

2025-2026 GRAND JURY INSPECTION REPORT FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DETENTION FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE

The State of California, per California Penal Code 919(b), requires all county grand juries to inspect the jails, holding cells, and state prisons within their respective counties annually. The San Luis Obispo County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) toured the local detention facilities, as well as additional related county facilities. The inspected sites are listed below:

1. San Luis Obispo (SLO) County Juvenile Hall
2. SLO County Courthouse Holding Facility
3. California Men's Colony State Prison
4. SLO County Psychiatric Health Facility
5. SLO County Sheriff's Office Crime Lab
6. SLO County Sheriff's Office Property Room
7. SLO County Jail
8. SLO County Coroner's Facility
9. SLO County Office of Emergency Services
10. SLO Police Department Holding Facility
11. SLO County Public Safety Communications Center

This report provides a summary of each toured site. The data for this report is based upon the following: tour observations, notes, verbal and written questions, facilities' websites and previous grand jury reports. The Grand Jury concluded their review without making findings or recommendations.

SLO COUNTY JUVENILE HALL

On October 2, 2025, the Grand Jury conducted a site visit at the Juvenile Hall, a 65-bed detention facility for male and female youth. Youth detained at the Juvenile Hall are either

awaiting the court process or serving additional time ordered by the court. The facility is composed of three levels of detention. The lowest level, the detention unit, has capacity for up to 20 youths who are detained pending court proceedings. The second unit, maximum population 10, is the Coastal Valley Academy where the youth are committed by the court from six months to one year. The third level is the Felony unit for the most serious offenders and have been ordered by the court to participate in a treatment program for up to eighteen months.

Medical services are available at the facility. A Registered Nurse is onsite to evaluate any immediate or chronic health conditions and to administer prescribed medication to the detainees. The medical department is supervised by two onsite Nurse Practitioners. A physician is the overall department head but is only at the facility on occasion. Mental health services are offered 24 hours a day, as needed.

One of the tools used to control detainee behavior is Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) which is an evidence-based program that uses tangible incentives to establish pro-social behavior. The PBIS program has emerged as a major focus for implementing constructive changes among juvenile offenders.

Educational services are provided to the detainees by the SLO County Department of Education. Classes are on site and conducted by teachers holding credentials in multiple disciplines, ensuring educational treatment plans can be uniquely tailored to each detainees' needs.

The outdoor recreation areas were clean, and an indoor gym provided a large basketball court and an area for large meetings and other activities. The facility was observed to be very clean, orderly, and quiet. Staff were professional and related positively with each other and with the detainees.

SLO COUNTY COURTHOUSE HOLDING FACILITY

The Grand Jury conducted a site visit of the County Court Holding facility on October 7, 2025, located in the SLO County Courthouse. There are a total of nine holding cells, and Incarcerated Persons (IPs) are held there for an average of four to eight hours while awaiting their court appearances (lunch is provided when necessary). The officers separate IPs from known gangs in order to reduce potential conflict between them. On any given day the facility processes between 30 and 60 IPs, and they are not housed there overnight.

The facilities are old but clean and well maintained. A new holding facility is scheduled to be included in the planned new SLO County Courthouse.

CALIFORNIA MEN'S COLONY STATE PRISON

The Grand Jury visited the California Men's Colony (CMC) on October 23, 2025. CMC is a medium-security state prison operated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and is located on Highway 1 between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay.

CMC currently houses approximately 2,100 IPs, fewer than the full capacity of 2,350, and has approximately 1,500 employees. Prior to arriving at CMC, each IP is assigned to a custody level from 1 to 4, with 1 requiring the least amount of custody and 4 requiring the highest level of custody. The prison is divided into four yards — A, B, C, and D₂ where IPs are housed based partially on their assigned custody level. One IP is assigned per cell. There is also a 50-bed Mental Health Crisis Center that provides treatment for IPs from prisons around the State.

CMC offers IPs rehabilitation resources to facilitate the opportunity to rejoin society as productive citizens. Services offered include academic programs such as General Education Diploma (GED) preparation coursework and college coursework through Cuesta College. Vocational training is offered where IPs can learn skills such as dog training, vehicle repair, manufacturing clothing, license plate stickers, and other products.

