In recent years, Los Angeles County has issued many, many findings and recommendations related to transforming the youth justice system. The Consultant Team of the Youth Justice Workgroup has provided a separate bibliography that includes descriptions and links to those lengthy studies and reports containing the findings and recommendations. Here, we have compiled and sometimes abbreviated findings and recommendations from seven key reports. We believe these reports are particularly relevant because they resulted from collaborative initiatives involving diverse sectors and leaders, including many of you. As the Workgroup shifts to studying and developing proposals, we urge you to become familiar or refamiliarized with these recommendations so that we can reconsider, build upon, strengthen and learn from implementation of the best ones.

PRIOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDED ARE FROM THE FOLLOWING STUDIES/REPORTS:
1. Los Angeles County Report on Implementing Senate Bill 439 and Diversion of Younger Children (March 2020)
5. PRIT Reform Plan Summary (August 2019)
7. A Roadmap for Advancing Youth Diversion in Los Angeles County (2017)

CONSISTENT THEMES AND PRINCIPLES
- Avoid system (both dependency and justice) involvement whenever possible
- Avoid removing youth from their homes whenever possible
- Promote and expand holistic youth development supports for both youth and families across a continuum of responses, in and outside of dependency and justice systems to respond to harms
- Downsize and transform the culture of institutions – especially the Probation Department as a whole and juvenile halls – in order for all other change to be meaningful
- Improve data and information-sharing (as well as protections), evaluation, training and accountability all around
- Engage youth and families at every stage of decision-making
- Capitalize on what we have - improve coordination and collaboration across systems to better leverage existing resources and efforts

KEY QUESTIONS STILL EMERGING FROM PRIOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
- What does a youth development-oriented continuum of care look like that both reduces the size and scope of the justice system and improves outcomes for youth who are justice-involved?
  - Which systems and models have been effective in serving youth who are justice-involved – in and outside of the system, and in the community and out-of-home facilities?
- Which youth:
  - Should be served outside of any justice response versus court-processed/supervised?
  - Should be in an out-of-home placement, secure and non-secure?
- What have we learned about barriers to implementation of these recommendations so far?
- What additional capacities are needed to provide interventions along the continuum?
- How can we better leverage and coordinate across systems for a youth services/youth development system?

COLOR CODE
Black – Relevant to all three subcommittees
Red – Subcommittee 1: Development and Diversion
Blue – Subcommittee 2: System-Involvement
Green – Subcommittee 3: Alternatives to Placements/Incarceration
1. Los Angeles County Report on Implementing Senate Bill 439 and Diversion of Younger Children (March 2020)

1.1. Findings from Research and Stakeholder Discussions (Abbreviated): this section draws from data, research and diverse engagement meetings to arrive at the following agreements and concerns about implementing diversion of younger children.

1.1.1. **Any contact with law enforcement can be harmful and should be avoided when possible.** Diversion from the justice system to alternative interventions can effectively deter future offending, school misconduct, school truancy and suspensions.

1.1.2. **Effective alternatives rooted in holistic youth development should be explored** – but not over-used – to address the underlying causes of justice system contacts...children’s underlying behavioral needs should be addressed through alternative child-serving systems, such as community- and family-based health and mental health, education, child welfare services, and other community-based services and programs that meaningfully engage children, their families and communities and promote healing.

1.1.2.1. There is also agreement that young children should not be removed from their homes as a default. In the most severe cases where young children present psychiatric disorders, temporary and longer-term secure holdings, in addition to mental health evaluations and treatment, are available through existing health systems. In other rare instances, the dependency system may consider removing a child from their home.

1.1.2.2. Across the board, community residents advocated for strong, holistic youth development infrastructure, with attention to improved, comprehensive assessment tools and processes to identify the right kind of intervention for youth and families across systems. However, even where some type of intervention is deemed appropriate, community and law enforcement and other system representatives alike pointed out that the diversion approaches through any system should be proportionate and focused on developing the strengths and well-being of youth and families. There was consensus that diversion can also risk being more intensive, unnecessary and harmful to youth than either the justice system or leaving them alone.

1.1.3. **Violence and harm and threats of such need to be taken seriously** - effective intervention is part of public safety. Research and feedback from the community and system representatives underscore the reality of threats and dangers and the harm inflicted on communities as a result.

1.1.4. **Los Angeles has a growing infrastructure of youth-serving initiatives, programs, and supports but should improve access and coordination.**

1.1.5. **It is important not to widen the net or bring more youth into the dependency system.** There was repeated cautioning and agreement that implementation of diversion of younger children should avoid over-relying on and involving youth in the dependency system...dependency courts should be used as a last resort for young children and families with substantial unmet needs.

