

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 HHCYC is critical. The presence of law enforcement should be reserved for high-risk situations, critical incidents, or times of peak census. HHCYC 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 HHCYC often display behaviors rooted in trauma and emotional distress.

HHCYC 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, HHCYC 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.