES OF INCIDENTS	RSO 2023*	BPD 2023*	RSO 2024	BPD 2024
RUNAWAY JUVENILE/AWOL	316**	25	437**	49

**Numbers may represent the same children who frequently go on AWOL. HHCYC and Law Enforcement use the terms Runaway Juvenile/AWOL interchangeably.

* RIVCO took over ownership of property 8/1/23

Sources:

Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) Data Warehouse Reports system

Beaumont Police Department 1/21/2025

Note: The RSO has "primary responsibility" for incidents at HHCYC, which could account for the lower BPD numbers.

The excessive incidents of Runaway Juveniles/ AWOL cases occurred as well when the facility was owned by Childhelp and are primarily attributable to the absence of fencing around the 121-acre perimeter of the HHCYC grounds. Children are able to leave the property without being stopped by staff. While staff members may attempt to verbally deter residents from leaving, they cannot force them to remain on the property. [The Foster Youth Bill of Rights](#) in particular, prevents staff from compelling the children to stay on the premises. Consequently, residents routinely leave and return to the property during various times of the day and night. Staff members are frequently called by AWOL children or law enforcement to pick them up from surrounding communities.

In some instances, children are able to secure transportation from HHCYC by using one of the commercial rideshare companies. According to data provided by RSO and BPD, children who have gone AWOL will shoplift, use drugs, or engage in other illegal activities.

According to DPSS, when there is a child identified as AWOL from HHCYC, the staff follows the AWOL protocol. HHCYC staff will contact law enforcement to file a missing person's report, then notify the assigned social worker via an Incident Report. The social worker is responsible for notifying the courts to obtain a warrant to locate the child.

Assigned social workers have an ongoing obligation to locate children who are AWOL. This includes filing reports, conducting investigations, and developing plans to return the child to care.¹⁸

As of this writing HHCYC has begun to install (8') fencing that will surround the exterior perimeter of the four cottages. Each cottage will include a pedestrian gate with the intended purpose of egress only. Each gate will be powered and preinstalled

¹⁷ Beaumont Police Department 1/21/2025

Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) Data Warehouse Reports system

¹⁸ Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, email 1/21/25

with access control. Key-card badge readers will be installed at all 4 cottages. Additionally, each cottage will include a 10' manually opening service gate to allow access for maintenance staff. The project is estimated to be completed by June 30, 2025.

Additional security cameras and lighting are being installed throughout the campus which will improve illumination on the pitch-dark property. This will be especially helpful in locating children roaming the campus after hours. SOS Panic alarms will be installed on county cell phones. This project is currently in progress.

3. Foster Youth Bill of Rights

These security enhancements will be a great addition to HHCYC. One continuing issue of concern however is the inability of HHCYC staff to enforce basic rules, including limits on the children's use of cell phones, as well as the ability to compel children to take prescribed medications. These limitations are due to the guidelines outlined in the [Foster Youth Bill of Rights](#) (FYBR) that were passed in California in 2001.

These rights include, the right to live in a safe comfortable home, the right to be treated with respect, the right to refuse to take medications, the right to use a cell phone, plus other various health, family and court access rights. There is also an ombudsman's office with a toll-free number designed to field questions about services available and to handle complaints about abuse in the system.¹⁹

While protecting the rights of foster children are important, the FYBR has become too restrictive for HHCYC staff to effectively perform their duties. This is another reason why 24-hour security is critical. Staff members are restricted in their ability to look through a child's personal belongings without a legal reason, and take physical measures to break up altercations or other violent incidents between the children and staff. Additionally, the inability of staff members to limit phone usage allows children to contact and meet up with outsiders who have nefarious intent such as traffickers or drug dealers.

4. Transportation of Children

The [Foster Youth Bill of Rights](#) specifies that foster children have the right to attend their school of origin or enroll in a new school. Consequently, HHCYC is required to shuttle the children to and from their respective schools. In addition, these children periodically participate in field trips away from the facility requiring transportation by staff.

HHCYC Staff members use a RIVCO passenger van or their personal vehicles for transporting children. The use of staff to transport the children is problematic. Staff drivers are frequently taken away from their assigned duties, and are prone to potential liability while transporting children.

¹⁹ [California Dept. of Social Services Foster Youth Rights](#) Accessed March 31, 2026

One campus in Orange County similar to HHCYC utilizes a commercial service to shuttle their residents to and from schools and other locations. This is one of several nation-wide companies that use certified and insured drivers in company vehicles to transport passengers.