The Grand Jury directly inspected yards A, B, C, and D, which includes cells, exercise and eating facilities, and a canteen. The facility was generally clean and well-maintained. The IPs were orderly and respectful, and mutual respect was observed between the officers and the IPs.

SLO COUNTY PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY

The Grand Jury visited the state licensed San Luis Obispo Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF) on November 4, 2025. Since July 1, 2023, the County has funded a private contractor, Crestwood, to administer services in this repurposed hospital (built in 1879).

The PHF is co-ed, and patients are referred to as guests by the staff. There are 16 adult guest beds contained in eight rooms. There are no beds in this facility for minors.

Admission to the PHF is not voluntary. Most guests are admitted on a Welfare & Institution Code Section 5150 hold as being a danger to themselves or others. If a guest needs treatment beyond 72 hours, the guest may be placed on an additional hold and can remain at the PHF so long as there are sufficient guest beds. If there is not, then the guest will be transferred to another county that has an open psychiatric bed.

The PHF is a locked site and has 52 staff including nurses, a licensed marriage and family therapist, psychiatric technicians, and a recreation therapist. A psychiatrist is on call 24 hours per day. Prior to admission, all guests are evaluated medically at a local hospital to rule out medical issues causing their behavior. They reside in a therapeutic environment where a behavioral therapy program and a wellness recovery plan are designed for each guest in order to decrease psychiatric symptoms and increase personal responsibility for their behavior. Discharge planning for a guest occurs soon after that person is admitted and treatment has begun.

The average occupancy is 14 guests, and the average length of stay is nine days. One bed is kept open in case a person from the jail is held on a Section 5150 warrant. Court hearings occur via Zoom, as needed.

SLO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME LAB

On November 12, 2025, the Grand Jury visited the Crime Lab located at the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office complex and toured the following labs: forensic service, alcohol analysis, chemistry/toxicology, and fingerprint/fiber analysis. All of the labs are small, but available space is utilized efficiently, and the facility is well-maintained.

Forensic specialists conduct crime scene investigations and testing as requested by law enforcement agencies within the County. There is one forensic crime unit, three crime scene investigation labs, and a drug toxicology lab. Evidence is meticulously tracked and tested samples are placed in evidence storage to be processed and completed.

The lab contains a crime light, infrared camera, and equipment that tests the amount of gunpowder on surfaces. Other equipment can test for fingerprints on various types of surfaces, such as clothing. They have a modem connected to the FBI for identifying people whose fingerprints are in the system. There is a rapid DNA machine which can identify DNA in under two hours.

The two forensic specialists were professional and reported that they receive continuous training.

SLO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PROPERTY ROOM

On November 12, 2025, the Grand Jury visited the Sheriff's Office Property Room. It appeared to be clean, well-organized, and maintained, although space is a continuing issue in the building and usage is at capacity. Purging unneeded old evidence occurs daily to make room for new evidence. Homicide forensic evidence is permanently stored at the facility. Firearms are

destroyed after the court orders their destruction and the Department of Justice has been notified. A space freezer stores DNA samples for up to 10 years. Drugs are held in a separate locker from other types of evidence. A refrigeration room is operating and adequate for current needs, although it is also at capacity.

SLO COUNTY JAIL

The Grand Jury visited the Jail on Wednesday November 19, 2025, which houses male and female IPs in maximum, medium, and minimum-security settings. IPs are housed in four primary locations – West Housing, Main Housing, the Kansas Facility, and the Honor Farm. The jail has a 680 bed-capacity and, as of the writing of this report, is housing approximately 550 IPs. Currently, 85% are male and 15% are female.

IPs are assessed and categorized based on their history and needs (medical, etc.) and then placed in an appropriate housing unit. The West, Main, and Kansas facilities are for medium to maximum security IPs. A section of the Jail called Kansas Max houses people considered seriously mentally ill (approximately 16% of the population, as of this writing). The Honor Farm is a more open facility for low to medium-level, nonviolent offenders. It provides opportunities for IPs to gain certain job skills, including graphic design and working with metal, paint, and wood materials. Notable is a bike giveaway program, where the IPs and staff work on new and used bikes for qualified youth within the communities. Currently, there are 20 males and 20 females living at the Honor Farm.

