



When Making Do Doesn't Work: San Francisco Jails in Crisis



2025-2026 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury Report
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About the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury

The San Francisco Civil Grand Jury (the “Jury”) is a government oversight panel of nineteen San Francisco citizens who volunteer for one year. Each Jury determines which local government entities within San Francisco it will investigate. The Jury cannot investigate disputes between private parties, criminal activity, or activities outside its jurisdiction, which is the government of the City and County of San Francisco (“City”) and any other local governments within San Francisco city limits.

The Jury publishes public reports with findings and recommendations based on its investigations.

Read more about the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury here:

<https://www.sf.gov/departments--civil-grand-jury>

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Executive Summary

Three distinct and mutually reinforcing trends are combining to create a crisis for the San Francisco County Jails (the "Jails"). First, legal changes and enforcement priorities – particularly surrounding increased arrests for drug crimes and retail theft – have driven large increases in the average daily population ("ADP") in the Jails. This population arrives with more acute mental, physical, and behavioral health needs than ever. Second, this population is housed in neglected, overburdened facilities supported by a technology infrastructure from a bygone era. Third, funding, staffing levels and training are insufficient for current needs, leaving staff too stretched to carry out duties effectively. The San Francisco Sheriff's Office ("SFSO") exceeds its overtime budgets by millions annually, at the expense of essential capital projects and maintenance.

These problems form a vicious cycle, and each, left unaddressed, fuels the others. The system is left at a breaking point with no end in sight.

The Jury's investigation revealed a distressing situation inside the Jails, outside the public's view:

- The Jails population is climbing, is dangerously close to functional capacity, and higher than during a series of violent eruptions that injured staff and inmates in 2024.
- The SFSO reopened a dormitory-style facility ("the Annex") that was closed in 2010. It was designed to house minimum security male inmates and multiple studies have concluded that it is not a safe place to house maximum-security inmates. With the Jail's minimum security male population at approximately 17.5%, the Annex houses mostly medium and maximum-security male inmates in open dormitory spaces.¹
- Today's population has acute medical, behavioral, and substance use challenges; all compounded by ready access to fentanyl, methamphetamine, and other drugs in open air drug markets in the Tenderloin and SOMA's Sixth Street corridor. The Jails weren't built for this population.
- Every weekday, 100 or so inmates ride decrepit buses from San Bruno to San Francisco to wait for court proceedings. The Jails lost their court holding facility when the Bryant Street Jails closed in 2020; they received no funding to replace it. The Intake and Release Jail now overflows with people being booked, released, or waiting for court. Overflow arrivals from San Bruno now wait in the gym, making it unavailable for state mandated exercise for CJ#2 inmates while it's being used as a makeshift holding tank in the morning.
- Sworn staffing in the Custody Operations Division has run 20-30% below authorized levels for years. The Jails regularly operate below minimum required staffing levels.

¹ February 17, 2026 Daily Count Report, provided by SFSO. Not all inmates are classified by security level.

- Deputies average 28 hours of overtime per week, with some reaching more than 100 hours worked in a week. The Annex is staffed entirely on overtime. Excessive overtime jeopardizes everyone's safety.

All of this threatens the safety and wellbeing of everyone who occupies the Jails – inmates, employees and visitors. Jail staff are left to do the best they can under untenable circumstances. Witnesses repeatedly referenced a Jails culture of "making do." But making do – getting by with inadequate resources – does not work in a heavily regulated institution with legal obligations to those housed behind its walls, where nearly everyone will return to the community in short order.

Most inmates in the Jails have not been found guilty of a crime. It is a population with a growing rate of acute mental, physical, and substance abuse issues when they are taken into custody. Many are unhoused and have no fixed address. It is not realistic to think these issues will be resolved by spending a day or three in the Jails. They will almost certainly have the same issues when released. Cycling people through broken, understaffed facilities and back into the city time and time again is not a win for the inmates, the staff, or the public.

The Jails are not the masters of their own destiny. They have no say in new laws or changing law enforcement practices, how the District Attorney charges and prosecutes misdemeanor cases, how long counsel and the courts take to get cases to trial, or how long people remain in jail awaiting sentencing or after a sentence begins. Through all this, Jails must take almost everyone that the police bring through their doors. "No Vacancy" signs are not an option.

And yet, the Jails have become San Francisco's tool of last resort for absorbing residents with untreated addiction, mental illness, and no place to sleep. The treatment infrastructure wasn't designed to, and cannot, support the volume or the acuity of the population's needs. If the Jails are expected to function as the last stop on the road to break the cycle, the City must provide sufficient resources - for infrastructure, treatment, reentry services and staffing. The SFSO will administer 15,000 releases from this broken system this year - more than 1000 per month. The financial and human costs are immense.

This report examines how we got here, shedding light on critical San Francisco functions rarely in the public view and offers Findings and Recommendations for improvement.

The City and County of San Francisco is facing a crisis that no longer can be ignored. Making do no longer works.

How We Got Here: A Story of Poor Planning and Capital Neglect

How did San Francisco wind up with such a dilapidated system? The macro story is one of glaring, persistent capital neglect, coupled with a critical mistaken assumption that the Jail population would not rebound from COVID-period lows.

A crisis in capacity was foreseeable. San Francisco long planned to close the seismically unsafe Hall of Justice (HOJ) jails at 850 Bryant Street. The SFSO proposed a smaller replacement focused on medical/mental health care. On July 15, 2015, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution authorizing the Sheriff to proceed with approved plans for a new jail and seek up to \$80 million in grant funds from the California Board of State and Community Corrections (“BSCC”).² Notice of grant approval was received in November 2015. On December 15, 2015, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) unanimously rejected the \$80M BSCC grant it had unanimously agreed to seek just five months earlier.³ Instead, the BOS proposed to proceed with efforts to build a mental health facility.⁴ They didn’t even get to the planning stage. Instead, they formed a 39-member Committee to Reenvision the Jail Replacement Project (“the Committee”) to explore alternatives. The Committee’s efforts to reduce the jail population faltered until one-time COVID measures caused a precipitous drop in the population from an ADP of 1164 in January 2020 to an ADP of 770 in September 2020. (see Chart 2).⁵

The Committee recommended to the BOS that CJ#6 be closed without opening a new jail. On May 5, 2020, the BOS voted to close CJ#6 at the HOJ by November 1, 2020.⁶ It closed on September 5, 2020. The Committee’s Report did not address the likelihood of a post-COVID population rebound, despite evidence that the precipitous fall in population was due to one-time, COVID-specific measures by the Judicial Council and others.

Five years later, the net result is that the City has barely reduced its capacity (CJ#6 had capacity for 402 inmates and the now-reopened Annex has potential capacity for 372) while walking away from \$80 million of state funds to replace aging jails with modern facilities to better serve health and program needs. As the population steadily increases, the SFSO has

² San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Resolution No. 261-15.

³ No new jail after S.F. supervisors refuse to allocate funds, SF Gate, December 16, 2015, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/No-new-jail-S-F-supervisors-refuse-to-6700835.php>, KTVU, SF supervisors unanimously reject proposal for new \$240 million jail, December 15, 2015, <https://www.ktvu.com/news/sf-supervisors-unanimously-reject-proposal-for-new-240-million-jail>

⁴ ABC News, San Francisco officials propose mental health facility to replace jail plan, January 5, 2016. <https://abc7news.com/post/sf-officials-propose-mental-health-facility-to-replace-jail-plan/1147785>.

⁵ The Committee was created under Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 02-16, passed in January 2016, after the planned replacement jail was rejected. The 39-member Committee was created to plan for the permanent closure of the Bryant Street jails and to recommend investments in mental health facilities and jail retrofits.

⁶ SF Board of Supervisors, Ordinance No. 80-20, (Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to require the City to close County Jail No. 4, by November 1, 2020; to require the Sentencing Commission to establish a Safety and Justice Challenge Subcommittee to plan for the reduction of the City’s daily jail population and closure of County Jail No. 4), <https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/o0080-20.pdf>.

been re-opening pods in the Annex, which had been closed in 2010. There are no other facilities to bring on-line once the Annex hits capacity.

See Appendix B for a timeline of the history of jail planning and funding, or lack thereof, which brought the Jails to their desperate state.

What Do Jails Look Like in San Francisco?

Jails are not prisons. Prisons hold people convicted and sentenced to serve longer terms, typically a year or more.

Jails serve a different function – they are locked detention facilities designed as short-term facilities to briefly hold arrested people awaiting arraignment, trial, or sentencing. Jails are waystations where pre-trial inmates are held to await legal decisions, while prisons typically hold people for periods ranging from over one year to life.

Jails are not prisons. Most people in jails haven't been convicted and are waiting for a legal decision on claims against them. They are presumed innocent until and if they are convicted.

Assembly Bill 109, the California Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011 ("Realignment"), shifted the custodial responsibility for certain low-level offenses (non-violent, non-serious and non-sex offenders) from state prisons to county jails. Under Realignment, newly convicted low-level offenders without current or prior serious offenses now serve their sentences in county jails, such as the San Francisco Jails. These individuals typically serve sentences of one year, reduced by time already served before sentencing. They are part of the 15% of the population that has been convicted and sentenced.⁷

Jails have substantial legal obligations to people they hold in custody, including:

- **United States Constitution, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments** prohibit cruel and unusual punishment, such as punishments that are brutal and excessive or extreme overcrowding (e.g., litigation against California prisons holding 175,000 people in a system designed for 85,000⁸) and other conditions judged by "evolving standards of decency."
- **California Code of Regulations, Title 15 ("Title 15")⁹** establishes operational standards that govern clothing and personal hygiene, safety checks, staffing levels, food and nutrition, exercise and out-of-cell time per week, mandatory educational and

⁷ <https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/recidivism/realignment-factsheet.pdf>

⁸ *Brown v Plata*, 563 U.S. 493 (2011)

⁹ California Code of Regulations, Title 15, Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities, Division 1, Chapter 1, Subchapter 4.

individual/family service programs, medical obligations and many other aspects of jail life.

- **Title 15 medical obligations** ensure provision of emergency and basic health care services including medical, dental, and mental health services; specific obligations include screening at intake and providing mental health services, detox treatment for those with substance withdrawal needs, dental care, psychotropic medications, and pharmaceutical management.
- **Title 24 of the California Code (“Title 24”)**¹⁰ governs the physical design and construction of detention facilities, which are inspected by the BSCC.
- **California Penal Code section 41** requires provision of necessary medical and hospital care, including provision of eyeglasses, dentures, hearing aids, and prosthetics.

Beyond legal obligations, San Francisco has an obvious and important interest in providing effective services and care to those who cycle between the jails and local communities.

The Population - Medical Challenges, Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders are Common

The Jails house a medically vulnerable population with high rates of chronic conditions, mental illness, and substance use disorders. Fentanyl addiction is particularly challenging.

Education levels tend to be low and homeless rates high; histories of drug use and abuse are common as are co-occurring mental disorders. Inmates increasingly have treatment needs that challenge systems grounded in security needs and bed availability.

Many are charged with violent crimes and rated at maximum security levels – a recent daily count of persons in CJ#3 and the Annex (all of whom are male)¹¹ showed approximately 17.5% of classified inmates with a minimum-security rating and the remainder rated as higher security, as reflected in point-in-time data from February 17, 2026.¹²

Demographics - The Majority of Inmates are Black and Hispanic Males

The racial and ethnic demographics of the Jail population vary over time but Black and Hispanic males are consistently overrepresented, relative to the general population in San Francisco.

¹⁰ California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Section 1231.

¹¹ Most of the recordkeeping and budget for the two facilities is maintained as if they are a single facility, making it difficult to know the true cost of operating and staffing the Annex and understand its profile. For example, the count reports we have seen do not separate the classification breakdown as between the Annex and CJ#3.

¹² February 17, 2026 Daily Count Report, provided by SFSO.

Chart 1 : Race / Ethnicity of Jail Population

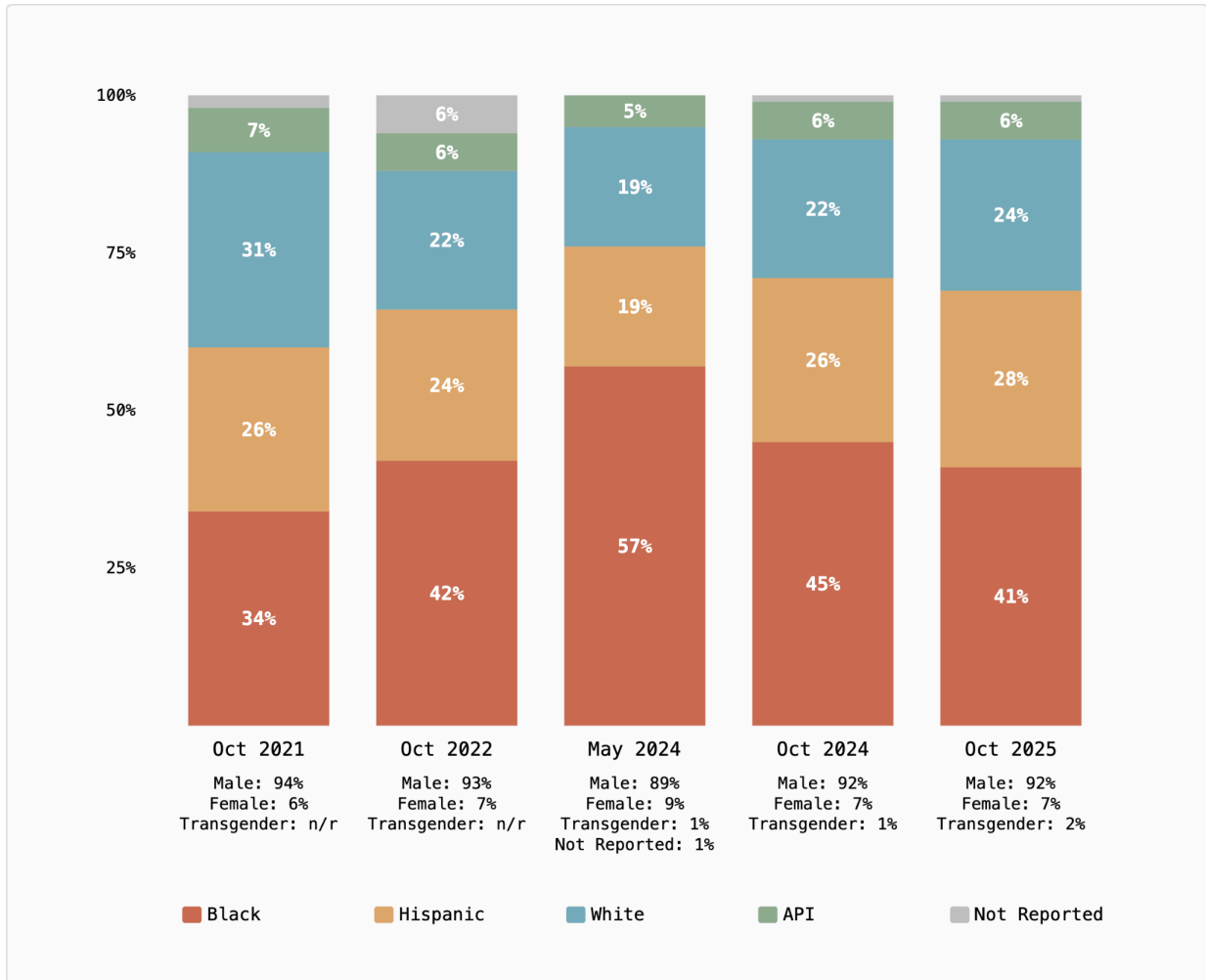


Chart of Race/Ethnicity of Jail Population

Race/ethnicity and gender composition at five snapshots from Oct 2021 through Oct 2025. Black population share grew from 34% to 41% (peaking at 57% in May 2024). Hispanic share held steady around 26%. White share declined from 31% to 24%. Gender remains overwhelmingly male (92%). Source: SFSO facility snapshots, Oct 2021 – Oct 2025.