Children at HHCYC often resort to other means of transportation including calling commercial rideshare services. A review of the corporate procedures of two major rideshare companies indicates that they are prohibited from transporting children under the age of 18 without an adult accompanying the passenger. While the drivers are expected to honor these rules, they are adhered to at the driver's discretion. In some instances, the drivers choose to overlook this rule to earn the fare.

5. Lack of Activities for Children

HHCYC currently has a gym, pool, farm, classrooms, and land within the campus that includes walking trails. These areas at present are being underutilized for activities. The farm is not available for use, the classrooms are empty with few educational classes being conducted, and the gym and pool need to be updated. Keeping children occupied and involved are essential tools in preventing disruptive incidents. Among the activities that need to be added include expanding use of the gym for more sports; and utilizing classrooms for instruction on computers, art, and life skills.

While it is understood that HHCYC is a temporary emergency shelter for the difficult to place (the average stay is 10+ days), there are limited activities to occupy children's time, leading to incidents of fighting, acting out, going AWOL, and other disruptive events. After visiting other facilities in both Riverside and Orange counties, we discovered that while activities are not a complete solution to the aforementioned issues, they do reduce the occurrence.

6. Volunteers

Unpaid volunteers are the backbone of many of these activities. They supplement paid staff by providing additional support and resources. Unfortunately, most volunteers are hesitant to become involved with organizations like HHCYC due to the overwhelming paperwork and wait-time that certification entails. Many applicants will quit the process due to the length of time that is required.

While it is understood that working with children requires a thorough and necessary background investigation, a more efficient way to quickly recruit volunteers is to use existing, certified volunteer organization members. New volunteers can still participate after completing the standard application process.

As of this writing HHCYC is working in partnership with Beaumont Unified School District (BUSD) to bring an Independent Study program on campus with one (1) full-time teacher on site. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is currently under review with BUSD.

BUSD plans to provide additional services on campus, ensuring that HHCYC children have access to tutoring, mentoring, and enrichment programs designed to complement classroom learning. This is a welcome addition to HHCYC as it will hopefully reduce the current necessity to transport children to their local schools. Providing on site education ensures more cohesion and stability for children living on the campus and may compel those children who refuse to go to school to attend classes on site.

According to DPSS, in addition to academic services, a range of engaging activities has been organized to keep youth active and connected to their community. Specifically, youth have participated in programs such as Friday Night Live (FNL), sponsored by Riverside University Health Systems. FNL offers a safe space for socializing and building friendships, while access to the gym promotes physical fitness and well-being. DPSS is currently working with FNL to expand its partnership and activities for the 2025 calendar year.

Additionally, California Family Life Center (CFLC), provides life skills workshops, helping children develop practical knowledge for managing personal finances, building relationships, and navigating life's challenges, as well as resume building.²⁰

Conclusion

The Civil Grand Jury found that the Harmony Haven Children and Youth Center as it currently operates is lacking in fundamental infrastructure requisites. Initially housing children on site before proper processes and procedures were in place, including adequate security and 24-hour medical care were available, increased the likelihood of harm to children and staff as well as a liability to Riverside County. While it appears as if DPSS has been addressing these requirements, they are doing so in a piece-meal fashion Their approach has been more reactive than proactive.

The aforementioned plans for improvements at HHCYC are noteworthy and to be applauded. The long-range completion of the master plan will be a beneficial addition for Riverside County Foster children as well as a potential model for the State of California. Housing multiple medical and behavioral health services in one location will greatly facilitate the proper triage, assessment, treatment, and placement of foster children.

²⁰ Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, email 1/21/25

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FINDINGS

MEDICAL

F-1 There are no regularly scheduled, certified medical professionals on staff at HHCYC. On site behavioral health specialists are on call for emergencies and present less than 24 hours a day.

SECURITY

F-2 RSO deputies are assigned to HHCYC from 12 p.m. to 12 a.m. This amount of time is insufficient as the children tend to act out after RSO deputies go off duty at 12 a.m.

STAFF MEMBER OVERSIGHT AND AUTHORITY

F-3 Staff members are unable to enforce basic rules due to guidelines contained in [Foster Youth Bill of Rights](#) (FYBR), that were passed in California in 2001.