The County Jail houses a medical area with several exam rooms where medical services are provided. These services include primary care, dental, and mental health, and are provided by a team of medical and therapeutic professionals, as overseen by the Sheriff's Chief Medical Officer and staff.

Good behavior is incentivized by staff with a points system. Rewarded behaviors can include (but are not limited to) taking medications, completing tasks, using proper hygiene, and acceptable community behavior. This has created positive results within the housing units.

The Sheriff's deputies and staff have made enormous efforts to make the atmosphere rehabilitative, not just punitive. The range of medical services, educative programs, and incentive-based systems utilized illustrate their commitment.

SLO COUNTY CORONER'S FACILITY

The Grand Jury visited the County Coroner's office on Tuesday December 2, 2025. It is part of the Detective's division of the SLO County Sheriff-Coroner's Department and is comprised of office space, a central autopsy suite, a walk-in refrigerated unit (housing up to 16 bodies), and miscellaneous storage space. There is also a viewing room and a staff break room.

Approximately 350 autopsies are performed each year. One-third of deaths are overdose related and most commonly involve fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine.

All spaces viewed were clean and orderly, and appeared to be in proper operating condition. The four Sheriff-Coroner deputy investigators work well with the smaller workspace and limited vehicles they have at their disposal.

SLO COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Grand Jury visited the SLO County Office of Emergency Services Facility (OES) on December 16, 2025, otherwise known as the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC is currently co-located with the PG&E Emergency Operations Facility. The Dispatch Center will be moving to a new location in 2026. The EOC is the location where emergency management teams coordinate and respond to disasters. It is used to manage information, coordinate response efforts, and communicate with government and private stakeholders (including the public), and the media. It has state-of-the-art mapping and communication systems to ensure public safety.

OES is responsible for the weekly and monthly Emergency Alert Test broadcasts on local Radio/TV stations. It is also responsible for the Early Warning System Sirens and conducts quarterly growl tests.

The EOC is the primary command and control center outside of the Plant, should a nuclear emergency happen. The OES is to be commended for the work it is doing to ensure the safety of the residents and visitors of the County.

SLO POLICE DEPARTMENT HOLDING FACILITY

The Grand Jury visited the San Luis Obispo Police Department (SLOPD) holding cells on January 28, 2026. The two holding cells and one transfer cell were in fair condition for their intended short-term use. Bookings are now done electronically from the police vehicle, and those arrested are taken directly to the San Luis Obispo County Jail, rather than being held at the SLOPD.

SLO COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

The Grand Jury visited the new Dispatch Center on Tuesday February 17, 2026. It is a newly built facility and is co-located with CalFire Dispatch in Templeton, California. The two-story building is over 20,000 square feet and is situated next to a 140-foot communications tower. It is designed to withstand emergencies such as an 8-9 magnitude earthquake. A 1,000-gallon back-up diesel generator can keep the building and communications running for up to 96 hours.

The Sheriff's Dispatch Center occupies a large section of the second floor, easily tripling the size of the former dispatch space. It houses 14 stations and utilizes state-of-the-art equipment and advanced dispatch technology. Dispatcher staffing is almost to capacity (21), including trainees. Also within the center is office space for the watch commander and dispatch supervisor. The remaining space on the second floor is occupied by CalFire dispatch services.

The first floor consists mainly of a large computer server room and numerous offices for Sheriff and CalFire employees. A kitchen, indoor/outdoor breakrooms, a gym, restrooms/showers, and dorm space complete this new facility.

The shared space allows for enhanced emergency response coordination between multiple agencies. Currently, the center is responsible for all 911 calls in the unincorporated areas of SLO county, as well as Morro Bay, Grover Beach, and Arroyo Grande. Although dispatch is currently not contracted for service to every city within SLO County, the new space allows for future physical and operational expansion.

CONCLUSION

The Grand Jury has completed its mandated inspection of all county jails, prisons, and holding facilities as required and has not identified any findings or recommendations for this report. The Grand Jury inspected related county support agencies as listed earlier in this report, also with no findings or recommendations.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

This is an informational report. No responses are required.

Presiding Judge	Grand Jury
Presiding Judge Tana Coates Superior Court of California 1035 Palm Street Room 355 San Luis Obispo, CA 93408	San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury P.O. Box 4910 San Luis Obispo, CA 93403