Most Inmates are Charged with Serious Crimes but Have Not Been Convicted

Almost all (95%+) inmates held in the SFSO jails are charged with felony crimes, while typical misdemeanor-only arrestees without warrants are booked and released within a day or so, many before they are assigned a bed. More than half the Jails population is held on serious or violent felony charges, and about 17% were in custody for murder charges as of June 17, 2025. By comparison, total bookings are about 67% felony charges and 33% misdemeanors, reflecting the many persons arrested for misdemeanors who leave directly from the Intake Center without spending a night in CJ#2, CJ#3 or the Annex.

While many charges are serious, approximately 85% of inmates are held pre-trial and have not been found guilty of the crime(s) charged. As a matter of law, they are presumed innocent.

Length of Stay - A Few Hours or a Year?

Inmates tend to stay at the jail for either very long or very short periods of time. The data on long stays is tracked and available, while the data on duration of short stays is of questionable quality and value. For example, the SFSO website reports an average of 335 days in custody and a median of 93 days as of April 9, 2026.¹³ However, the February 2026 Jail Population Trends Report presents the average and median stay at 27.6 and 3.13 days respectively, with 1 day the most frequent outcome (the statistical mode).¹⁴ The Jury heard conflicting explanations of the discrepancies, but suspect that data collection for "revolving door" short stays is reported in different formats for different reports. The lack of transparency on the frequency of short stays makes prioritizing triage services, targeting repeat offenders and post-release planning challenging. It also obscures the human and economic costs of booking and releasing people on a rapid-fire basis; for example, leaving no time to help someone with Medications for Opioid Use Disorder ("MOUD").¹⁵

An Intro to Facilities and Operations

The SFSO Custody Operations Division bears overall responsibility for custody operations. Sworn deputy sheriffs staff the facilities around the clock, managing intake, classification, housing, movement, and security. Non-sworn staff support a range of operational functions, from clerical work and records management to building maintenance.

Medical and mental health care are provided by Jail Health Services ("JHS"), a division of the San Francisco Department of Public Health ("DPH"). JHS staff – nurses, clinicians, psychiatrists, and support personnel – provide healthcare to all inmates. This dual-authority structure means that a person in crisis in a jail pod is simultaneously the custodial responsibility of a sworn deputy and the clinical responsibility of a DPH employee. Inmates with urgent needs may be transported to secure facilities at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFGH). Supportive programs, such as wellness, cognitive therapy, and jobs training, run by third parties, also operate in the jails.

Inmates are booked at the Intake and Release Center (County Jail #1 or CJ#1) and if processed for housing, will go to one of the three housing facilities: County Jails 2 and 3 (CJ#2

¹³ Sheriff's Current Jail Data and Trends, length of stay data as of April 9, 2026.

<https://sfsheriff.com/services/jail-services/current-and-historical-jail-data/current-jail-data-and-trends>

¹⁴ SF Sheriff Jail Population Trend Report, February 2026,

https://sfsheriff.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/2026_02_Jail_Population_Report.pdf

¹⁵ "Tired of living like this: One man's journey from S.F. jail to addiction treatment," Mission Local, April 21, 2016, <https://missionlocal.org/2026/04/sf-jail-cycle-addiction-treatment-sam/>

and CJ#3), and “The Annex” located at CJ#3. CJ#1, CJ#2, CJ#3 and the Annex are collectively defined as “the Jails” in this Report.

More detail is provided in the “Pressure #2” section of the Analysis.

Do the Jails Have Sufficient Capacity for Now and the Foreseeable Future?

The Jails’ rated capacity is 1,472,¹⁶ meaning the facilities are assessed to hold up to 1,472 beds. The critical question of how many people the facilities can safely house is more complex.

All empty beds are not always available. Two-bed cells may be used as singles to separate inmates with mental health issues, sex offenders, rival gang members, or for administrative segregations. The SFSO Custody Operations Manual states that CJ#2 should operate at 10%-15% below rated capacity¹⁷ and witnesses affirmed this general range of operating margin for all housing facilities.

Applying a 10% reduction results in a capacity limit of 1,325, well below the recent peak of 1,375 in December 2025. The 1,375 number may be slightly inflated due to counting practices (for example, including people booked and released without occupying a bed, though there was considerable confusion on how this works in practice). It also includes people in off-site hospital beds. Unfortunately, the ADP count does not disaggregate these nuances, but the investigation found ample evidence of a system precariously close to practical and rated capacity.

If the population increases further, SFSO has limited options - it can send inmates to Marin, Alameda or San Mateo County, an option with direct costs and significant logistical challenges for transporting inmates to and from San Francisco courts and constraining family and legal visits.

¹⁶ CJ#2, #3 and the Annex have capacities of 392, 768, and 312 beds, respectively. If Dorm C of the Annex opens, the Annex will have capacity of 372 and the Jails will have a total capacity of 1532. CJ#1 does not have a BSCC rated capacity for housing because BSCC classifies it as a Temporary Holding Facility that holds people for 24 hours or less. <https://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/All-Facilities-list-for-web-4.24.26.pdf>

¹⁷ SF Sheriff Custodial Operations Manual, section 511.2, p. 128, (“County Jail #2 has dormitories ... that provide additional challenges for the classification of incarcerated persons. These facilities ... generally require a 10% to 15% bed vacancy in order to comply with classification requirements.”), <https://sfsheriff.com/sites/default/files/2025-19/120425-custody-court-operations-policy-manual.pdf>

Analysis: A System Under Compounding Pressures Reaches a Breaking Point

Three trends are converging to create a crisis in the Jails. First, the population coming into the jail system is growing, while also having more acute health and behavioral needs. Second, this population is housed in decaying infrastructure ill-suited to care for the needs of today's population. It is managed with paper record systems and obsolete software.¹⁸ Finally, staffing levels and training have not kept pace, leaving staff stretched too thin to carry out duties safely. The net result is a broken system.

Pressure #1: A Growing Population with More Acute Needs and a Revolving Door

A May 2024 snapshot of the Jail population showed that less than one in five people were there for the first time. Nearly a third had cycled through ten times or more. This population is full of repeat offenders with histories of substance use, mental illness, or both – people who move between emergency rooms, shelter beds, and jail cells, and rarely land anywhere that breaks the cycle. The Jails are increasingly expected to stabilize the lives of people who have fallen through San Francisco's safety nets in the short window of a few hours or days before most are released - whether because they are not arraigned or charged or because they are released on their own recognizance or on bail. However, they don't have the staffing, funding, or infrastructure for this role and it is unrealistic to expect the Jails to change lives in these fleeting timespans.

The recent jail population increase is downstream of factors beyond the Sheriff's control: courts returning to normal operations post-COVID, changes in harsher law enforcement practices like the Drug Market Agency Coordination Center (DMACC), a new law enforcement entity driving increased enforcement of narcotics crimes ("supercharging nighttime drug enforcement" according to Mayor Lurie¹⁹), and rapidly increasing misdemeanor drug arrests and prosecutions after Proposition 36 became effective in December 2024 ("Prop 36"). Prop 36 allowed for enhanced treatment of certain drug and theft related crimes committed by persons with at least two prior misdemeanor convictions for drug possession or petty theft. The effects on the jail's population is stark – from an all-time ADP high of 2,198 in 2008, 1,252 in December 2015, 1,284 in September 2019, and a historic low in the mid-700s during COVID. It has steadily risen to a 180-day average of 1,281 as of early April 2026.

¹⁸ San Francisco Department of Police Accountability: SFSO Investigations, 2025 Fourth Quarter (Q4) and 2025 Annual Report, pp. 7-8,

<https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/2DPA.SFSO.2025.Q4.YearEnd.ReportPresentation.SDOB.Meeting3.6.2026.pdf>
¹⁹<https://www.facebook.com/daniellurief/videos/san-francisco-is-supercharging-our-nighttime-drug-enforcement-targeting-those-wh/1903327680622428/>

Chart 2: Average Daily Population vs. Rated Capacity

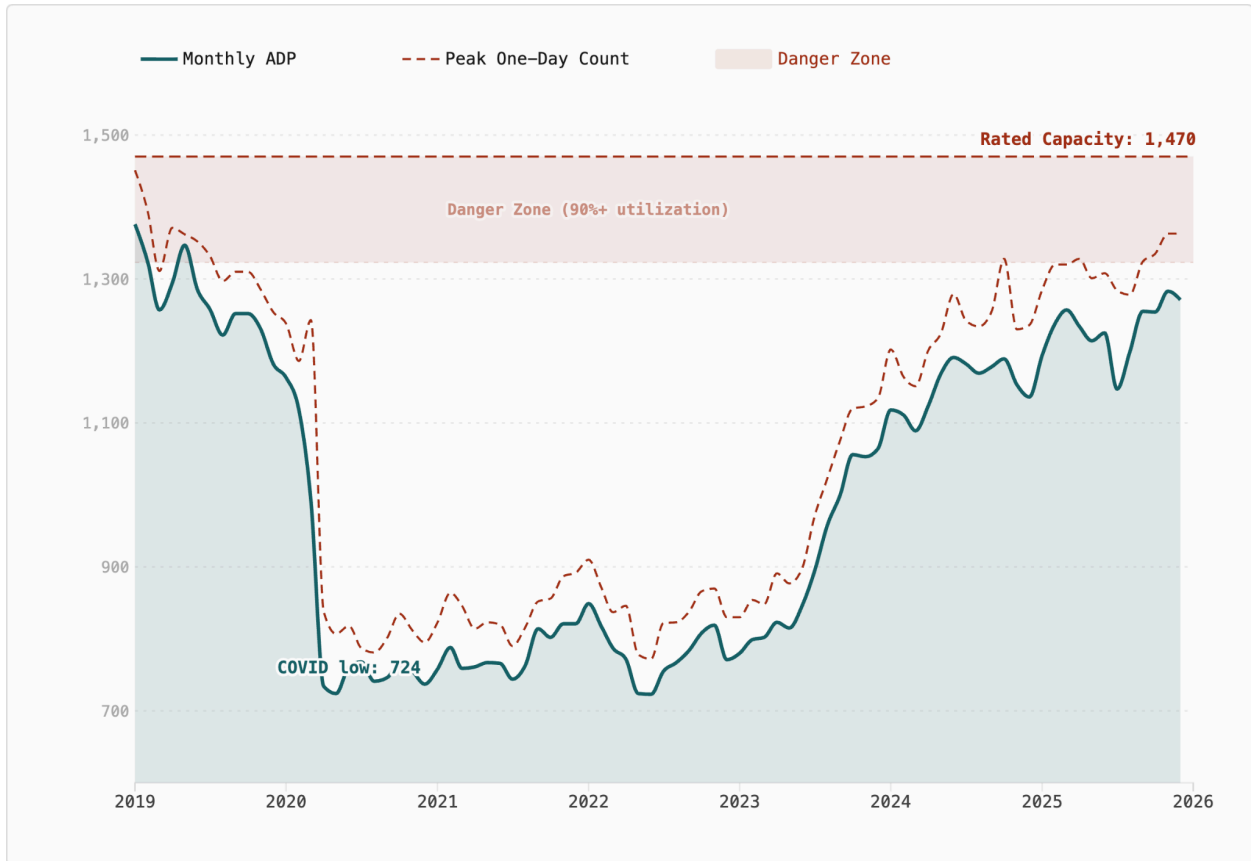


Chart of Average Daily Population

The jail population dropped to 724 during COVID, then climbed steadily back toward capacity. The shaded band marks the danger zone – 90% or higher utilization – below rated capacity (1,472 beds). ADP has climbed into this zone, with peak single-day counts nearing capacity. Source: BSCC Monthly Data, Jan. 2019 – Dec. 2025. Capacity per SFSO Annual Report 2025.

These numbers understate the volume of people flowing through Intake and Release Center (CJ#1) and the time it takes to process them. The number of persons in CJ#1 not assigned to housing on a given day has doubled since 2019 from 16.7 to 32.5 (See Chart 2). This includes people waiting for a bed assignment. It also includes people who will be released within hours without entering housing. Those who don't enter housing may be released on their own recognizance, after making bail, after sobering up, or because they qualify for release after the DA declines to charge or dismisses higher charges. Regardless of whether they are eventually assigned to housing, all inmates at CJ#1 take up space in booking areas and require attention and processing. Based on our interviews and data review, the delay seems associated with chronic understaffing in CJ#1 and the overcrowding and competing demands on the space have not helped. CJ#1 has operated at approximately 70% of authorized staffing for the last three years. It has the worst ratio of actual to authorized staffing of any of the Jail facilities and reportedly operates below required minimum staffing on the day shift almost daily.

Chart 3: Annual Jail Bookings

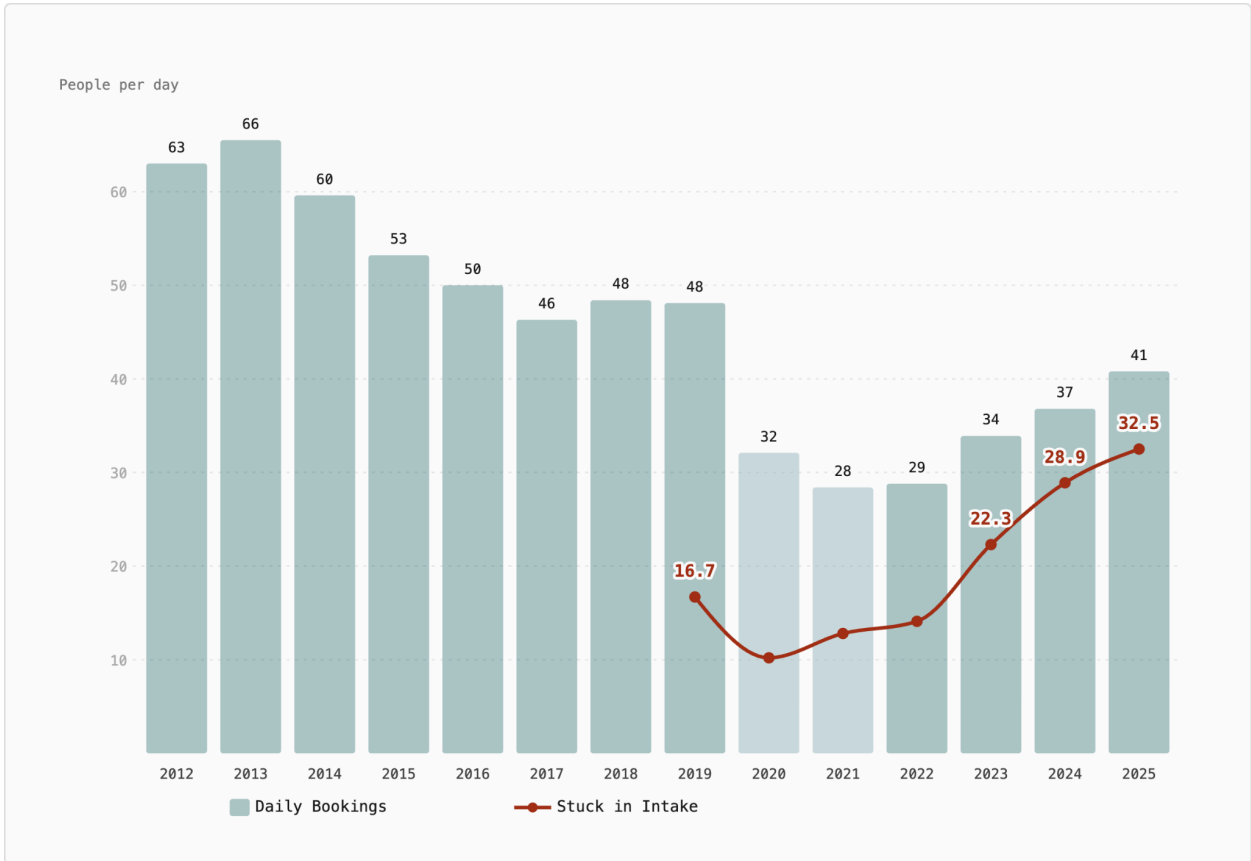


Chart of Annual Jail Bookings

Bookings have fallen 30% from their 2013 peak – yet intake congestion has doubled. Both metrics are on the same scale – people per day. The bars show daily bookings (annual total ÷ 365). The red line shows how many inmates are in intake waiting for a release decision or a bed at a fixed point in time. In 2019: 48 booked per day, 16.7 waiting. By 2025: 42 booked per day, 32.5 waiting – nearly one waiting for every one processed. Source: SF Open Data – Sheriff Jail Bookings (bars); BSCC Monthly Data (congestion line), Jan. 2012 – Feb. 2026.