TRANSPORTATION

F-4 Presently, HHCYC staff transport children to schools throughout the county and pick them up after school. This is an undue burden on staff members, waste of resources, and potential liability to RIVCO.

F-5 Commercial rideshare companies may well be picking up underage children in violation of company policies.

ACTIVITIES

F-6 HHCYC areas such as the gym, farm, and classrooms, are being underutilized for activities.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

MEDICAL

R-1 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that at least one medical professional be assigned at least part time to HHCYC.
Dedicated, on-site behavioral health support should be expanded to 24-hours daily.

Based on Findings: F-1
Implementation: January 1, 2026
Financial Impact: Moderate to High

SECURITY

R-2 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that RSO expand their presence to 24 hours per day, and increase the number of deputies by two for a total of four on rotating shifts.

Based on Findings: F-2
Implementation: January 1, 2026
Financial Impact: High

STAFF MEMBER OVERSIGHT AND AUTHORITY

R-3 DPSS should contact the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to identify any flexibilities in following the provisions of the [Foster Youth Bill of Rights](#) . Providing staff members with the ability to limit the children's use of cell phones, reject their refusal to receive prescribed medications, or attend school, will give them greater influence in preventing disruptive episodes.

DPSS should provide all communications between CDSS on this matter to provide evidence that they have pursued this issue.

Based on Findings: F-3
Implementation: January 1, 2026
Financial Impact: Minor to Moderate

TRANSPORTATION

R-4 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that DPSS pursue the use of outside transportation services for taking children to school. DPSS should provide documented evidence of contact with at least two transportation services.

In the interim, there should be an avoidance in using personal vehicles for transporting children.

Based on Findings: F-4

Implementation: January 1, 2026

Financial Impact: Moderate to High

R-5 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that DPSS issue letters to the major rideshare companies notifying them that there are unaccompanied, underage children at foster care facilities thereby suggesting drivers screen the riders before accepting the fare at these locations.

Based on Findings: F-5

Implementation January 1, 2026

Financial Impact: Minimal

ACTIVITIES

R-6 The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the following activities be considered at HHCYC:

- Gym – offer children various sports such as basketball, volleyball, and table tennis as well as dance, exercise, movies, lectures, and guest speakers.
- Classrooms – offer instruction on computer use, art, and music, as well as life fundamentals such as, how to create a resume, present oneself at a job interview, and develop proper speaking skills.
- Pool (once refurbished) - offer swimming lessons, water polo, exercise classes.
- Farm - place animals such as sheep, goats, therapy horses, chickens, and ducks on the property to teach children about the responsibility of feeding, grooming, and basic care of animals. Invite animal rescue organizations to bring in their animals for the day.
- Occupations - Invite guests who can speak about different trades that the children can pursue.
- Assign murals throughout the grounds that children can design and paint.

Based on Findings: F-6

Implementation: Starting January 1, 2026

Financial Impact: Minimal to Moderate



REQUIRED RESPONDENTS

According to California Penal Code §933, governing bodies have 90 days to respond to grand jury report findings and recommendations. The California Penal Code §933.05 outlines the parameters within which governing bodies are permitted to respond.

Department	Findings	Recommendations
Riverside County Board of Supervisors	F-1 through F-6	R-1 through R-6

INVITED RESPONDENTS

Agencies/ Departments	Findings	Recommendations
California Department of Social Services	F-1 through F-6	R-1 through R-6
RIVCO DPSS	F-1 through F-6	R-1 through R-6
RUHS Behavioral Health	F-1	R-1
RIVCO Executive Office	F-1 through F-6	R-1 through R-6

Report Issued Date: 4-29-2025
Report Public Date: 5-2-2025
Response Due Date: 8-2-2025

**Riverside County Board of Supervisors
Request to Speak**

Submit request to Clerk of Board (right of podium),
Speakers are entitled to three (3) minutes, subject to
Board Rules listed on the reverse side of this form.

SPEAKER'S NAME: Roy BUCKERT

Address: _____
(only if follow-up mail response requested)

City: _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone #: _____

Date: _____ **Agenda #** 3.4

PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:

Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:

_____ **Support** _____ **Oppose** _____ **Neutral**

Note: If you are here for an agenda item that is filed
for "Appeal", please state separately your position on
the appeal below:

_____ **Support** _____ **Oppose** _____ **Neutral**

I give my 3 minutes to: _____

BOARD RULES

Requests to Address Board on "Agenda" Items:

You may request to be heard on a published agenda item. Requests to be heard must be submitted to the Clerk of the Board before the scheduled meeting time.