1.2. Concerns raised by stakeholders:

1.2.1. **Lack of data about detained youth.** In considering recommendations on further detention policies for youth 12-years-old and older, further data on the numbers, demographics, the underlying alleged offenses and underlying needs of youth, is needed. Further information-gathering about youth detained and supervised by the Probation Department and Department of Mental Health are needed to better understand the appropriate type and level of intervention needed.
1.2.2. **Effectiveness of interventions.** Overall, feedback was consistent that more data and evaluation is also needed about the effectiveness of all public and private community-based systems of care for youth...There is agreement that accountability and supports for both government systems and community-based organizations are important, and youth and their communities should meaningfully inform the design, delivery and evaluation of interventions.

1.2.3. **Lack of temporary housing and secure alternatives to juvenile halls and camps for youth under 12 and few options for youth over 12.** There is a strong, widely shared belief that children under 12-years-old do not need any secure alternatives to juvenile halls at all – and those available through health systems in cases of medical crisis and through dependency systems in cases of abuse and neglect are sufficient. With regards to non-secure alternatives, there are questions about Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs)¹, resource families (including those approved to provide Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC)), relative/non-relative caregivers, and other temporary housing – including about the barriers to placement for justice-involved youth, the availability of placements prior to any child welfare system involvement, and the effectiveness of supports and services in such settings. Stakeholders interested in justice reform thus recognize that there must be greater attention and linkages to implementation of continuum of care reform happening on the dependency side. The questions of what secure alternatives do and should exist for youth age 12 and older are unanswered. For all ages, further research is needed, including about:

1.2.3.1. The two local Community Treatment Facilities – that serve 12- to 17-year-old youth, and whether they can be expanded to serve as alternatives to juvenile halls and camps generally, including for youth under the age of 12; and

1.2.3.2. Children’s Crisis Residential Programs – which is a subcategory of licensing under STRTPs and was created in 2017 through legislation "to serve children, nonminor dependents, and individuals 18 to 20 years of age, experiencing mental health crises as an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization."² Legislative materials that created CCRPs specifically addressed the lack of children’s mental health crisis residential services for children under 12.³ Health and Safety Code section 1562.03 provides that CCRPs shall provide “therapeutic programming” seven days a week “to maintain an appropriate treatment setting and services, based on individual children’s needs” and that the program shall be sufficient staffed “to accept children 24 hours per day, seven days a week and to admit children, at a minimum, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week, 365 days per year.” As of December 2019, Los Angeles County has not developed CCRPs.

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¹ STRTPs were a concept resulting from Continuum of Care Reform, an effort authorized by Senate Bill 1013 (2012) and launched in September 2012 by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) in partnership with the County Welfare Directors Association of California to improve the rate setting system, and the services and programs serving children and families in the continuum of placement settings. In January 2015, CDSS released a report to the legislature that outlined the comprehensive approach to improving the experience and outcomes of children in foster care and made recommendations to improve the Continuum of Care through legislative action. Section 1502 of the Health and Safety Code defines STRTPs as: “a residential facility operated by a public agency or private organization and licensed by the department pursuant to Section 1562.01 that provides an integrated program of specialized and intensive care and supervision, services and supports, treatment, and short-term, 24-hour care and supervision to children.”

² California Department of Social Services, “Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program Interim Licensing Standards: Subchapter 3” (Released January 29, 2019), Section 87098.10, page 5; see also “Assembly Bill 501: Factsheet” (2017).

³ See Assembly Bill 501: Factsheet” (2017). “With 47 out of 58 counties lacking any child/adolescent psychiatric hospital inpatient beds for children under 12 (and fewer than 70 beds statewide) the need for children’s mental health crisis residential services could not be more acute.”
1.2.4. **Unfinished definitions or dialogues to reach clarity and agreements or disagreements.** From prosecutors and police to community representatives, many beliefs and goals do converge around needing to reduce reliance on policing, prosecution and court processes to respond to youth. At the same time, there is a sense that concepts and language like “ending youth incarceration” and “transformative justice” need to be better and specifically defined. There is a call all around to continue to listen and elaborate.

