

# MONTEREY COUNTY JUVENILE HALL NEEDS ASSESSMENT: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS



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Policy Brief

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## Introduction

Monterey County currently has 190 beds certified by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) (2013). Currently, the county plans to close the Wellington Smith Jr. Juvenile Hall, with a rated capacity of 114 beds (County of Monterey, 2013; Reynolds, 2013). The facility closure is a result of a conditional funding allocation award of \$35 million dollars from the Local Youthful Offender Rehabilitative Facility Construction Funding Program administered by the BSCC. The proposed facility will replace the existing one in Salinas that was constructed approximately 50 years ago. The Juvenile Hall is a short-term detention facility whereas the Monterey County Youth Center, with 76 rated beds is a long-term commitment facility<sup>1</sup> (BSCC, 2013).

Eight years ago, the Monterey County Probation Department (2006) projected the need for 210 new detention beds over the next 20 years. This estimate was based on 2003 to 2005 juvenile arrest totals that have since declined by approximately 35 percent, mirroring a similar statewide trend. The purpose of this preliminary analysis is to examine current crime, confinement, and population trends within a larger historical context to estimate the county's future juvenile detention needs. The analysis finds:

- Monterey County's youth crime rate is decreasing and not focused in Salinas. In particular, Monterey youth are nearly twice as likely to be arrested for felonies as Salinas youth, despite the former's low poverty levels.
- Historically, Monterey has relied on youth incarceration more than other counties. While incarceration rates have been decreasing, Monterey's use of local detention facilities has declined more slowly than other California counties.
- Currently, 70 percent of the youth in the juvenile hall are pre-disposition (awaiting processing or otherwise have not been adjudicated), and 65 percent are charged with or convicted of misdemeanors. Both of these proportions appear above the state average for juvenile halls.
- Assuming youth crime rates remain stable and juvenile justice stakeholders continue to implement modest reforms to reduce county reliance on youth detention to statewide levels,

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<sup>1</sup> Monterey County has an internal functional capacity of 60 beds for the Monterey County Youth Center (Probation Chief Manuel Real, Monterey County Probation Department, personal communication, April 10, 2014). The BSCC recognizes 76 rated beds, which would allow for future utilization of the additional 16 beds.

preliminary analysis suggests a 94-bed Juvenile Hall would satisfy the local need through 2035.

Further assessment of youth crime trends, existing interventions, and the current juvenile detention population using local data is necessary to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Monterey County juvenile justice system needs.

## Methodology

This analysis uses data made available through statewide agencies that collect and report juvenile justice statistics from all of California's counties. The Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) provides local youth detention population data; the most recent available is for June 2013. Felony arrest data are provided by the California Department of Justice through 2012. BSCC data from March 2013 is used to review county trends. For projection purposes the most recently available data were used. Projected Juvenile Hall bed need was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Maximum County Detention Population} + 5\% \text{ Buffer} - \text{Youth Center Capacity}$$

County youth population projections are available from the United States Census Bureau and California Department of Finance. Data on county use of state correctional facilities are provided by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Juvenile Research Branch.

## Analysis of Monterey County trends

Monterey County is a coastal California county with a population of 421,494 as of January 1, 2013 (DRU, 2013). Salinas (population 153,215), the county seat and largest city, experiences persistent violence that, despite small recent reductions, continues at a high level. This included 1,027 reported violent felonies in 2012, of which 21 were homicides. With 36 percent of the county's population, Salinas accounted for 55 percent of reported violent crime in 2012. Salinas is linked to an area of poverty that spans the northern and eastern parts of the county, whose southern areas are among the most affluent in the state. However, Salinas's crime is not concentrated in the youth population, which has shown plummeting rates of felonies and violent crime in recent years and is now at record low levels. In 2012, those under age 18 accounted for just 9 percent of Salinas's violent felony arrests and 15 percent of felony arrests (CJSC, 2013).

