

## JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION COMMISSION DUTIES AND POWERS

Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 225 requires each county to have a Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC). The JJC must be comprised of not less than seven and no more than fifteen members, including at least two between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one years. Terms of membership are supposed to be for four years, although the formality of set "terms" is not observed in many counties. All appointments are by the Juvenile Court Judge.

Although the law gives legal parameters, it does not tell how to implement or how to accomplish the intent of the law. This means that there is a great deal of latitude, and variation, in how County JJ/DP Commissions operate and what they do.

Most counties have combined their Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commissions; although, legal authority, roles and responsibilities are different for the two Commissions.

The duties of the JJC are "to inquire into the administration of the juvenile court law" in the county. For that purpose the JJC has access to all publicly administered institutions in the county in which juvenile offenders are housed, and has the duty of inspecting such institutions at least once each year. What does "inquire into administration" mean? It does not mean to attempt to administer. It is extremely important that any planning and/or activity in this area be done in a spirit of cooperation with the Juvenile Court and the Probation Department.

The JJC shall annually inspect any jail or lockup within the county used for confinement of any minor for more than 24 hours. A report on any inspection of a jail and/or lockup, together with recommendations, must be made to the Juvenile Court and the Board of Corrections. In urban counties this inspection duty can involve a substantial amount of time, but in rural counties this time commitment is minimal. The JJC may hold hearings, and the Juvenile Court Judge has the power to issue subpoenas requiring attendance and testimony of witnesses, or the production of documents, at such hearings.

W & I Code Section 229.5 states that JJC may inquire into non confidential administrations of any group home in the county which houses wards or dependent children of the Juvenile Court. Section 229.5 regulates the manner in which inspections of group homes may be conducted, and authorize the JJC to report findings to the Juvenile Court Judge, Chief Probation Officer, or Department of Social Services. The JJC may recommend changes deemed beneficial after investigation and may publicize its recommendations.

Under the direction of the juvenile court judge the JJC also nominates the chief probation officer who, in turn, is appointed by the judge. All appointments of deputy and assistant probation officers are subject to approval of the JJC. W & I Code Section 270.