

The New Horizons Program

The Northern California Regional Facility is a unique 18-bed locked treatment facility for hard to place, dual-diagnosed juvenile court wards on probation. When a minor enters the Regional Facility, he or she begins an intensive integrated program of mental health, education, independent living skills and behavior management correctional components called the New Horizons Program. The program is divided into five Phases of Intervention: Phase I Orientation, Phase II Stabilization, Phase III Advanced Placement preparation, Phase IV Transition, and Phase V Aftercare. Following release from the Regional Facility is a minimum of six months of enhanced probation supervision. Where available, wraparound services are provided. When the in-custody phase is completed, aftercare services become the responsibility of the county of residence.

Interdisciplinary Staffing

Building the necessary therapeutic environment to support these youth in their transition to more mature, responsible attitudes and behaviors is facilitated through staff meetings. Weekly case staffing occurs to address progress, goals and transition plans for residents. A separate interagency meeting is held weekly to address program issues. The Humboldt County Probation Department, the children's mental health program at the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services, and the Humboldt County Office of Education work in a coordinated team approach to provide supervision, treatment, and educational services, as well as individual transition after-care planning. Probation officers for residents from other counties are welcome at staffings.



Services Provided at the Regional Facility

Residents at the Northern California Regional Facility receive services in four basic areas while participating in New Horizons:

Independent Living Skills

The Independent Living Skills (ILS) curriculum provides "life skills" techniques and information to residents participating in the New Horizons program. Curriculum topics include community resources, personal paperwork and documentation, medicine and health, cars and driving, housing, career exploration, employment search skills, job retention skills, and budgeting and financial planning. The ILS program works in collaboration with other components of the New Horizons Program to create a supportive and positive transition plan for residents. Each resident is encouraged to adopt a lifestyle of following rules and policies, as well as taking responsibility for their actions through examples of employment expectations.

Mental Health

Services include individual, group, and family counseling. Residents attend both skill development groups and peer support groups, which focus on the development of problem-solving skills, anger management skills, social skills, and mature moral judgment. Residents also attend two weekly substance abuse groups and work with mental health staff to develop individualized relapse prevention plans. Residents are taught to identify and change the thinking and behavior patterns that typically lead to drug use and other illegal or irresponsible behavior. Psychiatric medication, evaluation, and support appointments are also available and provided as needed.

Education

Students are provided group and individualized instruction. Credit recovery occurs daily as students are placed in appropriate individualized curricula based on transcripts, grade, and skill level. When needed, students receive individualized instruction in all core academic areas. Computer technology, vocational education topics and Resource Specialist services are also provided. All program goals are reinforced through curricular approaches, behavior management, and individual interactions with students.

Juvenile Corrections Officers

The correctional staff interacts with the residents and participates in staffings to support the creation of the therapeutic environment. They reinforce treatment goals, integrating them with safety and behavior management issues.

Who Is Eligible (Refer to W&I Code 5696)

- Minor must be a 602 ward between the ages of 12 and 18 years
- Minor must have a minimum of 6 months confinement time (12 is preferred)
- Minor must have a current edition DSM mental health diagnosis and display significant and substantial impairments in important areas of life functioning
- Minor's behavior must present a danger to the community or self
- Minor's behavior must indicate a need for treatment within a secure setting
- In addition, minor must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Be removed or at risk of being removed from home
 - Exhibit impairments that are present for more than one year or are likely to continue without treatment
 - Display a psychotic feature, risk of suicide, or violence due to a mental disorder
 - Meet special education eligibility requirements for the emotionally disturbed.



How a Ward Is Referred

The probation officer requests the Supervising Mental Health Clinician to assess the minor for initial eligibility criteria. The case is then staffed at Probation.

If Probation staffing results in recommendation to the New Horizons Program, a packet of all previous developmental, school, probation and mental health reports is provided to the Northern California Regional Facility Manager.

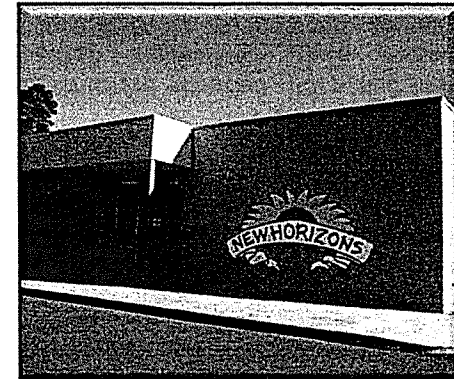
If the Juvenile Court Judge accepts the recommendation, the minor is then ordered to the Northern California Regional Facility New Horizons Program for treatment.

Out of County Placement

Other California counties who have a minor they wish to have considered for the New Horizons treatment program should notify the Regional Facility Manager. A referral packet will then be mailed to the referring county. Within seven days of receiving a thoroughly completed referral packet, the referring county will be notified of placement decision via telephone with a letter to follow.

The Northern California Regional Facility is not a psychiatric hospital and does not specialize in the treatment of sex offenders. However, such placements are considered on a case-by-case basis.

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**An Interdisciplinary,
Collaborative Program**

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