Youth arrest patterns in the more affluent cities of Monterey, Marina, and Carmel are more significant than in Salinas. Monterey youth in particular are nearly twice as likely to be arrested for felonies as Salinas youth, despite the former's low poverty levels. With 8 percent of the county's youth population, these three cities produce 14 percent of its youth felonies.

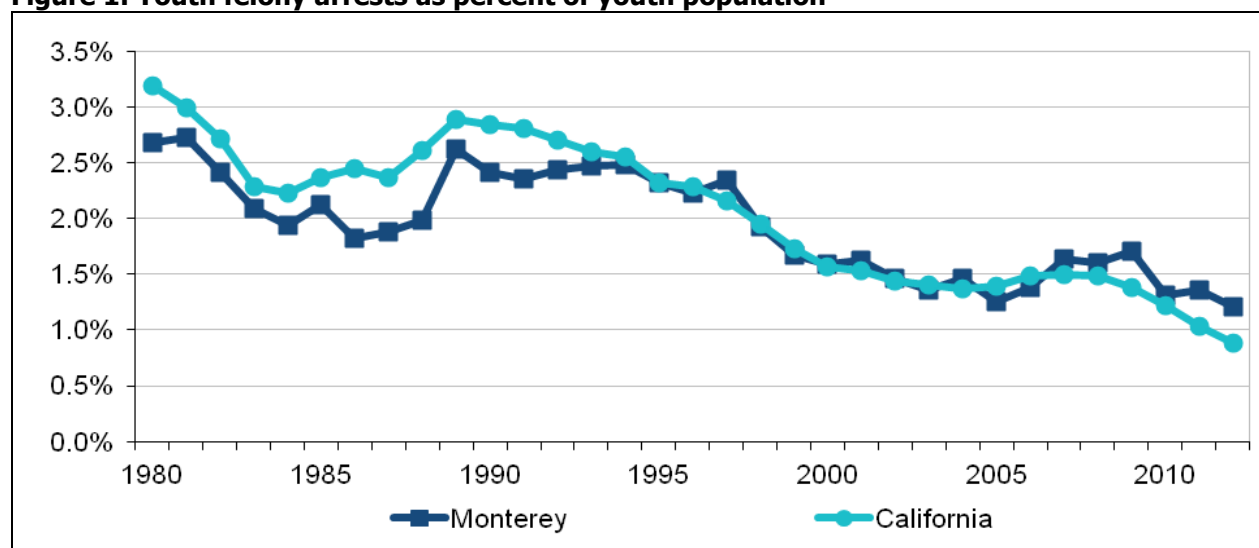
In recent years, Monterey County's crime rate among youth under the age of 18 has dropped to record low levels including for violent, other serious, and misdemeanor offenses. In 2012, 578 youths were arrested for felonies, including 127 for violent crimes—down substantially from the peak of 1,090 felony arrests and 263 violence arrests in 1994, when the county had around 4,000 fewer youths. As of June 2013,

there are 151 youths held in detention, including 19 in the state Division of Juvenile Facilities (DJF)<sup>2</sup> and 132 in local halls and camps—also the lowest numbers on record.

In 2012, the Monterey County Probation Department reported an average daily cost of \$243.58 to keep a youth in the juvenile hall, and \$327.95 to house a youth in the youth center (BSCC, 2013a). Thus, any reduction in confinement could have an \$89,000 saving per reduced juvenile hall ward annually, and \$120,000 for each reduction in youth center wards annually, minus costs of alternative supervision. Given the ongoing operating costs to support a juvenile justice facility, it is imperative that the facility be designed to maximize space. Empty units unnecessarily increase per ward costs and waste resources that could be reinvested in providing cost-effective community-based public safety interventions.

Prior to the mid-1990s, Monterey County had a lower rate of felony arrests than the state as a whole; from the mid-1990s to around 2007, an average rate; and after 2007, a slightly higher rate (Figure 1). This is not due to rising felonies among Monterey youth; rates have been falling sharply (down 55 percent since 1980), though not as rapidly as elsewhere in the state (down 73 percent). For violent felonies (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and kidnapping), youth arrest rates fell by 38 percent in Monterey County, compared to 59 percent statewide, over the 1980 to 2012 period.