1.3. **Issue discussed beyond SB 439: Other systems may also need to be transformed to be more holistic, better resourced, and more capable of partnering with community-based services.** Implementing SB 439 true to its intent of decriminalizing the behaviors of young children implicates the practices of entire justice systems, other systems and communities and the resources and readiness of all of them. For instance, to avoid the negative impacts intended, a youth under 12 should be diverted away from both prosecution in courts and expulsion from school. Community representatives discussed the need to avoid stigmatization and pathology in over-relying on traditional mental health diagnosis and treatment as well.

1.4. **Final recommendations:**

1.4.1. **Section 1: Recommendations on Service Delivery and Infrastructure**

1.4.1.1. The Division of Youth Diversion and Development (YDD), in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Office of Child Protection (OCP), should increase access to and utilization of existing prevention and early intervention services and infrastructure for youth under 12 who are at risk of future justice involvement. These strategies to increase access and utilization to resources for youth impacted by SB 439 should include:

1.4.1.1.1. Continuing to build and update a central repository of information about resources for youth through available education, child-welfare, and health-oriented providers, prioritizing those that are holistic and community-based and designating those available for youth under 12;

1.4.1.1.2. Compiling information about resources specific to young people who are in disproportionately impacted or particularly vulnerable populations, including Black and Hispanic/Latinx youth, undocumented youth, LGBTQ youth, foster youth, and youth with serious mental or physical health needs;

1.4.1.1.3. Connecting the information and resources to justice systems and other youth-serving systems—including schools—through facilitating spaces for cross-sector communication, coordination and collaboration;

1.4.1.1.4. Making information about identified resources accessible to the community through a variety of outreach communications and technologies in collaboration with youth and community leaders;

1.4.1.2. Working with existing services to decrease eligibility restrictions and improve cultural responsivity so that justice-involved young people—especially those who are in disproportionately impacted or particularly vulnerable populations—are not excluded from accessing or meaningfully utilizing services; and

1.4.1.3. Providing support for research, evaluation, and youth/community engagement focused on holistic, community-based youth development and restorative/transformative justice approaches for partners across systems, including coordination with other county initiatives focused on positive youth development such as the Department of Parks and Recreation’s County Youth Networking Group and public-private partnerships like Ready to Rise.
1.4.1.2. **YDD** should work with the Chief Executive Office to explore avenues for additional resources and staffing to support the implementation of SB 439 recommendations, including at least one full time SB 439 implementation coordinator housed in YDD. Future phases should include additional staff to support research and evaluation in addition to positions for young people and system-impacted people.

1.4.1.3. **YDD** should work with the Center for Strategic Partnerships to engage philanthropy as thought partners in addition to potential funding partners focused on components of this work for which public funding is not available.

1.4.2. **Section 2: Recommendations on First Responder Training and Protocols**

1.4.2.1. **YDD** should work with the Public Defender’s Office in collaboration with youth/community leaders and other stakeholders to continue to develop and disseminate outreach materials and trainings on the change in law; alternatives to the justice system; and developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, racially equitable approaches to youth—focusing on first responders like police, schools, congregate care, service providers, and communities disproportionately impacted by youth arrest. These strategies to increase awareness of appropriate responses to youth impacted by SB 439 should include:

1.4.2.1.1. Clarifying that YDD be an entity to receive diversion and development referrals, including of youth under age 12;
1.4.2.1.2. Clarifying that law enforcement agencies who have contact with youth under 12 shall report such contacts to YDD for the purposes of coordinating potential service referrals, monitoring and enforcement, and research and evaluation;
1.4.2.1.3. Clarifying that the Public Defender’s Office should be contacted immediately about improper citations and petitions by law enforcement agencies of youth under 12;
1.4.2.1.4. Addressing the need for alternatives to transportation in police cars and temporary detention at police stations to reduce the negative impact of trauma and stigmatization on youth and families; and
1.4.2.1.5. Language, visuals, and mediums for know-your-rights information that are culturally relevant and accessible.

1.4.2.2. **YDD** should maintain specific protections on collection, access to, and use of information for youth under 12 over whom the court can no longer have jurisdiction through County information-sharing protocols and legislative amendments if necessary, reflecting the protocols for information generated by informal service referrals established by the YDD model. These protections for data on youth impacted by SB 439 should include:

1.4.2.2.1. Include high-quality and well-coordinated record-keeping among the network of community-based organizations providing services to youth under 12;
1.4.2.2.2. Ensure regular assessment and cross-sector review of de-identified data to avoid duplication of services and hold partners accountable to standards of quality and equity;
1.4.2.2.3. Provide data capacity-building and support as needed to improve system, program, and service delivery effectiveness;
1.4.2.2.4. Prohibit the sharing of individualized referral or service-utilization data for youth under 12 impacted by SB 439 by referring law enforcement agencies and service providers with other law enforcement and justice system agencies; and
1.4.2.2.5. Prohibit the use in any future court proceedings of statements made by youth under 12 impacted by SB 439 in the course of referral or participation in services.
1.4.2.3. YDD should monitor the implementation of SB 439 through maintaining regular collaboration and communication with law enforcement agencies, the Probation Department, Public Defender’s Office and District Attorney’s Office about youth under 12 who come into contact with law enforcement and the justice system.