The conclusion that processing time is increasing is supported by data showing that inmates are being released later in the day and into overnight hours. Since 2021, daytime (6 a.m.-5 p.m.) releases have decreased while evening (5 p.m.-11 p.m.) and overnight (11 p.m.-6 a.m.) releases increased. Daytime releases have fallen by almost 50%, dropping from 57% of 2021 releases to 22-25% of 2024-2025 releases. Overnight releases have increased from 7% to 26%. One in four inmates are now released between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.²⁰ Increased night releases, when services are unavailable, increases the potential for drug relapse at a particularly vulnerable moment. CJ#1 is near the City’s night drug markets in SOMA and the Tenderloin, creating risk of recidivism for those with substance abuse disorders.

²⁰ BSCC Jail Profile Survey, Late Night Release Information, San Francisco County, 2021-2025.

Before DMACC launched in May 2023, San Francisco averaged about 15 misdemeanor narcotics arrests per month. By 2025, the rate had climbed to more than 100 per month – roughly seven times higher.²¹

The Role of DMACC and Prop 36 in Increased Misdemeanor Prosecutions

In May of 2023, DMACC”, a multi-agency task force was created to address San Francisco’s intractable night drug markets, located primarily in the Tenderloin.²² As of April 10, 2026, DMACC reported seizing over 1249 pounds of narcotics, including 356 pounds of fentanyl. Along with those seizures, DMACC has made over 13,994 arrests.²³ Nearly half of all people arrested and taken to the Jails come from two supervisory districts that overlap the DMACC enforcement zone, with 43.9% of 2025 custodial arrests coming from either District 5 (Tenderloin) or District 6 (South of Market).²⁴

Enacted in November 2024, Prop 36 created a new “treatment mandated felony” charge for individuals found in possession of fentanyl, methamphetamine, heroin or cocaine or for acts of petty theft. They may be charged with a felony and ordered to complete a drug treatment program if, and only if, they have at least two prior misdemeanor convictions for drug possession or petty theft. If defendants complete a drug treatment program, the underlying charges are expunged from their record. Prop 36 has been criticized for increasing the costs of incarcerating misdemeanor defendants, while not funding increased incarceration costs or treatment costs.²⁵

Between Prop 36 and DMACC, the number of misdemeanors prosecuted in San Francisco has increased dramatically. District Attorney Brooke Jenkins²⁶ has publicly said her focus is to target repeat offenders for mandatory treatment status, following years in which misdemeanor drug crimes were not prosecuted by her predecessors. The emphasis on misdemeanor prosecutions has increased, and may well continue to increase, demands on county jails. See Chart 3, which shows a spike in 2023 (the year DMACC launched) and again in 2025 (Prop 36 went into effect in December 2024).

While inmates charged with misdemeanors are reportedly less than 5% of the jail population, SFSO reports show that 35% of crimes at booking were charged as misdemeanors in May

²¹ Source: SF Open Data

²² DMACC dashboard,

<https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/stay-safe/crime-data/drug-market-agency-coordination-center>

²³ SFPD Press Release, SFPD Makes 47 Arrests, Seizes 939 Grams of Narcotics in Latest Drug Market Crackdown #26-043, April 10, 2026,

<https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/news/sfpd-makes-47-arrests-seizes-939-grams-narcotics-latest-drug>

²⁴ Source: https://data.sfgov.org/Public-Safety/Police-Department-Stop-Data/ubqf-aqzw/about_data, SFPD Stop Data by supervisory district, 2025, excluding citation and release and field releases.

²⁵ California increased penalties for some drug and theft crimes. Here’s how the law is working, San Francisco Chronicle, April 10, 2025,

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/california/article/prop-36-crime-20263074.php>

²⁶ See FN 24.

2025 and again in February 2026.²⁷ In October 2022, only 20% of crimes at booking were misdemeanors. Constant turnover of this large segment increases demand for services, and is particularly hard to manage given space and staffing challenges in the CJ#1 Intake and Release facility.

Chart 4: Narcotics Arrests Presented to the District Attorney

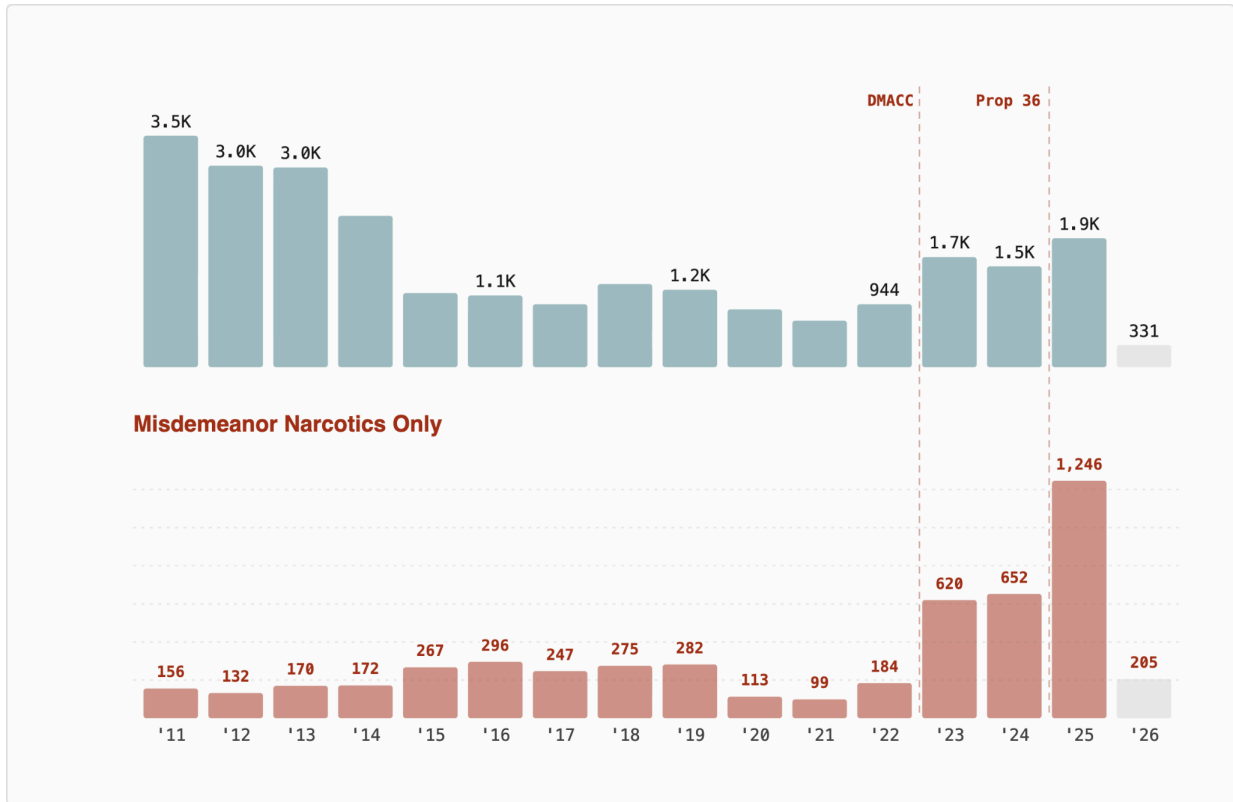


Chart of Narcotics Arrests

Narcotics arrests in San Francisco tell two different stories at once. The upper panel shows that total narcotics arrests declined steadily over the past decade as felony enforcement receded. The lower panel isolates misdemeanor narcotics arrests, which surged from 184 in 2022 to 1,246 in 2025 – a 6.8x increase from the year before DMACC was created and a startling 91% increase in the first year after Prop 36 became effective (December 18, 2024). Misdemeanor arrests often result in short or no jail stays under laws governing citation and release, no-bail or own-recognizance release, or release if DA doesn’t charge or court doesn’t arraign. These high volume arrests strain CJ#1 intake operations relative to the long-term housing population. Source: SF Open Data.

Mental health needs of inmates are growing. Inmates identified as requiring mental health housing grew from 90 to 144 between 2022 and 2025, outpacing overall jail population growth. On any given day, JHS reports that about 25% of the jail population have a documented history

²⁷ https://sfdistrictattorney.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/6-27-24_SentencingCommission_FullPacket.pdf; https://sfsheriff.com/sites/default/files/2025-06/2025_05_Jail_Population_Report%20May.pdf

of opiate use. Multiple interviews revealed that the health conditions inmates face are more severe since the introduction of fentanyl. And the distinct but co-occurring needs created by serious mental illnesses (SMIs) and substance use disorders create additional challenges in care for inmates. Fentanyl cases often involve individuals with profound addiction, co-occurring mental health disorders, and serious medical conditions including infections, withdrawal complications, and cognitive impairment. This population requires intensive medical monitoring, mental health services, and addiction treatment – resources the jail system is not built or staffed to provide.

Chart 5: Jail Population Growth and Mental Health Burden

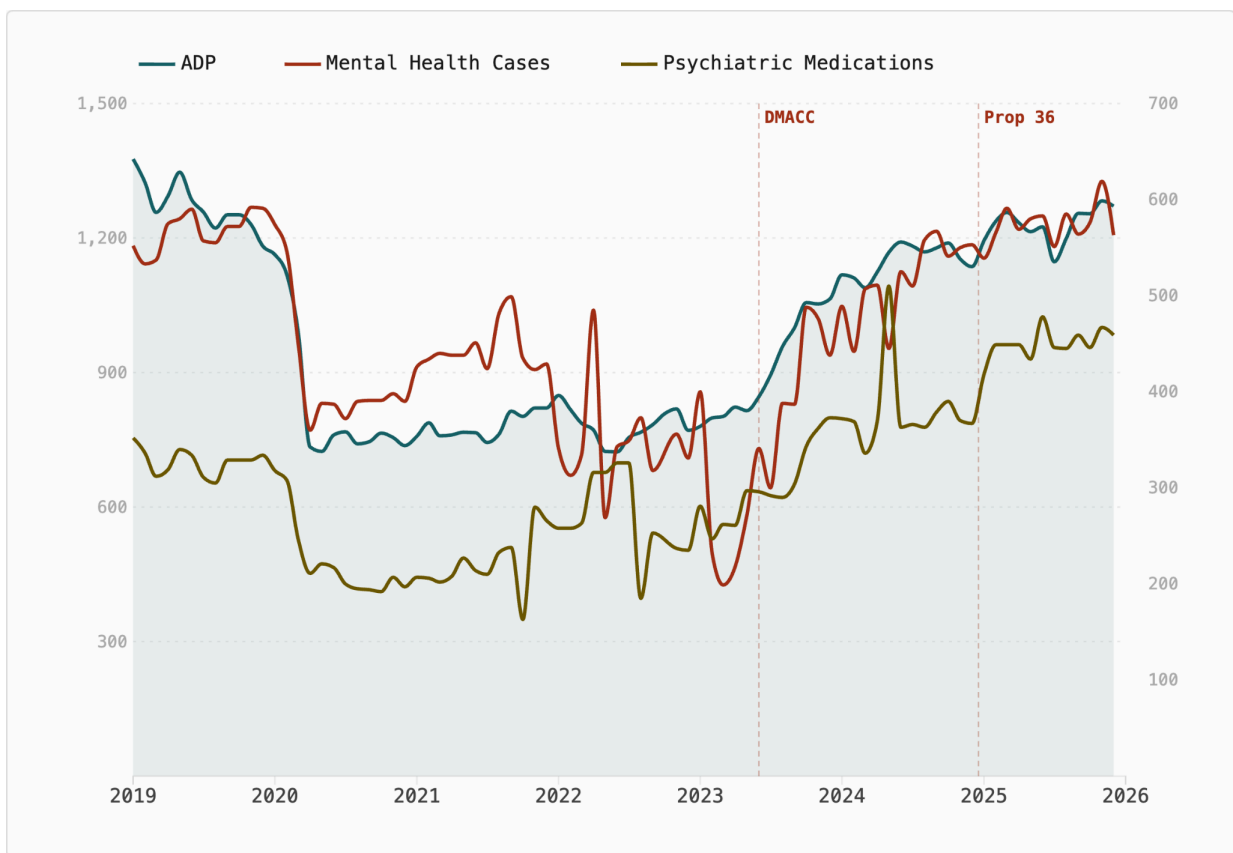


Chart of ADP, Mental Health Cases, and Psych Med Cases

Three lines on two axes: ADP (teal, left axis) shows the population climbing back from COVID lows. Mental health cases and psychiatric medications (right axis) climb alongside it – but steeper. All three are growing. By late 2025, ADP was 1271, and 47% of inmates had open mental health cases and 37% were on psychiatric medication – both at or near record highs. DMACC and Prop 36 inflections marked. The health burden is not just tracking population; it is outpacing it. Source: BSCC Monthly Data, Jan. 2019 – Dec. 2025.

Providing health services in an environment grounded in security is daunting, particularly in obsolete facilities where chronic staffing shortages limit access to inmates. For example, the physical nature of the Annex – an open dormitory with no secure cells, limited space for calls with counsel, and no private meeting or program space – can make mental health service delivery dangerous, since isolating an unstable inmate may disrupt the entire pod.