**Figure 1. Youth felony arrests as percent of youth population**



Source: CJSC (2013); DRU (2013).

Monterey County experienced significantly higher felony arrest rates for every race and both sexes in 2012 compared to the statewide average (Table 1). In particular, Monterey County Hispanic youth are 53 percent more likely to be arrested for a felony than Hispanic youth statewide, Monterey female youth are 73 percent more likely to be arrested for a felony than female youth statewide, and the county's other races and males also show higher felony levels than their statewide counterparts. This pattern is puzzling, given

<sup>2</sup> In 2005, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) formed the Division of Juvenile Facilities (DJF). While DJF is frequently referenced as the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), this report uses DJF unless quoting.

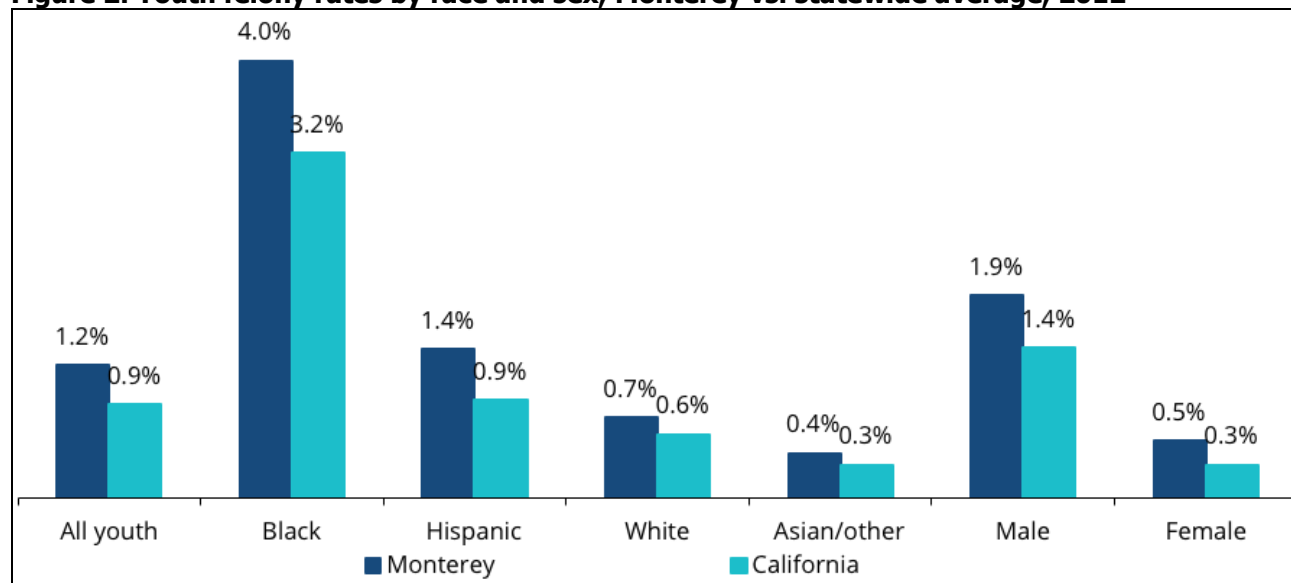
that, for each race, Monterey County has a lower than average rate of youth living in households with incomes below poverty guidelines and lower poverty level is generally connected to lower arrest rates.

