

Intensive Services Foster Care for Juvenile Justice Involved Youth

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Panel

- **Rosa Hernandez**, JPD Program Director, Alternative Family Services (AFS)
- **Andrea Pittman**, Resource Parent, Alternative Family Services (AFS)
- **Lisa Randall**, Supervising Probation Officer, San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (JPD)
- **Maria McKee**, Director of Grants, Analytics, & Planning, San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (JPD)

San Francisco Juvenile Probation Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC)

History

- Prior to the ISFC program, youth ordered to out of home placement in San Francisco were waiting +25 days in custody due to limited/decreasing foster care options.
- In spring 2021, a UC Berkeley analysis recommended that JPD contract with a Foster Family Agency for ISFC placements recruited specifically for the juvenile justice population.



San Francisco Juvenile Probation Intensive Services Foster Care

Funding

- Title IV-E covers less than half the total cost of the program, which includes monthly reservation payments to Resource Families to ensure capacity for JPD referrals.
- In fall 2021, SFJPD collaborated with the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and their Families to issue an RFP for ISFC, resulting in a grant to Alternative Family Services (AFS), funded through a Board of Supervisors mandated budget allocation for “Juvenile Hall Placement Alternatives.”
- In 2023, JPD received approval for a CDSS Complex Care Capacity Building Request for the Intensive Services Foster Care Program.



Alternative Family Services

- The mission of Alternative Family Services (AFS) is to support vulnerable children and families in need of stability, safety, and well-being in their communities
- Since 1973, AFS has provided thoughtful, informed foster care, adoption, and mental health services throughout Northern California
- AFS serves roughly 600 youth each year
- AFS is a licensed Foster Family Agency (FFA)

AFS Intensive Services Foster Care

Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) is a Resource Family care option for youth who need intensive treatment and behavioral support. Youth in ISFC homes receive a higher level of care and supervision than traditional foster care.

Resource parents who are certified to provide ISFC must undergo additional training, are paid more, and get more access to support and respite.



AFS has recruited culturally responsive homes (including Spanish speaking), specifically for the San Francisco juvenile justice population.

Homes are selected by AFS according to their ability to work with the target population.

Homes located in San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, and Solano Counties

Reservation fees hold beds for Juvenile Probation referrals. Once youth are placed, homes also receive state ISFC rate.



Partnership with SFCASA: youth are matched with trained volunteer advocates, who may also serve as Education Rights Holders as needed. Volunteer advocates provide community and court-based advocacy, as well as community linkages, and follow the youth through placement changes.

Probation ISFC Target Population

Youth ordered to out of home placement by the San Francisco Juvenile Court

- Includes pre-adjudicated youth ordered to emergency shelter.

Additional characteristics include:

- Ages: 13-18, mostly 16 or older
- Gender: girls, boys, and gender expansive
- Special Populations including but not limited to, youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, monolingual Spanish-speaking youth, youth with behavioral health needs, unaccompanied youth, and youth who are alleged or found to have committed serious and/or violent crimes.

AFS does not accept:

- Youth with validated gang affiliation
- Youth with alleged or sustained charges of arson or homicide
- Youth who have an extensive history of aggressive behaviors toward caretakers or history of firearms charges
- *Each youth assessed on a case-by-case basis and exclusions may be waived by AFS.*

AFS Care Coordination



Individualized
intensive case
management

Access to a mental
health clinician

24/7 immediate
response to Youth and
Resource Families,
crisis response, &
probation referrals

Strengths-based,
trauma-informed,
Child and Family Team
meeting participation

Placement
stabilization &
emergency care

Long-term, transition
planning to extended
foster care

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AFS Principles

Voice and Choice

Child and Family Team

Community Based Services

Cultural Competence

Outcome Based Services

Individualized Services

Strength Based Services

Natural Support

Persistence

Collaboration

Probation Perspective



Impact

- Served 45+ young people since 2021.
- 2024 evaluation found that program appears to reduce time in detention and recidivism; but also appears to have higher AWOL rates than STRTP placements, especially for girls.

Benefits

- Immediate access to beds
- Emergency placement options
- Skill and compassion of Resource Families
- Stable and culturally competent home environments for youth
- Holistic services and care for youth
- Strong collaboration between JPD & AFS

Challenges

- Limited number of homes in San Francisco
- No co-enrollment with Wraparound/ disruption of services

Resource Family Perspective

Culturally responsive homes recruited specifically to work with the juvenile justice population.

Resource parents are certified to provide Intensive Services Foster Care: higher level of care/supervision, additional training, higher rate, more access to support and respite.

Questions?