Chart 6: Medical Services – Annual Monthly Averages

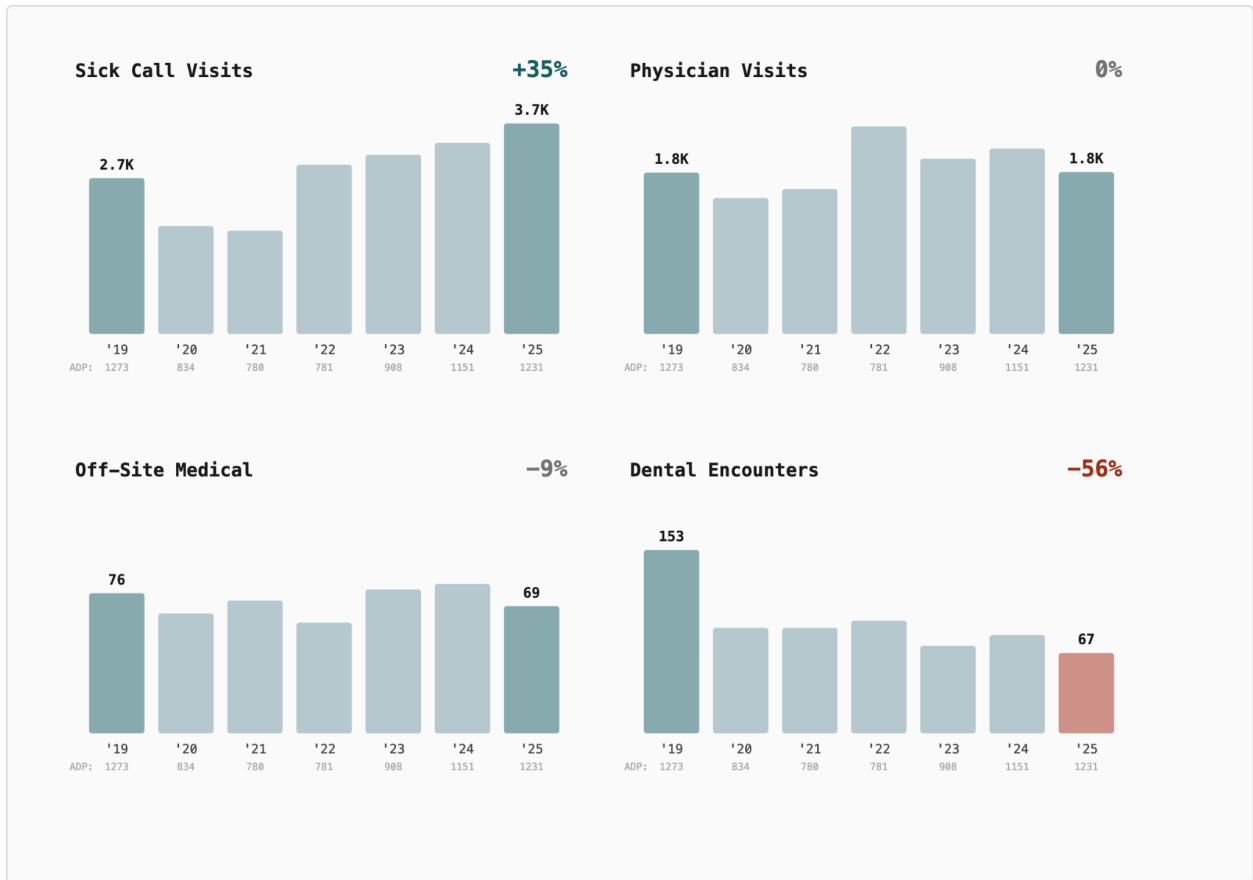


Chart of Medical Services Provided

Four panels showing monthly averages by year. The first and last bars are emphasized. Sick call climbed 35%, tracking population growth. Dental collapsed 56% despite a population nearly 50% larger. Source: BSCC Monthly Data. Annual averages.

Interviewees repeatedly emphasized the importance of programming to support inmates, provide structure and release, and offer skills and pathways to more stable conditions inside jail and after release, with a suggestion that programming can be even more important than clinical health support. However, the quality and volume of programming is compromised by budget cuts and short staffing. Programs require deputies to move inmates to and from program areas and are routinely canceled or limited when deputies are short-staffed.

Finally, the female population housed at CJ#2 present unique challenges. Women in jail often have higher rates of trauma history, mental illness, and chronic medical conditions than male inmates. Many are mothers separated from children, creating distinct programming needs. Medical issues specific to women, including pregnancy care, gynecological services, and gender-responsive mental health treatment and programming require specialized resources that the facility struggles to provide adequately given outdated treatment spaces.

A further consequence of population growth straining the physical space is pressure on the classification system itself. Classification – the process by which deputies assess each person's security level based on charges, criminal history, institutional behavior, gang affiliation, and other factors, and assign them to appropriate housing – is fundamental to jail safety. It is intended to keep incompatible people separated, place seriously mentally ill individuals in settings they can manage and protect vulnerable people from predatory ones. We heard concerns that the current system may be under-rating dangerous individuals in order to fit available beds. This concern is particularly acute in the Annex, where open dormitories housing up to 62 people per dorm carry the risk that a single misclassified violent individual can cause substantial harm before staff can intervene – a risk that does not exist to the same degree in a facility with individual cells.

SFSO Policy 511.2 outlines²⁸ a process to handle high-capacity situations, calling for the Sheriff to initiate a “Crowding Committee” of key stakeholders if the Jails occupancy rate exceeds 80% for over a year (which occurred in 2025 and is on track to occur again in 2026). This Committee has not been convened. We have seen no evidence that the SFSO has a plan for sustained growth or a surge that pushes the Jails over capacity, other than transferring inmates to Marin or Santa Clara County Jails - a costly and disruptive option. Nor have we seen any indication of serious efforts by other entities to engage in collaborative efforts to reduce the long stay population at the Jails.

Jail Health Services

SFSO partners with JHS to administer healthcare, but they can have conflicting goals. SFSO is primarily focused on custodial responsibility and security, while the goal of the health care providers is meeting a legal responsibility for care, regardless of the circumstances of an individual's incarceration.

It is challenging to meet the care responsibility across all levels of the system. For example, CJ#1 became the holding area for court appearances for inmates by default when the Bryant Street Jails closed, while continuing to serve as the intake facility for new arrests. The physical environment of the triage nurses is in constant flux as the buses from San Bruno bring inmates for court appearances; these inmates can disrupt the nurses with complaints and demands for attention.

²⁸ See SFSO Custody and Court Operations Policy Manual at p. 126, <https://sfsheriff.com/sites/default/files/2025-19/120425-custody-court-operations-policy-manual.pdf>

Medical services - from pill drops to medical consults - are safer with a sworn deputy escort and in some cases the deputy's presence is mandated. For example, deputies are required to escort nurses on "pill-pass" or "pill drops" which happen 4-5x/day. Diversion of medications is a serious problem in the jail and nurses and deputies must ensure that the inmate swallows the pill and doesn't keep it in their mouth to sell, save it to diffuse and snort in an inhaler or potentially collect the pills for a suicide effort. Privacy is difficult when nurses conduct cell-side consultations with deputies next to them. Even when private rooms are available, deputy escorts may not be available at the requested time due to staffing shortages. Further, JHS staff may weigh the safety of an escort against the infringement on personal privacy of their patients. Inmates may be hesitant to admit conditions or accept care without privacy.

Pressure #2: Infrastructure at a Breaking Point

The population changes described in Pressure #1 would strain any jail system. They are especially acute in San Francisco because they affect a system designed for a different era, a lower security population, and different clinical demands. The facilities themselves are aging poorly due to deferred maintenance and lack of capital improvements. The technology systems that support jail management, health care delivery, and records management are obsolete and, in some cases, actively impeding care. And the public health infrastructure — while genuinely innovative in places — is stretched thin with less space and more inmates with greater medical and psychiatric problems than the system was designed to treat.

The facilities themselves are aging poorly due to deferred maintenance and lack of capital improvements.

Underinvested and Overloaded Physical Facilities

In exercising our legal responsibility to inquire into jails, we inspected all the jail facilities.²⁹ The following section provides a current evaluation of these facilities based on data and capital funding history as well as firsthand observation and interviews. In this respect, we have served as a stand-in for the public, which does not generally have access to these facilities. We offer a detailed and informed picture of CJ#1, CJ#2, CJ#3 and the Annex, as well as other infrastructure critical to those facilities, like transport and technology systems.

County Jail #1 (CJ#1) - Can this Neglected and Understaffed Facility Handle Today's Demands? 425 7th Street in SOMA, built 1994

Everyone who is booked at the Jails or released from the Jails passes through CJ#1. In 2025, 15,163 people were booked into the jail and 15,364 released. Booking is a multi-step process, including triaging from a JHS nurse, gathering inmate information, changing clothing,

²⁹ California Penal Code section 919 requires the Civil Grand Jury to inquire into the condition and management of public prisons, defined to include jails, within the county. While CJ#3 and the Annex are located in San Mateo County, they fall within the Civil Grand Jury's jurisdiction because they are owned and operated by the County of San Francisco.

processing belongings, and assigning a classification. A triage nurse identifies injuries or illness that would require the person to be taken directly to an ER for treatment; identifies conditions that would preclude safe housing with the general jail population, followed by further screening for history of mental illness, psychiatric medication use, substance use and suicidality. Classification is based on factors like gang relationships, mental and physical health status, previous custody history, and behavior, along with an interview of the incarcerated person. Fingerprints are a constant bottleneck due to lack of fingerprint technicians. While the SFSO is required to finish the Intake process within 24 hours, we learned there is some question about whether or not this requirement is consistently met.³⁰

When CJ#4 closed in September 2020, the SFSO lost the use of holding cells on the 7th floor of the Hall of Justice. The Intake & Release Center (CJ#1) then “made do” and took on an additional function: service as the holding facility for court proceedings and attorney interviews. The SFSO received no funding to replicate the HOJ holding facilities or to renovate CJ#1. This created a setting described by multiple witnesses as “chaos” where populations with diverse needs cross: just-arrested inmates in need of medical assessment and classification, not infrequently in the throes of detox; inmates in the release process receiving exit medications, re-entry counseling, and contact information; and now, a holding place for existing inmates waiting for court appointments, who include maximum security inmates charged with violent crimes.³¹ The overlapping uses and crowding prevent deputies from separating male and female inmates. On court days, 100 or more inmates are transported by bus from San Bruno to CJ#1. The volatile mixture in the Intake Center creates security concerns and stressors for inmates and employees.

The need for court holding facilities was listed as an Emerging Project (no budget) as described below in 2021 in the Fiscal Year 2022-2031 Capital Plan.³² It is 2026 and CJ#1 is still waiting for that permanent solution.

There were no structural changes or capital improvements when CJ#1 assumed the court staging operations at the closure of CJ#4, which was adjacent to the courts and was equipped with dedicated holding cells, interview rooms for attorneys, and other court staging infrastructure. Instead, inmates at CJ#1 are held in areas designed (and needed) for other functions.

The need to replace the holding area was identified during the process of planning to close CJ#4 and addressed in 2015 plans for the proposed new jail. That jail was never built, and the existing jails have been on a capital starvation diet ever since. Sheriff Miyamoto proposed to close CJ#4 contingent upon a budget request of \$50 million, described as the minimum

³⁰ The Intake & Release Center is classified by BSCC as a Temporary Holding Facility (“THF”). THF’s are “used for the confinement of persons for 24 hours or less, pending release, transfer to another facility, or appearance in court.” <https://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/All-Facilities-list-for-web-4.24.26.pdf>

³¹ A snap shot of charges against Incarcerated Persons as of June 17, 2025, reflected 217 individuals (16.9% of total population) facing murder charges. The data reflected 54.28% of persons in custody on that date were charged with serious and violent felonies. Sheriff’s Annual Report, 2025, p.9.

³² Public Safety, Emerging Projects, <https://onesanfrancisco.org/search/content?keys=emerging>

needed for post-closing modification in lieu of a new jail (“When the courts mandate incarceration, I need a place to house people safely and humanely”).³³ The request was based on extensive documentation of the capital needs of the jail and the hundreds of millions from seismic bonds spent on facilities for other law enforcement entities leaving the Hall of Justice. But the SFSO received only \$19 million from the City’s General Fund in 2019 for a new kitchen to replace the shuttered CJ#4 kitchen. It wasn’t completed until 2023.

Our investigation revealed that CJ#1 is inadequate for this court-holding function. For example, the inmates waiting for court disrupt the triage nurses, creating a chaotic environment, frequently demanding attention for new or unresolved medical concerns and complicating the triage process. On busy court days, up to 120 people transported from San Bruno can arrive at CJ#1 needing space in holding cells before and after court appearances. CJ#1 does not have dedicated holding cells for this volume. Multiple sources consider CJ#1 unsafe on busy days. For example, the cells are overcrowded and the deputies cannot observe potentially high-risk activity in the back of crowded holding cells. The Jury heard repeated concerns that the situation is dangerous and untenable.

By late 2025, the Intake & Release Center could no longer hold all the inmates waiting for court. Ultimately, the SFSO elected to relieve CJ#1 pressure by using the gym at CJ#2 as a large scale, open-format holding tank with two deputies. This plan poses safety, staffing, and operations pressures, including the risk of depriving CJ#2 inmates of Title 15 mandated recreation time, particularly if CJ#2 is under lockdown or service reduction because of below minimum staffing.

Past practice was for inmates to move from booking at CJ#1 to CJ#2 for a few days first, before going to San Bruno (if necessary). This allowed more time for medical evaluation and classification, avoiding trips to San Bruno for inmates released in under three days. It also enabled those inmates participating in hearings to stay close to the courthouse. However, population increases, the increasing churn of misdemeanor inmates, and space constraints at CJ#2 have compelled frequent direct assignments from CJ#1 to CJ#3 or the Annex in San Bruno. This, in turn, stresses the transport buses and requires increased staff (more on both infrastructure and staffing below).

Seven years ago, while CJ#4 was still operating and before holding tank space had become an issue, the Capital Budget described the need to modernize CJ#1 as follows:

“The Intake and Release Center operates continuously with limited opportunity to replace aging infrastructure. As a result, all systems are reaching their end of life. There are also code-driven upgrades needed to bring the facility to modern standards. Priorities within the building include the security sally port doors, the perimeter sliding

³³ <https://sfsheriff.com/news-releases/san-francisco-sheriff-paul-miyamoto-moves-close-hall-justice-jail>; https://www.sfxaminer.com/news/miyamoto-proposes-closing-sf-jail-moving-inmates-to-santa-rita/article_845dec61-12f0-58b7-96b7-e5dd53521c59.html

doors, the property and clothing conveyor system, the floors and walls of the holding cells, the safety cells, plumbing fixtures, and ADA and energy improvements. The estimated cost for improvements at County Jail #1 is approximately \$5 million.”³⁴

Seven years later, CJ#1 is still waiting for infrastructure improvements. It continues to decline from age, neglect, and over-use and the strain of constant use as a detox facility. Holding tanks from the Bryant Street Jail were closed in 2020 and CJ#1 is buckling under the additional load of serving as a pre-court holding area. Improvements to CJ#1 are not funded in San Francisco’s latest 10-year capital plan - the need for holding space has been previously classified as an “Emerging Project” that falls behind projects already deferred to after 2036.

County Jail #2 (CJ#2) - Built as a work furlough facility, now holding maximum security inmates.

