



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





## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.



## 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.

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<sup>1</sup>Press 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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.*<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup>

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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Page 7

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

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

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



## **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

Orangewood 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



## 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. <sup>8</sup>

Children with behavioral problems which require more services are especially difficult to place in foster homes.<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup>

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

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<sup>8</sup> 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

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

<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

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.<sup>12</sup>

### **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.

<b>New Buildings – Master Plan</b>
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

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

<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>*

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.

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<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

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.

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<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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.<sup>16</sup>

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.

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

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

## HHCYC Resident Incidents RSO & BPD Data<sup>17</sup>

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.<sup>18</sup>

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

<sup>17</sup> Beaumont Police Department 1/21/2025

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

<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

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.

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<sup>19</sup> [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.<sup>20</sup>

## **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.

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



## 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.



## 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.

<b>Department</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Riverside County Board of Supervisors	F-1 through F-6	R-1 through R-6

## INVITED RESPONDENTS

<b>Agencies/ Departments</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
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