



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
DAVID O. LIVINGSTON
SHERIFF – CORONER

July 24, 2026

Ms. Brenda Balingit, Foreperson
2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

VIA EMAIL AND US MAIL

RE: Response to Report No. 2606, Cost of Adult Detention Facilities

Dear Ms. Balingit:

In response to the Grand Jury Report (2606) dated May 21, 2026, wherein you submitted findings and recommendations regarding the cost of Adult Detention Facilities, please see the responses below:

Findings

F1. The Sheriff's Quarterly Oversight Report to the Board of Supervisors regarding the cost of detention borne by the Sheriff's Department does not include costs borne by other County departments, such as the cost of medical and mental health services.

Response: Agree with the finding.

F2. In 2025, the average daily cost to detain an adult in custody at the County's three detention facilities, including mental and medical services, was \$396.

Response: Agree with the finding.

F3. At \$627 per day, Marsh Creek Detention Facility (MCDF) costs more to house inmates than Martinez Detention Facility (\$511) or West County Detention Facility (\$278).

Response: Agree with the finding.

F4. MCDF operates at 20% of its capacity.

Response: Agree with the finding.

F5. The Custody Alternative Facility (CAF) does not separately report the costs of the programs it administers: Sheriff's Work Alternative Program, Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitoring, and Electronic Home Detention.

Response: Agree with the finding.

F6. The most recently available, Sheriff's Community Transparency Portal, does not report on the costs of managing the adult detention facilities.

Response: Agree with the finding.

Recommendations:

R1. By January 1, 2027, the Board should consider requiring an audit to determine the full costs of adult detention facilities.

Response: The Sheriff's Office acknowledges the Grand Jury's recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Whether to conduct an audit is a policy decision for the Board to consider. The Board should weigh the potential value of an audit against the associated costs and staff resources.

The Sheriff's Office already operates under established County budgeting, accounting, and financial oversight processes. An audit would not reduce the costs of providing constitutionally mandated detention services and may provide limited value beyond the oversight mechanisms already in place.

R2. Upon completion of the audit and no later than June 30, 2027, the Board should consider directing the auditor to report on the review of the full costs of operating each of the adult detention facilities.

Response: The Sheriff's Office recognizes that the Board of Supervisors may choose to direct a comprehensive audit of the adult detention facilities. In making that determination, the Board should consider the significant financial costs, personnel resources, and time required to conduct such an audit, as well as the potential impact on County operations. Following review of the audit findings and any related analyses, the Board can then evaluate whether directing the auditor to report on the full costs of operating each adult detention facility would provide meaningful additional information to support future policy and budgetary decision-making that justifies the expense of the audit.

R3. By October 31, 2026, the Sheriff's Office should consider clarifying in its Quarterly Oversight Report that the detention costs reflect only the Sheriff's Office costs.

Response: The Sheriff's Office acknowledges this recommendation. The recommendation will be implemented. The Office of the Sheriff will clarify in future Quarterly Oversight Reports that the detention costs presented reflect only expenditures incurred by the Office of the Sheriff and do not include costs incurred by other County departments or agencies.

R4. The Sheriff's Office should consider collecting and publishing reasons for denials or disqualifications for all three CAF programs.

Response: The Sheriff's Office acknowledges this recommendation. CAF has tracked participant denials and disqualifications since 2017; however, the Office of the Sheriff does not support publicly reporting this information because it may involve confidential criminal justice, medical, or other protected information. Maintaining these records for internal operational, oversight, and audit purposes provides appropriate accountability while protecting participant privacy.

R5. By July 1, 2027, the Board should consider directing the Sheriff's Office to close MCDF.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. MCDF is the County's only dormitory-style, less restrictive custody facility and provides an appropriate housing option for lower-risk offenders. Unlike traditional jail housing, participants have increased out-of-bunk time, greater access to programming, and a rehabilitative environment while continuing to receive the same medical and mental health services available at the County's other detention facilities.

MCDF offers a variety of educational, vocational, and reentry programs that support rehabilitation and successful reintegration. Closing the facility would eliminate an important correctional resource, reduce housing flexibility, and be inconsistent with the Office of the Sheriff's commitment to providing appropriate custody options while reserving higher-security beds for offenders who require them.

R6. By December 31, 2026, the Board should consider directing the Sheriff's Office to collect and report cost data separately for each CAF program.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Producing separate cost analyses for the Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP), Electronic Home Detention (EHD), and SCRAM programs would require the development of new accounting methodologies to allocate shared personnel, facilities, equipment, vendor, and administrative costs. Following consultation with the Fiscal Unit, it was determined that implementing and maintaining this process would require significant staff time and resources and is operationally infeasible.

Letter to Civil Grand Jury Foreperson Brenda Balingit re Response to Grand Jury Report No. 2606

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Please let me know if my staff or I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Livingston", is written over the printed name.

DAVID O. LIVINGSTON
Sheriff-Coroner

DOL:jf