425 7th Street in SOMA, built 1994

CJ#2 is a facility rated for 392 people and is the only Jail facility serving women and the transgender population. The design and security standards of CJ#2 do not reflect modern best practices. It, like CJ#1, suffers from years of neglect. In 2017, the SFSO applied for funds to renovate CJ#2.³⁵ Former Sheriff Hennessey described CJ#2 in blunt terms:

County Jail #2 was originally designed and constructed as a work furlough facility with dormitory style beds and a commercial grade interior (including gypsum board separation walls, an acoustical ceiling, and surface-mounted light fixtures). For these reasons, County Jail #2 is only appropriate for housing low- to medium-security inmates, and the City’s jail population has housed an increasing proportion of maximum-security inmates since 2008.³⁶

There are many issues:

- CJ#1 and CJ#2 rely on the Hall of Justice for their water supply but it is not dependable. SFSO has submitted a capital request for an independent boiler system.
- A project to replace heat exchangers in the basement of CJ#2 was funded and implemented from February 6, 2026 to March 31, 2026 to address water temperature fluctuations. It required nightly hot water shutdowns from 12 pm to 6 am for almost two months and reheating time when service returns.³⁷

³⁴ ONESF, FY2020-29 Capital Plan, Public Safety, Deferred Projects, accessed on May 1, 2026 <https://onesanfrancisco.org/the-plan-2020/public-safety-deferred-projects#:~:text=This%20project%20would%20modernize%20County,and%20ADA%20and%20energy%20improvements.>

³⁵ SB 844, Adult Local Criminal Justice Facilities Construction Financing Program Proposal Form submitted by the San Francisco Sheriff, February 23, 2017 <http://m.sfsheriff.com/files/SB844.pdf>

³⁶ Then-Sheriff Hennessey signed the application, following language stating that her signature certifies that the information in the proposal form, budget, narrative, and attachment is true and correct to the best of her knowledge.

³⁷ February 6, 2026 memo to all personnel from Undersheriff Katherine Johnson, clarifying recent media coverage; <https://missionlocal.org/2026/02/sf-jail-filth-cold-showers/>

- Interior walls are made from gypsum board; inmates have penetrated the walls to punch holes.
- The roof is heavily patched and past its lifespan, with no funding for replacement
- Showers, plumbing, heating, and ventilation are failing, with cold showers reportedly a regular occurrence
- Open bunk areas, with makeshift nets on upper levels to prevent inmates from jumping or throwing things



Photos of Damage in County Jail #2, provided by SFSO.

The need for improvements was described in detail in the City’s Capital Plan in 2019:

“The Sheriff’s Department has particularly challenging renewal needs at present: The roof is leaking in multiple areas, and the roof-mounted air handlers need replacements. The flooring, ceilings, and lighting need to be replaced for code compliance and better hygiene. The analog security system is not adequate for a modern detention facility. The kitchen and laundry are not functional.”³⁸

These needs were highlighted again seven years later in the 2026-2035 Capital Plan:

“The permanent closure of County Jail #4 increases the need for County Jail #2 improvements beyond the original work furlough design as this facility will be needed to house inmates with higher security levels and security restrictions. Converting dorms to cells in A & D Pods of County Jail #2 would not increase the capacity of the jail beyond the required ADA-accessible cells, but it would create more usable space ...

³⁸ 2019 Capital Plan, p. 152. Accessed May 1, 2025
https://onesanfrancisco.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/19CapPlan-Doc_FINAL_Web_190517.pdf

appropriate for the maximum-security prisoners common in San Francisco's jail population. This work would require supporting work to the building's air handling systems and roof ... Improvements are also needed in the medical services pod (Pod C) of County Jail #2. Improvements will also include increased access to direct sunlight and fresh outside air in a setting where security is still a top priority. The estimated cost of this capital work at County Jail #2 is \$140 million."³⁹

The needed capital improvements are currently classified as "Deferred" in the ONESF 2026-35 Capital Plan, meaning no money has been budgeted for CJ#2 in the current 2 Year Capital Plan⁴⁰ or the FY 2026-2035 Capital Plan.

County Jail #3 (CJ#3) - SFSO's Largest Jail

1 Moreland Drive, San Bruno, built 2006

The highest capacity facility is also the largest and newest, housing 768 male inmates in a pod structure. The most acutely ill persons are housed in the Psychiatric Sheltered Living Unit (PSLU). Under normal operations, inmates can move outside their cells within the pod structure under supervision from a deputy while receiving medical visits or other programming. However, during regular lockdowns driven by staff shortage (more below), they are confined to their double occupancy cells (sometimes single-occupied depending on inmate risks).

CJ#3, built in 2005, is in perhaps the least-bad condition of the Jail facilities, but it also suffers from neglect. It shares hot water boilers with the Annex and complex-wide reliance on the aging boilers are a problem, as is the laundry that the Annex and CJ#3 share. As of February 2026, one of four washing machines and two of five dryers worked. The hot water maker and the dishwashing machine were broken. The freon line to the freezer had been broken but was repaired. There is no alternative if the final washer breaks. Inmates are supposed to get clean undergarments twice weekly and exterior clothing once per week. Bedding also must be washed. The Laundry and Kitchen need maintenance. There is no air conditioning in the medical area or in the management area.

Overall, the most acute challenges here are related to the population and staffing pressures. Between the Annex and CJ#3, the current staffing model prioritizes minimum staffing levels in the Annex, but both facilities are regularly below minimum required staffing – a few times per week according to our investigation. A full lockdown generally means that only one deputy supervises both sides of the pod unit, compelling all inmates to stay in their locked cells or, in the case of a dormitory unit, stay on their beds. This status severely hampers programming, attorney visits, and health visits. Shifts below minimum staffing don't necessarily result in full lockdowns, but lead to reductions in out of cell time, activities, medical visits, and visitation.

³⁹ FY2026-2035 Capital Plan, p179. Accessed May 1, 2025

<https://onesanfrancisco.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Full%20Capital%20Plan%20FY2026-FY2035.pdf>

⁴⁰ ONESF, Capital Budget Overview, FY25 & FY26 budget list, sorted by department for Sheriff("SHF"), <https://onesanfrancisco.org/capital-budget-25-26>

When we visited CJ#3 in the winter of 2026, we learned that required time out of cell had been provided in full for the three months before our visit and 95% of programming was offered in the prior quarter. Shortly after our visit, we learned that SFSO was notified that it was projected to exceed its annual overtime budget and needed to reduce its overtime spending or curtail spending on equipment, capital projects and facilities maintenance. The Sheriff elected to reduce overtime spending and directed Custody Operations not to use overtime in instances of below minimum staffing. Accordingly, it is our informed view that numerous activities that require deputies to transport inmates to programs and/or monitor programs have been negatively impacted. However, we do not know the current frequency or lockdowns or reduced status of programs.

County Jail #3 Annex (The Annex) – Is it Ready for Prime-time?

1 Moreland Drive, San Bruno, built 1989

In 2017, the SFSO applied to the BSCC for funds to renovate CJ#2. In attachments to that Application, then-Sheriff Vicki Hennessey stated that County Jail 6 [now known as “the Annex”] “cannot safely house medium- or maximum-security inmates.”⁴¹ Yet a recent point-in-time count reflected 82% of the inmates in custody at the Jails were medium or maximum security - the percentages fluctuate daily. In fact, numerous reports in past years studied the feasibility of renovating the Annex in lieu of building a new jail and reached the same conclusion: the dormitory design was incompatible with the classification requirements for housing maximum and high-medium security inmates safely.⁴²

Nonetheless, the SFSO was faced with a growing population in 2023, and the only option was to reopen the Annex, without funding for staffing, renovations or assessing the risk of using open dormitory housing for maximum security inmates. Adjacent to CJ#3, the Annex (formerly CJ#6) is a series of six dormitory pods arrayed around a central pillar containing the control

⁴¹SB 844, Adult Local Criminal Justice Facilities Construction Financing Program Proposal Form submitted by the San Francisco Sheriff, February 23, 2017 <http://m.sfsheriff.com/files/SB844.pdf>

⁴² See, e.g., Memorandum from SF Controller to Board of Supervisors, Jail Classification and Housing Options Assessment, November 20, 2015, transmitting Jail Facility Assessment Report of Dr. James Austin (contractor retained by Controller in consultation with stakeholders)(CJ#6 renovation scenario not structurally or operationally viable for maximum security with limited use for selected medium security), <https://sfcontroller.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/6963-JFA%20Report.pdf>; SF Controller’s Office, Jail Population Forecast & Facility Options Analysis, 2013, (sheriff identified CJ6 dormitory design as incompatible with secure classification requirements); San Francisco Controller, City Services Auditor, County Jail Needs Assessment, October 21, 2013, p.28, <https://sfcontroller.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/4596-UPDATED%20FINAL%20Jail%20Needs%20Assessment%2010-21-13.pdf>; BLA, Analysis of Sheriff’s Department Capital Needs and Jail Replacement Scenarios (dormitory housing incompatible with housing maximum- and high-medium-security inmates safely); FY 2014 Jail Population Forecast and Capacity Scenarios (noted physical plant deterioration from years of non-use; high transport costs at approximately \$1,000–\$1,500 per inmate per court appearance; dormitory configuration could not support required supervision ratios for higher-classification inmates); (security); SB 844, Adult Local Criminal Justice Facilities Construction Financing Program Proposal Form submitted by the San Francisco Sheriff, February 23, 2017 <http://m.sfsheriff.com/files/SB844.pdf>

tower and limited meeting rooms. Five dorms are currently open after 11 years of dormancy (other than a brief re-opening of a single dorm for COVID distancing in 2021). Each dorm has a maximum capacity of 62 people, with bunk beds arrayed in an open bay. The Jury observed that the yards were recently reinforced with anti-drone netting and featured newly painted pickleball courts. Each pod is supervised by a single deputy with support provided by one of a few floating deputies as part of the minimum staffing level of 10. This structure, which inmates may prefer for its relative freedom, also creates gaps and risks in operations. The design provides minimal privacy, offers limited ability to separate incompatible inmates, and makes it difficult to control violence if it erupts. A single altercation has potential to escalate to involve multiple inmates, putting both prisoners and staff at serious risk.

As might be expected from a 37-year-old facility that was closed for a decade, there are substantial physical issues. Several core kitchen functions were out of order at the time of our visit, including the freezer, hot water maker, and dish washing machine. One of three system hot water heaters was in operation, serving the entire San Bruno facility. While SFSO has so far been successful in bringing plumbing back online when it fails, the chance of full system failure is always present. Maintenance is provided by the Department of Public Works (DPW) due to staffing issues (more below) at considerable inter-city markup and delays given the location in San Bruno. Properly painted walls would increase the sense of order in the jail, but there often are lags in meeting painting maintenance schedules.

As might be expected from a 37-year-old facility that was closed for a decade, there are substantial physical issues.

CJ#3 and the Annex are included in the 2026-2027 Capital Budget with \$7.3M in “Pay-As-You-Go” funding. This is a relatively volatile funding line, as it comes from General Fund revenues on an annual basis, rather than a dedicated funding source. The City could defer or cancel this funding or request the SFSO use it to cover excess overtime charges (more below).

Medical Facilities

The physical environment in which jail medical care occurs profoundly affects the quality of care. Modern healthcare delivery requires private examination rooms, secure medication storage and preparation areas, adequate lighting and ventilation, adequate medical equipment, clean water and higher quality sanitation, temperature control, and space for confidential psychiatric interviews. The proposed new jail would have included a 384-bed facility with dedicated mental health and medical units, expanded programming space (including for substance abuse treatment), and updated programming, visitation, and recreation areas. Instead, SFSO now has the neglected Annex, not designed for today’s population.

This population requires intensive medical monitoring, mental health services, and addiction treatment — resources the jail system was not built or staffed to provide.

The Annex presents medical challenges. Dormitory-style housing and lack of private meeting spaces makes it nearly impossible to provide medical privacy. Mental health crises in close quarters create risks for all occupants. The facility was not designed for the medically complex population that modern jails must accommodate.

ZSFGH serves as acute and emergency care, specifically Ward 7L, a psychiatric facility at the hospital with seven secure psychiatric beds. Ward 7D previously served as a secure medical emergency facility for inmates, but it was

closed due to safety concerns. We learned of a newer 4-5 unit facility at ZSFGH built as a secure replacement but never opened for reasons unknown to us. Since there are no dedicated non-psychiatric medical facilities, 1-2 deputies accompany inmates in the general wards.

Bus and Transportation Issues

Moving inmates within the system and going to courts and care outside of the system is an essential function of the SFSO's core custodial function. SFSO manages this by running a fleet of buses and vans, with approximately 100 inmates moving back and forth between the San Bruno complex and CJ#1 for weekday court appearances - nearly 10% of the CJ#3 population daily. The Transportation Unit of the Sheriff's Patrol Unit is responsible for this function. Running multiple buses daily is expensive and labor intensive. According to the Sheriff's Annual report, there were 37,547 custody transports in 2025 for purposes including court appearances at the HOJ, release processing at CJ#1, and medical appointments at ZSFGH. There are 2 or 3 buses to San Francisco daily from San Bruno, with a capacity of about 40 prisoners per bus. Vans are used for smaller groups. Typically CJ#3 inmates are roused at 5am. High risk inmates are restrained with belly chains and leg shackles and general population inmates are handcuffed to someone else for the trip downtown. Opposing gang members are separated at the jail and put on either the A or B side of the bus to keep them apart. Each bus is guarded by two deputies.

What could go wrong? There are many safety and maintenance concerns about the current bus fleet. Three of five buses exceed the 12-year industry useful life. One bus was removed from service due to noise complaints from San Mateo County about chronic backfiring. We observed one bus awaiting repairs in the CJ#3 parking lot and learned it had a large hole in the floor. SFSO experienced multiple in-transit vehicle breakdowns which created safety risks for deputies and inmates. The Sheriff's budget reflects spending of \$150K per year on bus maintenance, noting that buses break down 2-4 times per month and are removed from service for long periods. Newer vehicles get better gas mileage and have

We heard from numerous witnesses that the buses are unsafe. They need to be replaced.

lower maintenance costs.⁴³ We heard repeatedly that the buses are unsafe. They need to be replaced.

Replacement of aging buses has been a Department priority for many years. In June 2024, \$300K earmarked for a new bus was de-appropriated from the transportation budget to pay for overtime. The Department requested \$500K in the 2026/2027 budget to replace the out of service bus. Time will tell if it is appropriated. In addition to problems with the bus fleet, we also learned of transport deficiencies for the command staff. Approximately 25 senior officers drive rental cars because there is no funding to purchase replacements for vehicles totaled in accidents. Rental is more expensive than vehicle purchase or lease-to-own options. These cars are not equipped with lights or sirens. This makes it difficult for officers to respond to critical incidents or direct traffic after accidents. We also learned there are tentative plans to install four EV charging stations at CJ#3. Given other pressing infrastructure needs in the jail system one may question the necessity of this project. Currently SFSO has no electric vehicles.

Technology Systems Too Fragile to Reboot

Mirroring the neglect and decline of the physical facilities, the underlying technology systems are outdated and underinvested. Technology is at the center of jail operations, including booking, classification, housing assignment, medical triage, disciplinary tracking, court appearances, and release. The Jail Management System (JMS) is a critical component of the wider operations infrastructure and factors heavily into performance. JMS software is

The operational consequences of running a 20-year-old system on aging hardware ripple through daily operations in ways that are both dangerous and costly.

essentially a specialized Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that captures data about inmates including personal information, charges and booking details, biometric data, medical and mental health history, inmate classification (like gang affiliations or housing separation needs), housing assignments, disciplinary incidents, and financial and property accounting. The JMS has been running on hardware purchased in 2004 and installed in 2008. Our investigation indicates that the current system is so fragile that administrators are reluctant to reboot it. The underlying database stopped receiving support from Microsoft six

years ago. The system is prone to catastrophic failure which would force the department to default to paper for all functions if the system went down.