**Table 1. Comparison of Monterey and California felony arrest rate by race, poverty level, 2012**

	Youth felony rate		Youth felony arrests		Population age 10-17		Poverty level age 12-17	
	Monterey	California	Monterey	California	Monterey	California	Monterey	California
All youth	1.2%	0.9%	578	36,368	47,420	4,251,973	17.1%	17.8%
Black	2.7%	3.2%	32	8,288	1,180	260,381	19.6%	25.3%
Hispanic	1.4%	0.9%	467	18,946	34,154	2,115,699	21.8%	24.3%
White	0.7%	0.6%	63	7,196	8,540	1,229,458	5.7%	8.1%
Asian/other	0.5%	0.3%	16	1,938	3,546	646,435	7.7%	14.0%
Male	1.9%	1.4%	458	30,092	24,499	2,179,688	16.7%	17.6%
Female	0.5%	0.3%	120	6,276	22,921	2,072,284	17.5%	18.0%

Source: CJSC (2013); U.S. Census (2013).

**Figure 2. Youth felony rates by race and sex, Monterey vs. statewide average, 2012**



Source: CJSC (2013).

### Local anomalies in arrest and poverty rates

Monterey County cities vary widely in their rates of youth arrests for felonies, and, contrary to the general rule, variations in arrests do not consistently track poverty levels. In the 2010-2012 period, for example, a number equal to 8.5% of the youth population of Monterey (city) were arrested in that city for felonies over the three-year period, compared to 4.5% in Salinas. Monterey's considerably higher youth felony rate may come as a surprise, given the attention focused on gang and other serious crime in Salinas and the higher poverty levels in Salinas. Table 2 compares felony arrest rates for the 2010-2012 period for the county's jurisdictions individually and, at the bottom, in four general categories.

Looked at another way, Salinas, with 41 percent of the county's youth population and 56 percent of its youth living in poverty, accounts for 48 percent of the county's juvenile felony arrests—a somewhat lower youth crime volume than its economic conditions would predict. In contrast, Monterey, Carmel, and Marina together account for 14 percent of youth felony arrests, but just 8 percent of the county's youth population and 5 percent of youth living in poverty—a considerably worse youth crime situation than would be predicted from these cities' more favorable economic conditions. There may be local explanations for these anomalies; it would be useful to know the residences of youths arrested, not just where they were arrested.

**Table 2. Comparison of Monterey County and California felony arrest rate by race, poverty level, three year period, 2010-2012**

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Felony arrest Percent</u>	<u>Monterey youth age 10-17</u>		
		<u>Felonies</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Poverty rate</u>
Monterey (city)	8.5%	130	1,521	9.0%
Sand City	8.3%	3	36	27.8%
Carmel	6.4%	9	141	0.0%
Soledad	5.5%	101	1,847	23.4%
Marina	5.0%	115	2,286	14.8%
King City	5.0%	93	1,872	16.1%
Greenfield	4.8%	107	2,250	23.0%
Salinas	4.5%	897	19,845	26.8%
County total	3.9%	1,855	47,433	19.9%
Gonzales	3.9%	51	1,315	27.0%
Seaside	2.6%	94	3,626	22.9%
Pacific Grove	2.5%	34	1,343	4.9%
Rural areas of county	2.0%	221	11,223	9.9%
Del Rey Oaks	0.0%	0	128	0.0%
<b>Affluent jurisdictions, high arrest rate</b>				
Monterey, Carmel, Marina	6.4%	254	3,948	12.0%
<b>Poorer jurisdictions, high arrest rate</b>				
Sand City/Soledad/Greenfield/Salinas	4.6%	1,108	23,978	26.2%
<b>Poorer jurisdictions, low arrest rate</b>				
Gonzales/Seaside	2.9%	145	4,941	24.0%
<b>Affluent jurisdictions, low arrest rate</b>				
Pacific Grove/Del Rey Oaks/rural	2.0%	255	12,694	9.4%

Source: CJSC (2013); U.S. Census (2013).