1.4.3. **Section 3: Recommendations on Addressing the Need for Placements**

1.4.3.1. The SB 439 Support Team developed for the 2019 Temporary Protocol—including the Office of Diversion and Reentry’s Division of Youth Diversion and Development, the Probation Department, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Children’s Defense Fund, Public Counsel, and the Children’s Law Center—should continue to support the resolution of law enforcement contacts with youth under 12 and ensure return home as the default, always taking into account the child’s risk of harm to him/herself or others. Reflecting evidence of promising practices, it is recommended that a child under 12 does not require, and should not be placed in, a locked facility when the following strategies are available:

1. All placements recommended are non-secure, though such placements may and can adopt high security measures in order to ensure the safety of a child, other children, and staff.
2. In the rare instances children under 12 cannot return home immediately, the Support Team should work together to utilize and ensure adequate capacity and access to existing short and longer-term placements available through the education, welfare and health pathways and systems;
3. In cases where psychiatric care is required, the Support Team should connect youth and families to Children’s Hospitals;
4. Where psychiatric care is not needed, the Support Team should consult DCFS for short-term placement with resource families and relative/non-relative caregivers first; and
5. Where resource families and relatives/non-family relatives are not viable options, DCFS should use temporary housing like Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs).

1.4.3.2. The County should pursue collaborative efforts—including community-based organizations serving youth and system-impacted youth and families—to evaluate and improve of placements for children under 12 as well as all youth. This research should include:

1. Exploring the need for and capacity to strengthen temporary housing options like STRTPs, including access to and payment for them;
2. Developing access to resource families, and relative/non-family caregivers and STRTPs without the involvement of the Department of Children and Family Services; and
3. Implementing Children’s Crisis Residential Programs as a subcategory of STRTPs to serve youth under 12, as well as considering CCRPs an alternative to juvenile halls and camps for youth 12 and older.

1.4.4. **Section 4: Recommendations on Additional Minimum Age Policies**

1.4.4.1. The County should adopt a protocol for presumptively prohibiting detention of 12-year-olds with a system of overrides to permit detention of a 12-year-old only in the rare instance.

1.4.4.2. The County should continue to assess the feasibility of expanding the minimum age of detention of youth older than 12-years-old as new information arises about their placement needs.
1.4.5. **Section 5: Recommendations Beyond SB 439**

1.4.5.1. **YDD should continue to strengthen and expand implementation of its diversion protocol, making pre-booking or pre-arrest diversion available to all legally eligible youth under 18 through:**

   1.4.5.1.1. Ensuring existing sites are implementing the protocol effectively;
   1.4.5.1.2. Cultivating additional law enforcement and service provider partners to divert youth at the earliest point possible; and
   1.4.5.1.3. Cultivating school and community pathways to diversion without involving law enforcement or school discipline by connecting diversion to efforts promoting youth development, restorative and transformative justice, and positive school climates.

1.4.5.2. **The Youth Justice Work Group should research, and/or identify opportunities for further research on, alternative models for safe and healing-centered practices, supports and placements for all youth.** The research should address the needs and experiences of justice-involved youth, including their mental health needs and diagnoses; school-based arrests/discipline and promising practices to improve school climate; placement models that are community-run and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; multi-disciplinary crisis response teams; and models for community training institutes focused on youth and community development, positive school climate, and restorative/transformational justice.

1.4.5.3. **The County should continue to engage and support impacted youth and communities in the development, implementation and monitoring of all diversion and development efforts, including all of the above related to SB 439, by developing a dependable mechanism by which resources for stipends, transportation, and food can be provided to youth participating in the YDD Steering Committee and other youth advisory councils and commissions.**

2. **Comprehensive Multi-Agency Juvenile Justice Plan (CMJJP) – Goals adopted by the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and adapted from The LA County Probation Workgroup Report (March 2019)**

2.1. **Goals:**

   2.1.1. **Align, coordinate, and oversee policies, practices, and services along a continuum of prevention and intervention programming focused on holistic youth development.** The youth development system should:

   2.1.1.1. Whenever possible, reduce contact between youth and the juvenile justice system with diversion programs and other community-based resources.