The operational consequences of running a 20-year-old system on aging hardware ripple through daily operations in ways that are both dangerous and costly.⁴⁴The intake process is particularly affected. California Penal Code §825 requires that a defendant appear before a

⁴³SFSO, FY 2026-2027 & FY 2027-2028 Budget Request, February 23, 2026, Budget Form 4B:Fleet, https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/Sheriff_Budget_Submission_FY27_and_FY28.pdf

⁴⁴The L.A. County Sheriff experienced a three-day outage of the computer dispatch program in its patrol vehicles and had to rely on radio and cellphones to communicate with deputies on patrol, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/03/us/la-county-sheriff-dispatch-system-crash.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>

magistrate within 48 hours of arrest (excluding weekends and holidays). The Grand Jury was told that delays in intake processing – driven by inexperienced personnel navigating a cumbersome multi-page input interface, combined with multiple paper checklists and manual PDF scanning steps required to populate an inmate's electronic file, create pressure on that legal deadline. This is true even for people who have cycled through the jail before and whose basic information is nominally already in the system. The interface has not kept pace with either the volume or the pace of modern jail operations.

The records management picture is similarly compromised. Case files are written in Word and converted to PDF, then manually delivered to the District Attorney or other parties. The reliance on decentralized, paper records was cited as an Investigative Finding in the [Q42025 Department of Police Accountability \(DPA\) report](#), released in March 2026.⁴⁵ For example, deputies on overtime perform what staff call "hand pulls" – manual retrieval and coding of records that a modern integrated system would handle automatically. Interns or non-sworn personnel could be trained to assist with this work at significantly lower cost, but a hiring freeze on non-sworn staff eliminates that option. Public Records Act requests related to litigation are a substantial additional burden. Many older records remain in physical boxes, difficult to search and in many cases overdue for destruction under standard retention policies.

Reporting of crime statistics is transitioning from Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) format to the FBI's more granular National Incident Based Reporting Standard (NIBRS) system. The SFSO currently uses the SFPD's UCR system. SFPD is in the middle of a NIBRS upgrade (forecast to go live in 2027), but SFSO has no interface. The lack of a NIBRS-compliant records system means SFSO's data cannot be incorporated into FBI national crime statistics – a gap with implications for research, accountability, and federal grant funding eligibility.

SFSO plans to migrate to a new JMS platform (Offender 360), which should improve interoperability with other City systems. Deployment is currently targeted for 2027. However, deployment will be challenged by budgetary pressures – for example, the 2024-25 budget had approximately \$6.5M earmarked for technology upgrades, however in June 2024, the Sheriff's Department [de-appropriated](#) \$3.3M of JMS funding⁴⁶ from its general fund to accommodate overspending on overtime. The current 2026-2027 plan restores \$1M to this budget to fund deployment.

Surveillance Technology

Our investigation surfaced a related technology failure in real time. While inspecting the Jails, jurors observed that many CCTV cameras in the command center were not functioning – the result of a system upgrade gone wrong. A contractor from the Sheriff's Bureau of Building Services (SBBS) was actively working to restore the system. The Q42025 DPA report also highlights deficiencies with the surveillance system – lacking modern features, adequate

⁴⁵ [SFSO Investigations: 2025 Fourth Quarter \(Q4\) and 2025 Annual Report](#), p. 7.

⁴⁶ [Special Budget and Appropriations Committee Meeting](#), June 14, 2024, p. 3.

resolution, and sufficient retention. We subsequently learned that some workstations were still running Windows 7 (discontinued in 2020) which may have contributed to the problem.

The bank of 30-40 video monitors are scanned by several cadets who have eight-hour shifts. It appears to be mind-numbing work. Our investigation, including pointed inquiries, revealed no active plans for considering AI or facial recognition technology to provide more effective monitoring.

However, we observed a new security contractor upgrading security cameras in the CJ#3 Annex and were advised the CCTV issue was resolved in other facilities.

On a return visit to the Annex, we observed a contractor installing new cameras in one of the unoccupied dorms. We visited the control room and observed four dorms and associated outdoor recreation areas in the Annex had upgraded their CCTV displays. However, hallways and other areas still had old video displays. The guards in the control room still relied on convex mirrors viewed from windows in the floor to monitor hallway traffic. It also appears that the security system at CJ#3 needs an upgrade, but funds are not available.

Pressure #3: The Compounding Staffing Crisis

If the population pressures and the infrastructure failures were the only challenges facing the San Francisco jail system, the natural policy response might be: staff your way through it and make do. More deputies mean more supervision, more programming, more capacity to manage a difficult population in difficult facilities. The problem is that staffing levels have plummeted and cannot increase overnight. It is a third, independent crisis – one that interacts with the first two in ways that make each of them worse. A population with acute needs requires more supervision, more frequent medical transports, and more careful classification. Inmates can't hold their own medications or needles for insulin and all medications must be administered through medical staff, who need deputies to accompany them on pill passes. The demands on deputies have increased, but the Jails are "making do" with fewer deputies. Aging facilities require more staff to deal with breakdowns and technology lapses. Instead, the jail system operates with fewer sworn deputies than it had five years ago, in facilities housing significantly more people, with a workforce so stretched by mandatory overtime that injury, exhaustion, and workers compensation claims have become drivers of the vacancy problem.

The staffing story is unambiguous. COD had 411 sworn deputies in 2020, followed by a precipitous drop to 318 in 2022, 327 in 2023 and 332 in 2024. It reached 361 in December 2025, well below the 2020 count and with a substantially larger and more complex population.⁴⁷ See Chart 6.

⁴⁷ SFSO Monthly Staffing Reports, 2020-2025.

Chart 6: Staffing Fill Rates by Division

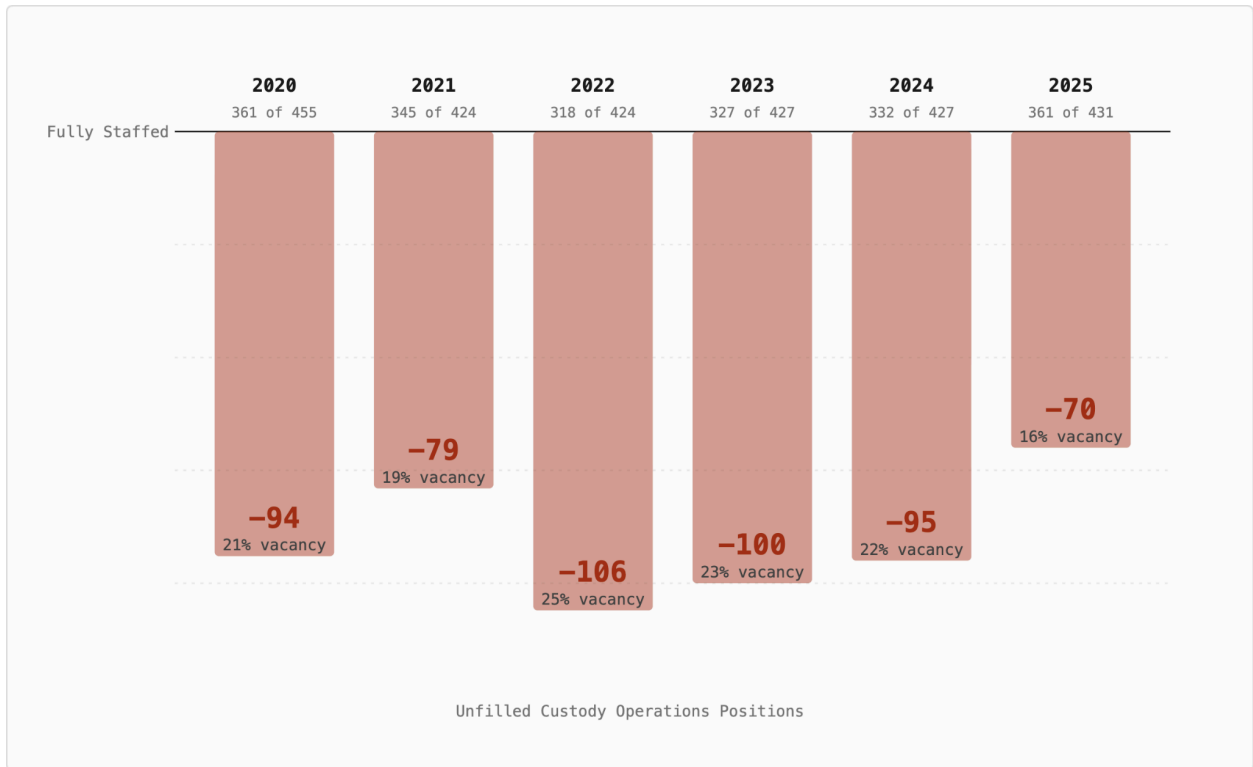


Chart of Staffing Rates

The raw number of unfilled Custody Operations positions. At its worst (2022), 106 deputies were missing – one in four positions empty in the division that runs the jails. The gap has improved but remains at 70 as of late 2025. Deficit bars: -94 (2020), -79 (2021), -106 (2022), -100 (2023), -95 (2024), -70 (2025). Source: SFSO Monthly Staffing Reports, December snapshots, 2020–2025.

Non-sworn staffing is stretched even thinner. At the end of 2024, professional staff positions showed a 35% vacancy rate against authorized headcount, and a citywide hiring freeze on non-sworn positions has eviscerated even replacement level hiring. Our investigation revealed that the jail currently has only one plumber for the entire system, a critical role for health and safety. When the plumber is unavailable, operational staff must contract with external agencies at a high premium for all services. Fingerprint technicians are hard to find, which delays processing with ripple effects throughout the system. This pattern exists across the system, leaving high external dependencies or sworn deputies completing civilian tasks on overtime, an exceedingly expensive alternative compared to the intended division of responsibilities with less expensive non-sworn staff.

Just as SFSO struggles with deputy staffing, JHS faces shortages of medical and mental health professionals. The specialized skills required for correctional healthcare—combining clinical expertise with security awareness and the ability to work in a locked facility—limit the

candidate pool. Competition from community healthcare providers offering less stressful work environments and often better compensation makes recruitment difficult.

These shortages affect care quality directly. When nurse positions sit vacant, remaining staff stretch to cover more patients with less time per encounter. Sick calls back up, chronic disease management falls behind, and medication administration becomes rushed. Mental health staffing gaps mean longer waits for psychiatric evaluation and limited counseling availability. Interviewees consistently expressed the need to ensure safety of public health staff in the jails.

The Never Ending Overtime Nightmare

Staffing woes come to a head in one place: the budget, and specifically overtime pay. Like aging facilities, staffing-shortage related overtime pay is not a new problem, but the problem is getting worse. In recent years, the San Francisco Deputy Sheriffs' Association ("SFDSA") implored the City to expedite hiring rather than relying on forced overtime. The ongoing efforts of the Sheriff's Office, coupled with Mayor Lurie's Rebuilding the Ranks programs, resulted in its first net increase in sworn staff since 2019, with 96 new deputies hired across the entire department in FY 2024-2025 and growth continuing in FY 2025-2026. However, it takes time to train and deploy new recruits – approximately nine months from hire, and not all make it through training – and the SFSO still has many deputies at, or approaching, eligibility for retirement. Only a fraction of new hires will go into Custodial Operations. The rebuilding is well underway but rough years remain ahead.

From a fiscal perspective, overtime numbers can appear worse than they are as increases in overtime are typically offset with decreases in payroll for the vacant employee spots that are filled on overtime. When a San Francisco law enforcement agency exceeds its overtime, it must get BOS consent to de-appropriate funds from budgeted but unused funds for salaries and benefits and appropriate them to actual and projected increases in overtime.⁴⁸ These de-appropriation requests have been made and routinely approved for many years as long as they don't draw on the City's budget. The problem arises when vacancy savings are less than overtime salaries and the appropriation can't be made within the entity's approved budget. At that point, the entity must cut funds from other budget items, or the BOS must vote to support the increased expenditure through the General Fund. Between opening the Annex, overall jail population growth and increased compensation expense, SFSO's overtime expense vaulted over the amount that could be de-appropriated from other compensation lines.

SFSO received no funding for Annex staffing in FY 2023-2024 or 2024-2025. Every shift was filled by a deputy working overtime. It was the functional equivalent of opening a new police station with no police officers. The SFSO was forced to cut non-salary spending on capital projects and facilities maintenance. In 2025, the SFSO de-appropriated \$300,000 from the automotive budget, including much needed funding for replacement buses, and \$3.6 million from Programmatic Projects (IT systems) towards the Overtime budget.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ S.F. Administrative Code, Section 3.17

⁴⁹ [Budget and Appropriations Committee Meeting](#), April 30, 2025, p. 3

Another Side of Excessive Overtime - Burnout, Stress, Accidents, and Workers Comp Claims

Initially, open posts are filled by volunteers. Once all volunteers are assigned and slots remain open, the next step is a global draft for involuntary overtime. Deputies already working overtime shifts in CJ#2 and CJ#3 are now drafted to staff the Annex, although the draft was recently suspended for budgetary reasons for the rest of this fiscal year. CJ#1 is constantly below minimum staffing. Minimum staffing levels are set independent of capacity – short staffing is easier to manage when the population is lower and far more painful when the population is at levels where the minimum is barely adequate. Positions need to be filled when the SFSO is understaffed and, for years, it's been on overtime.

The Jury witnessed approximately a dozen recreational vehicle trailers at the San Bruno jail that staff sleep in to bridge overtime shifts. Some live out-of-state, work large amounts of overtime and return home on comp time or vacation time, a practice confirmed in interviews. Deputies average 28 hours of overtime per week, and some deputies exceed 80 hours worked per week. Whether mandatory drafts or voluntary extra shifts, we heard consistently that overworked staff are at risk of burnout, illness, and accidents.

Even with mandatory overtime shifts, the Sheriff's department regularly faces the challenge of running a system below minimum required staffing levels. Minimum staffing levels must comply with BSCC requirements and are further negotiated with the SFDSA. The agreed minimums are contained in a Letter of Agreement that is part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement governing the relationship between the SFSO and SFDSA. When minimums aren't met at the beginning of a shift, a series of actions to increase staffing is triggered. If the numbers of on-site deputies are still insufficient, further action up to lockdowns takes place.