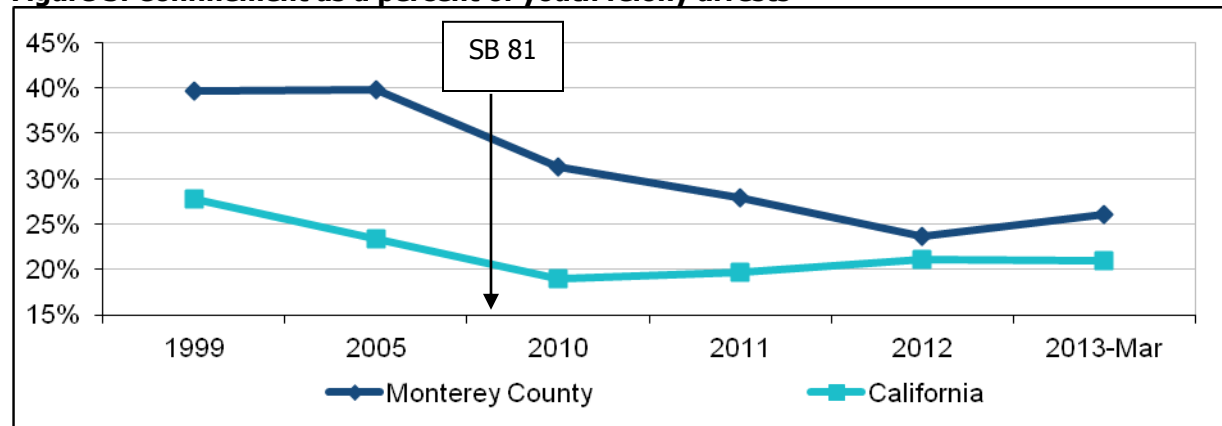
The bottom of Table 2 shows that while the larger rule is that poorer areas have higher arrest rates than wealthier ones, there are two sets of anomalies: lower-poverty communities that have higher than average youth felony rates (Monterey, Marina, and Carmel), and higher-poverty communities with lower than average youth felony rates (Gonzales and Seaside). While it is not surprising that Del Rey Oaks and the generally more affluent rural areas of the county had few youths arrested for felonies, it is unexpected that Gonzales (with a similarly sized youth population and a poverty rate triple that of Monterey) would have a youth felony rate that was less than half that of Monterey over the last 3 years.

## Current youth incarceration in Monterey County

Monterey has relied on confinement to manage justice-involved youth more than other California counties as a whole. Reliable figures for confinement in DJF and local county juvenile camps and detention facilities extend back to 1999. In 1999, approximately 0.66 percent (66 in every 10,000 youth) of Monterey County's youth were confined, compared to 0.48 percent statewide (48 in every 10,000 youth). By March 2013, 0.32 percent of the county's youth were confined, compared to 0.19 percent across California, or 32 versus 19 in every 10,000 youth.

Youth confinement in DJF fell dramatically both in Monterey County (down 88 percent) and statewide (down 90 percent) over the last 14 years. However, confinement in local camps and detention halls has dropped nearly twice as fast statewide (down 40 percent) compared to a 21 percent decline in Monterey County. In 2007 significant legislation was passed that restricted use of state confinement for justice-involved youth. This legislation, Senate Bill 81, realigned youth offenders to the local level unless they committed an offense enumerated under Welfare and Institutions Code § 707 (b); therefore, after the law was implemented, this population of youth was no longer eligible for confinement at state youth correctional facilities. SB 81 allocated additional resources to the counties to allow them to bear a greater responsibility for justice-involved youth at the local level. One of the designated funding streams allocated is the Local Youthful Offender Rehabilitative Facility Construction Funding Program, which provides funds for construction of local facilities on a competitive basis.

**Figure 3. Confinement as a percent of youth felony arrests**



Source: BSCC (2013); CJSC (2013).

Currently, 70 percent of the youth in the juvenile hall are pre-disposition (awaiting processing or otherwise have not been adjudicated), and 65 percent are charged with or convicted of misdemeanors. Both of these proportions appear above the state average for juvenile halls (Table 3).

