



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Sheriff-Coroner

Subject: Report on Inmate Welfare Trust Fund 2024

Meeting Date: May 20, 2025

Formal Title: Accept and file report on the Inmate Welfare Trust Fund for calendar year 2024

Recommended Actions

Accept and file the report on the Inmate Welfare Trust Fund for calendar year 2024.

Executive Summary

The California Penal Code Section 4025 provides for the administration of an Inmate Welfare Fund (IWF) and requires an annual itemized report of expenditures to the Board of Supervisors regarding expenditures, a summary of activities and various educational programs.

Discussion

The Inmate Welfare Fund plays a vital role in fostering positive change in the lives of individuals housed in Santa Cruz County correctional facilities. By providing financial support for programs, activities, and services offered in custody, the Fund helps create opportunities for growth, rehabilitation, and successful reentry into the community. The Inmate Welfare Fund supports initiatives across all four correctional facilities in the county: Main Jail, Rountree Men's Medium Security Programs Facility, Rehabilitation and Re-entry (R&R) Facility, and Blaine Street Women's Medium Security Facility.

The Inmate Welfare Fund began January 1, 2024, with a balance of \$324,498. The revenues during the 2024 calendar year totaled \$282,604. The expenditures totaling \$187,465 were used for the education, recreation, and/or welfare of the incarcerated persons as required by Penal Code 4025. As of December 31, 2024, the program had a balance of \$418,995.

Rehabilitative programming offers incarcerated individuals' meaningful opportunities for self-improvement and personal growth. Through evidence-based interventions and cognitive-behavioral skill development, participants build the foundation for healthier decision-making and long-term behavioral change. These programs are key to preparing individuals for successful reentry into the community and play a critical role in reducing recidivism. In-Custody Programs is further enhanced by Assembly Bill (AB) 109 funding, which expands access and availability across the four facilities.

In-Custody programs provide a wide range of rehabilitative services across all correctional facilities, equipping incarcerated individuals with the skills, knowledge, and support needed for successful reintegration into the community. These programs, which include educational classes, vocational training, substance use recovery, life skills development, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and wellness initiatives, are designed to address the underlying causes of criminal behavior and promote long-term success upon release. Across the bureau, more than 50 distinct programs, activities, and services are successfully operating, reflecting a strong commitment to rehabilitation, personal growth, and reentry preparation while supporting the diverse needs of the

incarcerated population.

The Women's Recovery and Reentry Program (WRRP), located at the Blaine Street Facility, was nationally recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice as a training and mentor site for Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) programs in 2024. WRRP is designed to enhance the safety, well-being, and overall quality of life for justice-involved women by reducing substance use and recidivism. The program is a collaborative effort between the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, Friends Outside of the Volunteer Center, and New Life's Gemma House. In recognition of its impact, the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) awarded WRRP an additional three years of funding.

In 2024, we successfully implemented our key goals aimed at enhancing reentry preparation and support for incarcerated individuals. A significant achievement was the expansion of our vocational training programs, including a new partnership with Goodwill Industries to deliver employment development classes focused on job readiness and skill-building. Additionally, a culinary arts class at the Blaine Street Facility, provided by the County Office of Education, now offers participants the opportunity to earn an industry-recognized ServSafe certification, equipping them with valuable skills for employment in the food service industry.

We also strengthened our Outreach Services component by establishing and deepening collaborative efforts with several community partners. These include Friends Outside for comprehensive reentry planning, the Probation Department for the "How to Succeed on Probation" program, the WINGS Program for assistance in obtaining vital records, Cabrillo College's Rising Scholars Program for access to higher education opportunities, and the Homeless Garden Project, which offers transitional employment and support services. These partnerships have significantly enhanced the continuum of care and support available to individuals as they prepare to reenter the community.

We are excited to embark on a new partnership that will bring beauty and wellness to the Blaine Street Facility. In collaboration with the UC Master Gardeners of Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, together, we will turn the underused backyard into a vibrant communal space. The project will include a vegetable garden, a serenity garden for relaxation, and a walking path to promote mindfulness and movement. This project is rooted in our shared belief that green spaces can heal, connect, and inspire, fostering growth for our Blaine Street community. Additionally, the Master Gardeners will facilitate horticulture and gardening classes as part of vocational training, offering valuable skills for personal and professional development.

Release clothing is available to incarcerated persons through IWF, ensuring they don't have to leave custody in ill-fitting or dirty clothing. This initiative provides a clean outfit—including a sweatshirt and sweatpants, shirt, socks, undergarments, and shoes—so individuals can step into their next chapter with confidence and a sense of dignity. By offering this simple but meaningful support, the program helps create a sense of renewal and a fresh start as they transition back into the community.

Financial Impact

The recommended actions have no financial impact on the General Fund.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

Submitted By:

Chris Clark, Sheriff-Coroner

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.