Chart 7: Overtime Spending by Fiscal Year

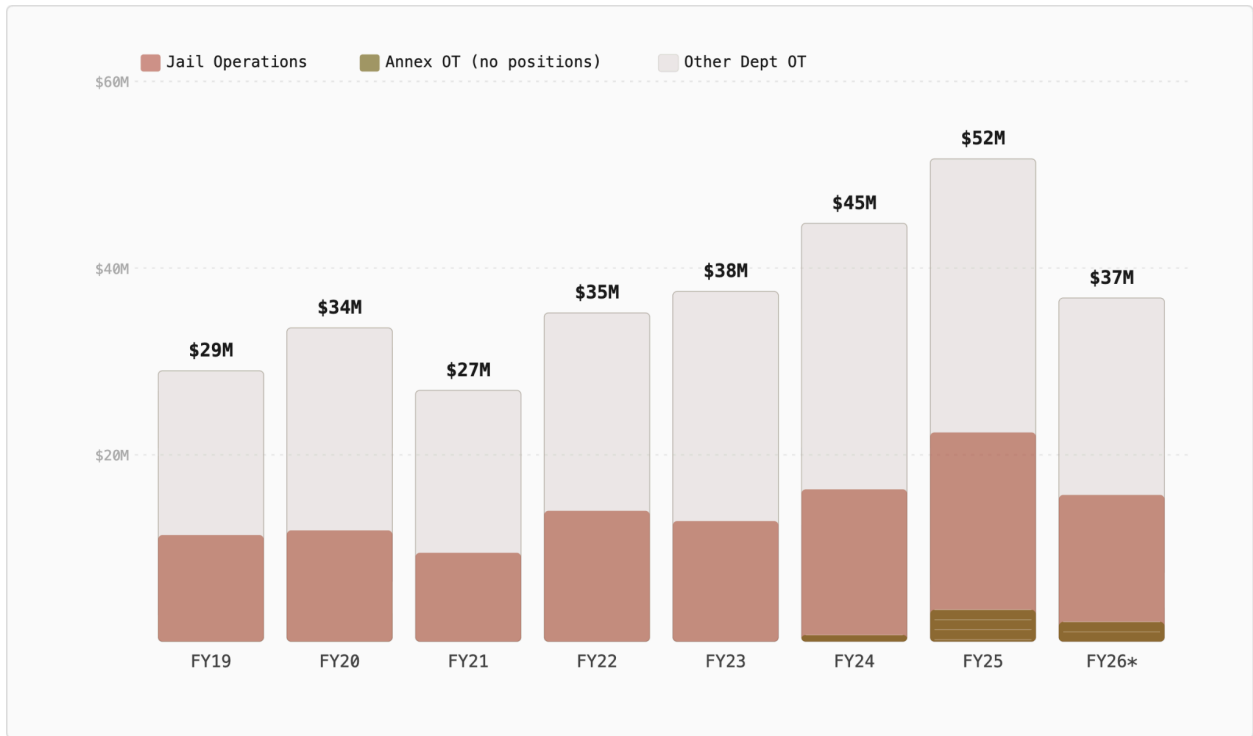


Chart of Overtime

Total department overtime broken into jail operations (including the Annex from FY24) and other department OT. Spending roughly doubled from \$29M (FY19) to a projected \$52M+ (FY25). Annex overtime – staffed entirely through OT with no dedicated positions – appears as a distinct and growing slice from FY24. The Controller’s March 2026 memo projects the deficit will require cuts to equipment, capital projects, and maintenance. Source: SFSO financial records (CFO), FY19–FY26. FY26 partial. Controller’s Office memo, Mar 2, 2026.

Lockdowns and Reduced Functionality at the Jail

The oft-used word “lockdown” is a bit of a misnomer. Lockdown is traditionally used when there’s a critical incident, like a fight, and an area is “locked down” for safety purposes while the issue is resolved. It is also used to describe actions when staffing levels are below the

Making do won’t work on a night when the beds are full and Intake is overflowing.

required minimums for a jail. In that case, the area is generally not “locked down” entirely but runs at a reduced level of functionality, depending on the number of available deputies. The levels may rise to a full lockdown if staffing is particularly low. In pods with locked cells, a lockdown means that inmates are confined to their cells instead of common areas.

There is nothing to “lock down” in open areas like CJ#1, the open sections of CJ#2, or the dormitories at the Annex. In dormitory housing, inmates may have to remain on their beds. Lockdowns can, and often do, lead to reduced

out-of-cell time, canceled programming, and disruption to medical rounds, mental health services, attorney visits, family visits, showers and shaving and every other activity that requires movement within the jail. Inmates lose rehabilitative connections, access to care, and the reset that movement allows. Numerous witnesses stressed the importance of programming in keeping staff and inmates safe. Lockdowns also impact deputies: simultaneous responsibility for two dorms can be frightening, particularly for a more junior deputy with less training and experience. We heard repeatedly that ongoing training is hard to schedule because it pulls officers from active shifts that may be below minimum and requires overtime expense.

Despite a 2019 Controller's audit recommendation⁵⁰ to track lockdowns systematically, the Jury did not find reliable data on how often lockdowns occur, how long they last, or how many program sessions were cancelled. However, there is ample evidence and agreement that lockdowns are a regular disruption. Our investigation revealed that full or partial lockdowns consistently occur multiple times a week. Further, JHS personnel administering health care during lockdowns presents challenges, making it difficult to adhere to HIPAA requirements.

⁵⁰ City and County of San Francisco, Office of the Controller, City Services Auditor, San Francisco Sheriff's Department: Key Strategies Could Help the Sheriff Reduce Its Heavy Reliance on Overtime and Better Communicate Its Staffing Needs, p.57 (2019)

Findings and Recommendations

F1. City and County leadership would benefit from first-hand knowledge obtained through inspection of the jail facilities and operations to enable them to better understand how policy changes affecting budget and operations for the Jails impact the operation of the Jails.

R1-A. The Mayor (R1-A(i)), all members of the BOS (R1-A(ii)), all members of the Capital Planning Committee (R1-A(iii)), and the District Attorney (R1-A(iv)) should inspect the San Francisco and San Bruno Jails by March 1, 2027, and at least once every two years thereafter. Any inspections involving one or more members of bodies covered by the Brown Act or Sunshine Ordinance should be conducted so as not to conflict with those laws.

R1-B. All members of the Sheriff's Department Oversight Board should inspect the San Francisco and San Bruno Jails by February 1, 2027 and at least once every two years thereafter. Any inspections involving one or more members of the Sheriff's Department Oversight Board should be conducted so as not to conflict with the Brown Act or Sunshine Ordinance.

R1-C. Inspections inside of the individual jail facilities should be conducted by front-line staff who work full-time in that jail, accompanied by the Sheriff and/or his designee(s). The inspections should be conducted in groups of less than 12 and should include inspection of the Jail buses, but the details are subject to the discretion of the SFSO.

Category 1: Jail Population

F2. Important jail reports report data in inconsistent manners, including a lack of clarity regarding how people in the booking process are categorized in ADP counts; a lack of available data on those booked and released directly from the Intake and Release Center without being assigned a bed in the general population; a lack of available data on recidivists with multiple prior jail bookings; and average stay data that is so broad as to preclude an accurate picture of the short term population.

R2-A. By November 1, 2026, the SFSO should review its Count procedures and implement a daily process to determine and report: 1. how many people included in the CJ#1 morning count are released from custody without being assigned to a bed in the general population, 2. how many of the people in each day's Intake count are released from custody without being assigned to a bed in the general population, and 3. daily count on how many people brought to Intake and Release in the custody of law enforcement officers are not accepted into the Sheriff's custody because of medical issues that require immediate care.

R2-B. By November 1, 2026, the SFSO should also report a daily count of the total number of people booked and released without entering the general population and of how many people in that count have a prior booking history with the SFSO.

R2-C. By November 1, 2026, the SFSO should maintain data that can be readily sorted and used to generate monthly reports reflecting the number of times an inmate has been booked in the last three years and to provide data on inmates with prior bookings, by frequency, for the general population.

F3. The Jails are dangerously close to capacity, and SFSO has not convened the Crowding Committee despite meeting the capacity triggers outlined in the SFSO Custody and Court Operations Manual, Policy 511.2.

R3-A. By November 1, 2026, SFSO should convene the Crowding Committee. In addition to the persons specified in Policy 511.2 (a)-(g), representatives of the District Attorney, San Francisco Sheriff's Department Oversight Board, and the BOS should also be invited.

R3-B. The Crowding Committee should issue quarterly status reports and data dashboards to the BOS and make them available on the Sheriff's website and on Data SF | OpenData Portal at data.sfgov.org.

F4. Beyond relying on facilities at other Bay Area jails far from San Francisco's courts, the SFSO has no plan for continued long term growth or a surge in the incarcerated population.

R4. By October 1, 2027, the SFSO should initiate a Facilities Need Assessment pursuant to the SFSO Custody and Operations Manual Policy 511.3, and by February 1, 2027 should submit a report on the Assessment to the Mayor's Office, the BOS, the DPW, and the Office of Capital Planning and Resilience.

F5. The Jails population has increasingly complex health needs, particularly mental health and substance use problems, which require more clinical and custodial resources than the system is designed to support.

R5-A. By January 1, 2027, SFSO and JHS should jointly issue a report analyzing the greatest barriers to meeting inmate treatment needs for medical care, including mental health care and substance use treatment, identify priority actions within their respective areas of authority that could be implemented to better meet those needs to improve support, and address potential sources of staffing and funding. Areas analyzed should include, at a minimum, the feasibility of providing extended hours for mental health and reentry services; processes for intake identification of inmates with a history of prior bookings and potential of additional reentry services for this population; and assessment of resources needed to provide re-entry services for inmates released in less than eight days. If SFSO and JHS are unable or unwilling to jointly prepare the report, they should separately prepare, issue and post a report covering all matters addressed above by January 1, 2027.

R5-B. The report should also assess, prioritize, and develop a timetable for possible implementation of identified actions within their respective areas of authority, including the feasibility of 24/7 mental health services. The report should specify which identified actions could be achieved without an increase in available resources, and which identified actions

require an increase in resources. If SFSO and JHS are unable or unwilling to jointly prepare the report, they should separately prepare, issue and post a report covering all matters addressed above by January 1, 2027.

R5-C. Beginning on April 1, 2027, SFSO and JHS should issue regular updates, at least quarterly, and include a dashboard showing the status of all items on the timetable (referenced in R5-B) and reporting whether the specific action has been achieved, and if not, why not. Each such update should be posted on the SFSO and JHS websites. If SFSO and JHS are unable or unwilling to jointly prepare the updates, they should separately prepare, issue and post updates covering all matters addressed herein.

R5-D. The report(s) should also identify priority actions not within the areas of authority of the SFSO and JHS that could possibly be implemented by actions of the Mayor absent an ordinance, and/or the BOS by an ordinance.

R5-E. The report(s) should be posted on the SFSO and JHS websites, on Data SF | OpenData Portal at data.sfgov.org and transmitted to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors.

F6. Current resources and procedures do not allow for sufficient discharge planning and resource provision or connection for people repeatedly booked on, and rapidly released from, charges for low-level offenses, creating further destabilization in this population.

R6-A. The Sheriff and the Director of DPH should meet by November 1, 2026 to assess the feasibility of funding and staffing evening re-entry support services or address methods to reduce the need for late night discharges, and review the timing of the Release process to find the earliest practical opportunity for re-entry personnel to provide services.

R6-B. Using the feasibility assessment conducted in response to R6-A, the JHS, SFSO, and other appropriate agencies should create a system that allows for earlier discharge planning for inmates at risk for recidivism, including but not limited to those who have been incarcerated more than twice in the past calendar year, and should address the needs of persons incarcerated for less than eight days. The effort to create a system should commence by November 1, 2026 and be completed by March 1, 2027.

Category 2: Infrastructure & Operations

F7. For at least a decade, the City has declined to make major capital investments in jail facilities, with the result that the Jails are operating in aging buildings that do not meet current operational, clinical, or safety needs.

R7-A. By October 1, 2026, the Mayor should direct the DPW and the Office of Resilience and Capital Planning, in coordination with SFSO and DPH, to develop a comprehensive jail resilience and capital plan. The plan should identify needed improvements, funding requirements for facility modernization, and funding mechanisms and recommendations,

establish a priority sequence for needed improvements, and address the long-term question of facility replacement or renovation at a scale adequate to serve the current and projected Jail population.

R7-B. By March 1, 2027, the report should be presented to the BOS, and by May 1, 2027, the BOS or a committee thereof should have a hearing on the report.

F8. The residential dormitories in the Annex at CJ#3 were designed for minimum security and selected low-risk inmates, but the current population consists primarily of medium- and maximum-security inmates and creates heightened risk of violent incidents.

R8. The SFSO should consult with a classification expert to assess whether the Classification system used by the SFSO Classification Unit is accurately addressing the risk of housing medium-security prisoners accused of violent crimes and maximum-security prisoners in the Annex dormitories. The analysis should also consider whether classification procedures need to be modified for the current levels of medical, mental health and substance use disorder in the custodial population. The SFSO should proceed in good faith to expedite the contracting process, and should start the process no later than October 1, 2026.

F9. The SFSO is underinvested in technology and overly reliant on outmoded, inefficient paper processes for records management, overtime assignments and tracking, and various other procedures. The SFSO central technology platform for all custody operations (JMS) is outdated, presenting risks to operations and creating inefficiencies for staff.

R9-A. The SFSO should complete its technology replacement plan to install Offender 360 in place of the existing JMS system by June 1, 2027.

R9-B. The SFSO should conduct a comprehensive study of IT needs and planning, including plans for a new Records Management System compliant with National Incident Based Reporting Standards (NIBRS) by March 1, 2027.

F10. Implementation of essential technology has been delayed and undercut by reappropriation of the technology budget to cover overtime costs.

R10. Starting October 1, 2026, if the Sheriff seeks to de-appropriate funds from the IT capital budget to pay for overtime or other compensation expenses, the Sheriff should prepare a cost-benefit analysis of the operational and fiscal impact of losing these IT funds on jail operations, including a five year history of the de-appropriation of capital budget line items. This information should be presented to the BOS when the SFSO submits its request for a supplemental appropriation pursuant to Administrative Code section 3.17 and should be posted on the Sheriff's website with any budget presentations.

Category 3: Staffing

F11. The SFSO operates below required minimum staffing levels on a chronic and recurring basis; and the many problems associated with operating below required minimums have been

magnified by the Sheriff's decision to curtail the use of overtime and operate below minimums from approximately March 15, 2026 to the end of FY 2025-2026.

R11. The Controller and SFSO should assess the need to staff the 372 inmate Annex separately from County Jail #3, including assessing the need for a Captain position and non-overtime funded staffing for the Annex, and for an accounting separation to reflect the separate populations and operating costs of the two facilities. The analysis should be started by November 1, 2026 and completed and presented to the Mayor and the BOS by no later than March 1, 2027.

F12. Chronic overtime spending in excess of budget, including the cost of staffing the Annex entirely on overtime after the City denied funding for staffing when the Annex reopened in 2023 and added additional dorms in 2024 and 2025, has directly impeded essential investment in the jail system. Overtime levels in recent years are detrimental to the safety, security, and health of the entire Jail community and the reliance on overtime at the Annex is particularly concerning.

R12. By November 1, 2026, the Controller should initiate a performance audit to assess SFSO staffing and use of overtime for Fiscal Years 2023-2024 through 2025-2026, including, but not limited to: i) procedures for approving, assigning, and reporting overtime; ii) deputy sheriff use of compensatory time off in lieu of paid overtime; iii) over-reliance on paper records; iv) areas of actual or potential abuse, v) cost-benefit analysis of return on investment from funding and implementing modern computerized systems to reduce use of overtime and enable increased use of civilians in clerical functions, and vi) other recommendations to improve the efficiency of staffing and overtime.

F13. Incidents of below minimum staffing result in facility lockdowns or lesser mobility restrictions, cause suspended programming, reduce out-of-cell time, interrupt access to health services, impede visitation, and have other negative impacts on inmates, yet data on lockdowns is unavailable.