Requests to Address Board on items that are "NOT" on the Agenda:

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these rules, member of the public shall have the right to address the Board during the mid-morning "Oral Communications" segment of the published agenda. Said purpose for address must pertain to issues which are under the direct jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors. YOUR TIME WILL BE LIMITED TO THREE (3) MINUTES.

Power Point Presentations/Printed Material:

Speakers who intend to conduct a formalized Power Point presentation or provide printed material must notify the Clerk of the Board's Office by 12 noon on the Monday preceding the Tuesday Board meeting, insuring that the Clerk's Office has sufficient copies of all printed materials and at least one (1) copy of the Power Point CD. Copies of printed material given to the Clerk (by Monday noon deadline) will be provided to each Supervisor. If you have the need to use the overhead "Elmo" projector at the Board meeting, please insure your material is clear and with proper contrast, notifying the Clerk well ahead of the meeting, of your intent to use the Elmo. **Speakers are prohibited from bringing signs, placards or posters into the hearing room.**

Individual Speaker Limits:

Individual speakers are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes.

Please step up to the podium when the Chairman calls your name and begin speaking immediately. Pull the microphone to your mouth so that the Board, audience, and audio recording system hear you clearly. Once you start speaking, the "green" podium light will light. The "yellow" light will come on when you have one (1) minute remaining. When you have 30 seconds remaining, the "yellow" light will begin flash, indicating you must quickly wrap up your comments. Your time is up when the "red" light flashes. The Chairman adheres to a strict three (3) minutes per speaker. **Note: If you intend to give your time to a "Group/Organized Presentation", please state so clearly at the very bottom of the reverse side of this form.**

Group/Organized Presentations:

Group/organized presentations with more than one (1) speaker will be limited to nine (9) minutes at the Chairman's discretion. The organizer of the presentation will automatically receive the first three (3) minutes, with the remaining six (6) minutes relinquished by other speakers, as requested by them on a completed "Request to Speak" form, and clearly indicated at the front bottom of the form.

Addressing the Board & Acknowledgement by Chairman:

The Chairman will determine what order the speakers will address the Board, and will call on all speakers in pairs. The first speaker should immediately step to the podium and begin addressing the Board. The second speaker should take up a position in one of the chamber aisles in order to quickly step up to the podium after the preceding speaker. This is to afford an efficient and timely Board meeting, giving all attendees the opportunity to make their case. Speakers are prohibited from making personal attacks, and/or using coarse, crude, profane or vulgar language while speaking to the Board members, staff, the general public and/or meeting participants. Such behavior, at the discretion of the Board Chairman may result in removal from the Board Chambers by Sheriff Deputies.

Online

Riverside County Board of Supervisors Request to Speak

Submit request to the Clerk of the Board (right of podium), Speakers are entitled to three (3) minutes, subject to Board Rules listed on the reverse side of this form. The Board may limit the public input on any item, based on the number of people requesting to speak and the business of the Board.

SPEAKER'S NAME: Jacki McCray

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Date: _____ Agenda # 3.4

PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:

Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:

_____ Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

Note: If you are here for an agenda item that is filed for "Appeal", please state separately your position on the appeal below:

_____ Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

I give my 3 minutes to: _____

Parking validations available for speakers only – see Clerk of the Board.

(Revised: 04/23/2025)

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Flores, Kate

From: Acquia Mail
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 8:46 AM
To: studio4salonhair@gmail.com
Cc: Clerk of the Board
Subject: Request to Speak Web Submission



Thank you for submitting your request to speak. The Clerk of the Board office has received your request and will be prepared to allow you to speak when your item is called. To attend the meeting, please call (669) 900-6833 and use **Meeting ID # 864 4411 6015 . Password is 20250729**. You will be muted until your item is pulled and your name is called. Please dial in at 9:00 am with the phone number you provided in the form so you can be identified during the meeting.

Submitted on July 29, 2025

Submitted values are:

First Name

jacki

Last Name

mccray

Address (Street, City and Zip)

17265 gardner ave

Phone

9512372077

Email

studio4salonhair@gmail.com

Agenda Date

07/29/2025

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

3.4

State your position below

Neutral

Do you need a Spanish translator?

No