**Table 3. Comparison of Monterey and statewide youth arrests and use of local confinement for felonies and misdemeanors**

	Percent of youth population		Raw numbers	
	Monterey	California	Monterey	California
Felony arrests	1.22%	0.89%	578	36,368
Violent	0.27%	0.23%	127	9,437
Nonviolent	0.95%	0.66%	451	26,931
Misdemeanor arrests	2.38%	1.66%	1,130	67,960
Youth population			47,420	4,097,768
<b>Confinement in juvenile hall and camp as a percent of the youth population</b>				
Felony	0.28%	0.17%	132	6,903
Misdemeanor	0.12%	0.04%	56	1,596
Pre-disposition	0.13%	0.05%	60	2,231
<b>Confinement in juvenile hall and camp as a percent of arrests, respectively</b>				
Felony	22.84%	18.98%	132	6,903
Misdemeanor	4.96%	2.35%	56	1,596
Pre-disposition	3.51%	2.14%	60	2,231

\*Disposition and population figures are for March 2013. Felony arrest figures are for 2012.

Sources: BSCC (2013); CJSJ (2013); DRU (2013).

## Projection of youth confinement needs in Monterey County

While CJCJ explored several different projection scenarios, the subsequent estimate of county youth confinement capacity projects a maximally self-sufficient approach in which Monterey County assumes full responsibility for all justice-involved youth. In particular, CJCJ assumes: (a) that Division of Juvenile Facilities will not be available in the future, and (b) that Monterey County replaces its 114-bed Wellington Smith Jr. Juvenile Hall with a newer facility (County of Monterey, 2013). This approach is presented in order to account for the maximum projected number of youth that Monterey County Probation Department would be responsible for serving.

Monterey County Probation Department has already implemented several interventions to strengthen alternatives to incarceration, reversing a historic county trend of favoring incarceration (Monterey County Chief Probation Officer Manuel Real, personal communication, February 10, 2014). Therefore, this projection also assumes Monterey County will continue to implement interventions that reduce use of detention to the statewide average. It is possible that Probation Department reform efforts could exceed that expectation as has been demonstrated in other counties. For example, Solano County has a similar youth population and felony arrest rate to Monterey County, and similar presence of a higher-crime urban center, but a much lower youth detention rate, predisposition confinement rate, and misdemeanor confinement rate (15% below the statewide average).

### Assumptions

In June 2013, Monterey County had 19 youths in DJF facilities and an average daily population (ADP) of 86 youth in the local juvenile hall and 47 youth in the Youth Center. The ADP does not reflect full capacity needs. During the 15-month, January 2012 to March 2013 period, the highest daily youth populations totaled 99 in the juvenile hall and 59 in the Monterey County Youth Center (on January 1, 2012), a total of 158 occupied beds. Further, under CJCJ's assumption of self-sufficiency the county would



be required to absorb youths formerly sent to DJF, bring maximum confinement capacity needs to around 178 beds. Allowing up to 5 percent excess for contingencies, 187 beds would be needed on a daily basis in 2013. Additionally, Monterey County's total youth population age 10-17 is forecast by the state Department of Finance to bottom out at 47,400 in 2014, then to rise steadily by 14 percent to 54,400 by 2035 (DRU, 2013).

Assuming (a) the projected 14 percent increase in Monterey's youth population by 2035, (b) no use of DJF, (c) closure of the current juvenile hall, (d) retention of the Youth Center at the current capacity of 76 beds, and (d) factoring in the highest daily detained population and a 5 percent excess (see summary in Table 4), CJCJ makes the following estimate.

### ***Stable Crime, Low Detention Estimate***

This estimate assumes that (a) Monterey County juvenile felony arrest rates remain at 2012 levels, and (b) Monterey County reduces its youth confinement per felony, currently 26.1 percent, to at or below the state average (21.0 percent), by reducing its higher than average levels of pre-disposition and misdemeanor confinement. Given that Monterey's youth crime rate has been steadily declining, this is a conservative estimate requiring only modest reforms by juvenile justice stakeholders.