R13-A. By March 1, 2027, the SFSO should implement a standardized tracking and reporting system that captures data: (1) for each lockdown or service reduction related to reasons other than subminimum staffing and, (2) for each lockdown or service reduction attributed to below minimum staffing. This system should include data on the affected facility, unit, date and duration of lockdown or service reduction, reason for lockdown, lockdown level and the staffing level at time of lockdown or service reduction, as well as the activities and services that were reduced, delayed, canceled, or suspended.

R13-B. This data generated by the system described in R13-A should be captured in dashboards and reported quarterly to the BOS and the Sheriff's Department Oversight Board, and published monthly on the Sheriff's website and on Data SF | OpenData Portal at data.sfgov.org.

Required and Requested Responses

Pursuant to California Penal Code §933, the Jury requires responses to the findings and recommendations shown in Table 2 within 60 calendar days (for the Mayor, the Sheriff, and the District Attorney) and 90 calendar days (for the Board of Supervisors).

Sheriff

- Findings: F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10, F11, F12, F13
- Recommendations: R1A-B, R2A-C, R3A-B, R4, R5A-E, R6A-B, R7A-B, R8, R9A-B, R10, R11, R12, R13A-B

Mayor

- Findings: F1, F5, F6, F7
- Recommendations: R1-A(i), R5-A-D, R6-A-B, R7-A-B

District Attorney

- Findings: F1, F3
- Recommendations: R1-A(iv), R3-A

Board of Supervisors

- Findings: F1, F3, F5, F7
- Recommendations: R1-A(ii), R3-A, R5-A-D, R7A-B

Requested Responses

SF Controller

- Findings: F11, F12
- Recommendations: R11, R12

SF Department of Public Health

- Findings: F5, F6, F7
- Recommendations: R5A-E, R6A-B, R7A-B

SF Department of Public Works

- Findings: F7
- Recommendations: R7A-B

Office of Resilience and Capital Planning:

- Findings: F7
- Recommendations: R7A-B

Capital Planning Committee

- Findings: F7
- Recommendations: R7A-B

Sheriff's Department Oversight Board

- Findings: F1, F3, F13
- Recommendations: R1-B, R3-A, R13-A-B

Methodology

To prepare this report, the Jury conducted personal interviews, reviewed reports and data from city offices, reviewed public hearings, read media reports, and consulted relevant legal statutes.

The Jury conducted over twenty interviews of both City officials and employees with firsthand knowledge of operations in the San Francisco Jails as well as others with expertise connected to the Jails or the criminal justice system. We are not permitted to identify witnesses in this report. In no instance does this report rely on the testimony of a single witness without corroborating testimony or other corroborating information.

Our process included an extensive review of publicly available information, including:

- DPH presentations on Jail Health; SFSO Annual Reports; SFSO Budget presentations; SF Controller and BLA Reports on jail population projections, assessments related to new jail proposal, reports related to excessive use of overtime and other matters; SFSOB minutes and presentations; BSCC data and documents; presentations before SF BOS and BOS committees; SF Sentencing Council minutes and presentations from Safety & Justice Challenge meetings, prior Civil Grand Jury reports, SFDSA labor agreement and public position documents; BLA and Controller's reports on excessive overtime, and a wide variety of news articles and reports on population projections, jail capacity, and decisions surrounding the closure of CJ#4
- Spending figures published by the Controller's Office and Sheriff's Office via DataSF and OpenBook
- Budget and other reports from the Controller, the Budget and Legislative Analyst, and other city oversight agencies
- SFGovTV review of numerous public meetings and hearings concerning jails; SF Sheriff's Department Oversight Board; SF BOS and BOS committee hearing, including review of transcripts and speaker submissions
- Documents and presentations prepared by city agencies, including operational, financial, and staffing documents shared by the Sheriff's Office and Department of Public Health
- Publications and news articles reporting on the challenges in the Jails and the justice system

Note: We are grateful for the time and insight of all who took time to meet with us during the interviews and inspections process and particularly wish to note their commitment and dedication to improving what has become a crisis for the City and County of San Francisco.

Appendix A: Jails Investments Timeline

- 2006** Replacing CJ#3 and CJ#4 named priority in SF's Ten-Year Capital Plan.
- 2010 - 2020** San Francisco Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response (ESER) bonds fund seismic upgrades and new facilities (\$1.44B combined across the 2014, 2020 and the current 2026 proposal). They have been used to fund relocation and new buildings for former public safety offices (such as the District Attorney) of the Hall of Justice. The 2014 and 2020 ESER bonds were used to build police facilities, fire stations, the Medical Examiner's Office, and SFPD crime labs. Jails were excluded every time. Certificates of Participation were issued to acquire and prepare a new facility for SFPD Evidence and Property Operations. Jails have been in the Deferred queue for almost a decade. Two SFSO departments - Warrants and Records and Transportation Operations - remain in the HOJ - with no plan for where they go when the HOJ Initiative is done.
- 2013** CJ#3 and CJ#4 were seismically dangerous, designed in an era that predates modern best practices for jails, and regularly experienced raw sewage backing up into cells. SF's Ten-Year Capital Plan identified replacing CJ#3 and CJ#4 as a funding priority and planning for a new jail began.
- 2015** After two years of study, the Sheriff's Department and the Controller's Office presented a concrete, funded proposal: a 384-bed facility with dedicated mental health and medical units, expanded programming space (including for substance abuse treatment), and updated programming, visitation, and recreation areas. In July of 2015, the BOS voted unanimously to authorize the Sheriff to submit a grant application to the California Board of State and Community Corrections ("BSCC").⁵¹ In December, the BSCC awarded San Francisco \$80M in financing.⁵²

However, in the interim months, "No New Jails," a coalition of community members, opposed the replacement project, instead preferring to re-open a minimum-security dormitory facility closed in 2010 (the Annex, referred to as CJ#6 at the time). The Controller's Office evaluated this option and opposed it, after hearing from retained experts that CJ#6 could not safely house maximum-security or special-management populations, and that transporting inmates from San Mateo County to San Francisco courts would impose substantial costs and compromise access to legal counsel, family visitation, and programming.

⁵¹ San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Resolution No. 261-15.

⁵² BSCC press release, November 12, 2015,

<https://sfgov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=4169675&GUID=436E0A1D-0D21-4BBC-8250-1182EB7E600D>

In December 2015, the same BOS voted unanimously to reject the BSCC funding, beginning a 10-year pattern of denying or excluding any meaningful capital investment in the jails.

2017 A DPW retained consultant, AECOM, conducted an infrastructure study and identified \$267M in needed improvements.⁵³ SFSO submitted a grant application to BSCC for \$70M to update CJ#2 and add 48 mental health beds.⁵⁴ BSCC denied it.

2020 CJ#4 permanently closed, eliminating rated capacity of 402 from the system.

One of the primary reasons for closure was repeated problems with the plumbing system. In January 2020, the City settled a lawsuit with 217 inmates who were exposed to overflowing raw sewage in 2017-18 for \$2.1M. *Zayas et al. v. San Francisco County Sheriff's Department et al.*, No.3:18-cv-06155, U.S. district Court for the Northern District of California (2020).

2021 For the first time since closure in 2010, the Sheriff's Department reopened one dormitory in the Annex for social distancing during the COVID pandemic.

2023 In late May, Mayor London Breed launched Drug Market Agency Coordination Center ("DMACC"), activating public safety resources to address the fentanyl crisis and deteriorating street conditions in the Tenderloin and South of Market..

By October 2023, the jail population spiked by more than 30%, and The Annex opened two 62-bed dormitories to cope with the emergency.

2024 - 2025 Two additional 62-bed dormitories were opened in the Annex.

2026 An additional 62-bed dormitory was opened in the Annex, bringing the total available capacity in the Annex to 5 active (of 6 total) 62-person dorms.

2026 ESER bond (\$525M) proposal included a request of \$140M for CJ#2 seismic upgrade. Police, Fire, and Muni were funded for specific projects, but jails were excluded again except for participation in a limited pool to be shared across all public safety initiatives in San Francisco.⁵⁵

⁵³ AECOM/DPW HOJ Infrastructure Study (Oct. 2017)

⁵⁴ SB 844, Adult Local Criminal Justice Facilities Construction Financing Program Proposal Form submitted by the San Francisco Sheriff, February 23, 2017 <http://m.sfsheriff.com/files/SB844.pdf>

⁵⁵ <https://sfpublicworks.org/eser-2026>

Glossary

AOT (Assisted Outpatient Treatment) – Court-ordered outpatient mental health treatment for individuals who meet specific criteria, typically including a history of hospitalization or incarceration related to untreated mental illness. AOT allows treatment to occur in the community rather than in custody or an inpatient facility.

ADP - Average Daily Population of the San Francisco County Jails.

Arrest – The act of taking a person into custody based on a peace officer's reasonable belief that the person violated the law. Not all arrests result in jail booking. Arrestees may be released by the arresting agency, post bail, be released on their own recognizance, or receive a citation requiring a future court appearance ("cite and release").

Assessment – A clinical evaluation after an initial screening, intended to determine the specific nature, severity, history, and course of an inmate's mental health and/or substance use conditions. Assessments inform classification, housing, and treatment decisions.

BLA – Budget and Legislative Analyst for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Provide fiscal analysis, budget analysis, policy analysis, budget recommendations and management audits of San Francisco departments and programs.

Booking – The administrative process of recording a person's entry into jail custody. Typically includes recording personal information and physical description, photographing, fingerprinting, and conducting a Department of Justice records check.

BSCC (Board of State and Community Corrections) – A California state agency that provides leadership, coordination, and technical assistance to county correctional facilities, including standards for local detention facilities and grant administration.

BOS - San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

CIT (Crisis Intervention Team / Crisis Intervention Training) – A law enforcement training model designed to improve officers' responses to individuals experiencing mental health crises. CIT-trained officers are equipped to de-escalate situations and connect individuals to mental health services rather than defaulting to arrest and incarceration.

Classification – The process of evaluating an inmate's security risk, medical and mental health needs, housing compatibility, and other factors to determine appropriate housing placement within the jail. Classification decisions affect whether an inmate is housed in minimum, medium, or maximum security and whether special accommodations are required.

CPC (California Penal Code) – Defines criminal offenses, criminal procedure, and the powers and duties of law enforcement and correctional agencies. Governs jail operations.

DPH –San Francisco Department of Public Health.

Diversion (Jail Diversion) – A program or process that redirects individuals who would otherwise be booked into jail toward alternative dispositions. Alternatives may include community service, psychiatric treatment, substance use treatment, fines, or other conditions in exchange for reduced or dropped charges. For individuals with mental illness, diversion typically involves agreement to participate in voluntary treatment.

Diversion of Medicines – The act of concealing, stockpiling, or redirecting prescription medications rather than taking them as prescribed. In a custody setting, diverted medications may be saved for sale, trade, or use in self-harm or suicide attempts.

DMACC (Drug Market Agency Coordination Center) – A multi-agency task force launched in 2023 to coordinate local, state and federal resources against drug markets, especially in the Tenderloin and South of Market. Led by SFPD, includes SFSO and other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies operating in a coordinated enforcement model.

Felony – A criminal offense that, upon conviction, can result in a sentence to state prison or more than one year in county jail. Felony charges are considered more serious than misdemeanors.

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) – A federal law that establishes protections for medical information and governs how health data may be shared. In a custody setting, HIPAA restrictions can limit the sharing of medical and mental health information between jail health staff and sheriff's deputies, creating operational tension between privacy requirements and safety needs.

JHS (Jail Health Services) – A section of the San Francisco Department of Public Health that provides medical, behavioral health, and reentry care to people incarcerated in the SFSO Jail system.

JMS (Jail Management System) – The central information technology system used by the San Francisco Sheriff's Office for custodial operations, including inmate records, classification data, housing assignments, and operational tracking.

Maximum Security Inmates – Inmates assessed as presenting the highest risk to the public, staff, or other inmates. Includes individuals who pose significant escape risk, have a history of violence in custody, or present serious threats to the safe and orderly operation of the facility. Maximum security inmates are typically housed separately from the general population.

Medium Security Inmates – Inmates who may present some escape risk or threat to staff or other inmates but who generally demonstrate willingness to comply with facility rules and regulations. Medium security inmates are typically housed within the general population.

Minimum Security Inmates – Inmates assessed as presenting low risk to the public, other inmates, or facility staff. Minimum security inmates are housed in general population quarters and may be eligible for work assignments or other privileges.

Misdemeanor – A criminal offense that, upon conviction, can result in a sentence of up to one year in county jail, a fine, probation, restitution, or any combination of these.

MOUD (Medications for Opioid Use Disorder) – Clinically supervised medications used to treat opioid addiction, including methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone. MOUD is considered the standard of care for opioid use disorder and may be administered in custody settings as part of jail health services.

POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) – The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, which establishes minimum selection and training standards for California law enforcement officers, including sheriff's deputies.

Pre-Trial Inmates – Individuals held in jail who have not yet been convicted or sentenced. Pre-trial inmates are awaiting trial or other court proceedings and are legally presumed innocent. They constitute approximately 85% of the jail population in San Francisco.

RMS (Records Management System) – An information system used by law enforcement agencies to manage reports, case files, and other operational records.

Sallyport – A secure, controlled entryway to a jail or correctional facility, designed for safely transporting arrested persons and inmates in and out of the facility. A sallyport typically consists of two interlocking doors or gates that cannot both be open simultaneously, preventing unauthorized entry or escape.

Screening – The initial, standardized intake evaluation conducted when a person is booked into custody. Screening identifies immediate medical, mental health, and substance use concerns that require urgent attention or that affect classification and housing decisions. Screening precedes the more detailed clinical assessment.

Sentenced Inmates – Individuals who have been convicted of a crime and are serving a court-determined sentence in the jail facility. Sentenced inmates have different legal status and, in some cases, different program eligibility than pre-trial inmates.

SFSO (San Francisco Sheriff's Office) – The law enforcement agency responsible for operating San Francisco's jail facilities, providing court security, and executing civil processes within the City and County.

SFDSA (San Francisco Deputy Sheriffs' Association) – The labor union representing San Francisco deputy sheriffs. The relationship between SFDSA and the Sheriff's Office is governed by a collective bargaining agreement that affects staffing, scheduling, discipline, and working conditions.

SFSDOB (San Francisco Sheriff's Department Oversight Board) – The civilian oversight body of the San Francisco Sheriff's Office.

SMI (Serious Mental Illness) – A clinical determination that an individual has been formally diagnosed with a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder that is currently active and causes serious functional impairment. In a custody setting, SMI status affects classification, housing, treatment planning, and discharge coordination.

Ward 7D / Ward 7L – Locked wards at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital maintained by the Sheriff's Office. Ward 7D serves inmates requiring medical hospitalization. Ward 7L serves inmates requiring psychiatric hospitalization. Both wards operate under custody conditions within the hospital setting.

Warm Handoff – The practice of directly introducing a person being released from custody to a case manager or service provider who will coordinate post-release treatment, housing, and community services. A warm handoff is intended to ensure continuity of care and reduce the likelihood of re-arrest or service disengagement.

ZSFGH (Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital) – San Francisco's public hospital, operated by the Department of Public Health. ZSFGH houses locked wards (7D for medical and 7L for psychiatric care) where inmates requiring hospitalization are treated under Sheriff's Office custody.