

California State Report Card

Last Updated: January 2026

Method and scoring: State involuntary civil commitment laws are evaluated using a 100-point grading scale. The scoring criteria are in accordance with Treatment Advocacy Center's values and policy preferences. Up to 50 points are awarded to a state based on the quality of its inpatient commitment law, and up to 50 points are awarded based on the state's assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) law. Final letter grades are computed using the following scale:

97 or above	A+	87–89	B+	77–79	C+	67–69	D+	59 or below	F
93–96	A	83–86	B	73–76	C	63–66	D		
90–92	A-	80–82	B-	70–72	C-	60–62	D-		

PART ONE: Inpatient Commitment Statute (up to 50 points)			
Criterion	Citation	Specifications	Points
1. Citizen access to court, emergency evaluation (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 5150, 5201	☐ Authorizes family/enumerated adults (3 pts) ☐ Authorizes any responsible adult (2 pts) Application to county designated person or agency only	0
2. Quality of emergency petition process (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 5150, 5151	☒ Process specified and reasonable (2 pts) ☒ Timelines specified and reasonable (2 pts) ☒ Responsible entities identified (1 pt) ☒ Requires certification by more than one professional (-2 pts) ☐ Emergency evaluation criteria inconsistent with inpatient commitment criteria (-5 pts)	3
3. Emergency hold duration (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5150(a)	☒ At least 48-hour hold allowed (3 pts) ☒ At least 72-hour hold allowed (2 pts) Up to 72 hours	5
4. Citizen access to court, inpatient petition (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5251	☐ Authorizes family/enumerated adults (3 pts) ☐ Authorizes any responsible adult (2 pts)	0
5. Quality of criteria for harm or violence to self or others (up to 10 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5250	☒ Contains explicit criteria (10 pts) ☒ Language is vague/ambiguous (-3 pts) ☐ Harm must be imminent (-3 pts)	7
6. Quality of criteria for grave disability/basic needs (up to 10 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 5008(h), 5250	☒ Contains explicit criteria (10 pts) ☐ Language is vague/ambiguous (-3 pts) ☐ Endangerment must be imminent (-3 pts) ☐ Criteria require family to turn person out of home to receive treatment (-3 pts) (See comment 1 below) ☐ Unreasonably high risk of harm (-3 pts)	10
7. Quality of criteria for psychiatric deterioration (up to 10 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 5008(h), (q), 15610.67	☒ Contains explicit criteria (10 pts) ☐ Language is vague/ambiguous (-3 pts)	10
SUBTOTAL			35
PART ONE: Extra Credit			
1. Specifies in which court a petition for inpatient commitment shall be filed (1 pt)			0
Extra Credit			0
PART ONE TOTAL			35

PART TWO: Outpatient Commitment Statute (up to 50 points)			
Criterion	Citation	Specifications	Points
1. AOT explicitly authorized (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5349	☐ Requires local government to adopt (-3 pts)	5
2. Citizen access to court for AOT (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346(b)	☒ Authorizes family/enumerated adults (3 pts) ☒ Authorizes any responsible adult (2 pts)	3

		☒ Authorizes citizen petition to mental health system only (-2 pts)	
3. Criteria sufficiently broad to provide actual access (up to 10 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346	Evaluate applicable provision only: ☐ If inpatient/outpatient criteria are the same: ☐ Inpatient criteria include psychiatric deterioration standard (10 pts) or ☐ No psychiatric deterioration standard, adequate grave disability standard (5 pts) or ☒ If outpatient criteria are distinct from inpatient criteria: ☒ Allows consideration of length of treatment history ≥ 36 months (2 pts) ☒ Does not exclude periods of incarceration or hospitalization (-1 pt) (See comment 2 below) ☒ Does not limit application to those currently dangerous or unstable (4 pts) ☒ Does not limit application to those refusing service or currently lacking insight (4 pts) (See comment 3 below)	9
4. Authorizes AOT directly from community (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346(a)		5
5. Procedures sufficiently detailed to guide practitioners (up to 5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346	☒ Process specified and reasonable (1 pt) ☒ Timelines specified and reasonable (1 pt) ☒ Responsible entities identified (1 pt) ☒ Periodic reporting to court required (1 pt) ☒ Renewal process expressly specified (1 pt)	5
6. Procedures require the treatment plan to be shared with the court (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346(e)		5
7. Specifies procedures and consequences for nonadherence (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346(d)(6), (f)		5
8. Duration of initial order	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346(d)(5)(B)	☐ = 90 days (2 pts) or ☒ > 90 days (5 pts) Not to exceed 6 months	5
9. Duration of continued order	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346(g)	☒ = 180 days (2 pts) or ☐ > 180 days (5 pts) Not to exceed 180 days	2
SUBTOTAL			44
PART TWO: Extra Credit			
1. Specifies court for AOT (1 pt)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346(b)(1)	Superior court in the county in which the person is present or reasonably believed to be present	1
2. Court monitoring of voluntary settlement agreements (5 pts)	Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5347	Settlement agreements are not supervised by the court in the same manner as contested orders	0
Extra Credit			1
PART TWO TOTAL			45

FINAL SCORE	
PART ONE TOTAL	35
PART TWO TOTAL	45
TOTAL	80
GRADE	B-

Comments:

- Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5250(d)(1) provides that a person is not gravely disabled if they can survive safely with the help of responsible family, friends, or others. However, subsection (3) clarifies that this section is not meant to require a finding of refusal of assistance from the family, friends, or others.
- The language of Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346(a)(4) only excludes periods of hospitalization or incarceration that “immediately precede” the filing of the petition.

3. Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 5346(e)(2) requires the court find that the person was offered an opportunity to participate voluntarily and either refused or *failed to engage in* treatment. When read together with the voluntary settlement provisions in § 5347, this emphasized language is an adequate safeguard to ensure that individuals who agree to participate voluntarily remain in treatment for a clinically significant period.