This can be accomplished, among other reforms, by increasing use of alternative supervision (i.e., home supervision, with and without electronic monitor) from the county's current 13.2 percent of justice-involved youth that are on alternative supervision, to the statewide average of 17.9 percent. These minor modifications of local practices will slowly reduce the need for youth confinement comparable to other counties even as the overall youth population increases.

Under these assumptions, the county could expect an ADP of 138 youth by 2035, requiring 170 total beds, by 2035. This would require construction of new detention hall capacity of 94 new beds over the next two decades. This allows for occasional population peaks and a contingency margin. The need for additional capacity in Monterey County appears both small and slow in developing over space or opportunity, allowing time for reasoned policies to develop, including ones to reduce both high felony arrest and high per-felony detention rates.

**Table 4. Projected Bed Need by 2035**

By 2035	Calculation	Stable crime, low detention
Maximum daily population	162	162
Plus 5% buffer	$162 * 0.05$	8
Total beds needed (all facilities)	$162 + 8$	170
Minus Youth Center capacity (76 beds)	$170 - 76$	94
<b>Total new beds (Juvenile Hall)</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>94</b>

Sources: BSCC (2013); Monterey County (2013); CJSC (2013); DRU (2013).

Several factors complicate estimating costs associated with this projection. It is assumed that the county would send most of those offenders who formerly would have gone to DJF to the more secure (and costly) Youth Center rather than to Juvenile Hall. While the Youth Center currently has sufficient capacity to



absorb these wards (perhaps necessitating redesigns to the Youth Center), there may be occasional transfers to Juvenile Hall during days of maximum occupancy. However, compared to current practices, this projection would reduce county juvenile hall detention costs by around \$1.1 million per year, at \$90,000 annual costs per juvenile hall ADP ward in 2012 dollars.

## **Recommendations**

In recent years, Monterey County has arrested youths for felonies and misdemeanors at rates 40 percent higher, and then confined its youthful offenders at levels 35 percent higher per arrest, than other counties. Meanwhile, on average, the county experienced less favorable juvenile crime trends with respect to both violent and non-violent crime rates over the past 30 years than have other counties, no matter which time periods are compared. That is, maintaining high rates of arrest and confinement is not associated with successful crime prevention or reduction. Based on the preliminary analysis, CJCJ respectfully recommends:

- **Monterey County jurisdictions should examine ways to reduce the county's generally high youth arrest rate.**

Not only does the county have average or below average levels of poverty among youth compared to the state as a whole, which typically correlates with lower arrest rates, jurisdictions within the county show widely varying youth felony rates that are inconsistently related to poverty levels. If these large and unexpected local discrepancies are not artifacts (say, of large numbers of out-of-county tourists being arrested in Monterey and Marina, for example), they provide the opportunity to study a variety of existing prevention, policing, processing, and probation alternatives to reduce the county's generally high youth arrest levels that, in turn, impact criminal justice and incarceration resources.

- **Monterey County should continue to explore increased use of alternative supervision.**

Monterey County should continue to explore alternative or expansion of existing policies and practices designed to reduce its confinement rates to at or below the state average. The county could reduce its current detention and camp population from a total of 151 to around 120 youths, which in turn would reduce future capacity needs and costs. The fiscal question is whether more effective and rehabilitative methods can be found for certain youth that now cost \$89,000 to \$120,000 to confine.

- **Monterey County should conduct a new comprehensive Juvenile Hall needs assessment.**

This preliminary data analysis suggests areas that Monterey County juvenile justice stakeholders could explore to reduce use of juvenile detention without compromising public safety. The assessment of historic and current crime rates identifies trends for further examination and for targeted interventions, such as pre-disposition and misdemeanor youth. In light of these data, deeper analysis of the current juvenile detention population and arrest trends is needed for county stakeholders to evaluate existing interventions, the impact of additional detention reforms, and the projected Juvenile Hall bed need.

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**Please note:** Each year, every county submits their data to the official statewide databases maintained by appointed governmental bodies. While every effort is made to review data for accuracy and to correct information upon revision, CJCJ cannot be responsible for data reporting errors made at the county, state, or national level.

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