   2.1.1.2. Deliver services using a continuum of promising practices, best practices, and evidence-based programs that build on youth’s strengths and assets and support the development of youth’s skills and competencies.

   2.1.1.3. Use strength-based screening and assessment tools to assess youth and family needs, build meaningful case plans and appropriately connect youth and families to appropriate services.

   2.1.1.4. When the use of out of home placements—non-secure or secure—is necessary, utilize family-based settings (e.g., relative, a nonrelative extended family member, and foster care placements) whenever possible, maintain safe environments in placements, engage/deliver services within a therapeutic milieu, and provide reentry services to ensure a seamless and positive return to the community.
2.1.2. Drive decision-making about systems coordination and integration, programming and direct services, evaluation and funding through identifying, developing and resourcing opportunities for collaborative, multidisciplinary partnerships among county agencies, community-based organizations (CBOs), youth and parents that have been impacted by the juvenile justice system, and other interested stakeholders.

2.1.3. Recognize and reduce the racial and ethnic and geographic disparities related to the access to services and juvenile justice processing and the needs of special populations including (but not necessarily limited to): females, LGBTQ-2A youth, crossover/dually-involved youth, youth who become parents, undocumented, and transitional age youth without family/caretakers/support systems.

2.1.4. Ensure transparency and accountability from all partners engaged in youth development service delivery for fiscal management, measuring outcomes related to their work, and implementing effective practices.

2.1.4.1. Collect and report consistent and meaningful outcomes on program impact and effectiveness on an annual basis (at minimum) to assess the impact of policies, practices, and programs.

2.1.4.2. Develop and support capacity of all partners to conduct consistent and meaningful data collection and evaluation.

2.1.4.3. Ensure studies involve research methodologies that are aligned with the perceptions and experiences of communities of color.

2.2. Continuum-Based Funding Strategies and Parameters

2.2.1. Primary Prevention. Provide children and families (focusing on those at-risk and the identification of conditions (personal, social, environmental) that contribute to the occurrence of delinquency) with an array of upfront supports within their own communities to minimize their chances of entering the juvenile justice system and maximize their chances of living healthy and stable lives.

2.2.2. Focused Prevention/Early Intervention. Provide upfront supports and services to children and families, whose holistic needs put them at greater risk of delinquency system involvement, in order to intervene early and prevent involvement or further penetration into the delinquency system.

2.2.2.1. Diversion Intervention to Community-Based Services: Redirects system responses and provides children and families to avoid involvement or further involvement in delinquency with community-based supports and services to prevent a young person’s involvement or further involvement in the justice system.

2.2.3. Intervention. Provide children and families who are already involved in delinquency with supports and services to address the factors leading to their behavior and reduce the likelihood or reoccurring delinquency.

2.2.3.1. During Community Supervision: Provide children who are on community supervision (including those reentering their homes and communities after a period of placement or detention) and their families with community-based supports and services to prevent the further involvement in the justice system.

2.2.3.2. In-Custody: Provide in-custody children and their families with community-based supports and services prior to and while preparing to reenter their homes and communities to prevent their further involvement in the justice system.
2.2.4. **Capacity Building of Community-Based Organizations.** Support community-based organizations with capacity-building, training and cross-training, evaluation, and to regularly track and monitor outcomes and use the results to drive County policy and practice change.

2.2.5. **JJCPA Evaluation and Infrastructure.** Support annual evaluation and ongoing training and supports for the JJCC and CAC to provide leadership on the development and implementation of the CMJJP.

2.3. **Recommended Service Categories and Approaches**

2.3.1. **Along the continuum of youth development prevention and intervention, the CMJJP should support the following service categories and approaches.** With a few modifications, these categories and approaches were the recommendations of the JJCPA evaluation conducted by Resource Development Associates. These approaches should be built into requests and contracts for services by public and community-based service-providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral Health Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide target youth populations with appropriate health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment that target their individual needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Specifically, fund community-based cognitive behavioral interventions and more community-based substance abuse treatment in neighborhoods with high density of youth on probation</td>
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<th>Schools/Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Fund educational advocacy and system navigation for parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fund an asset-based, family and community centered approach to truancy reduction that helps families address issues that limit regular school attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fund community-based providers in schools to provide tutoring/academic support for youth, and educational advocacy and system navigation for youth and families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fund intervention workers to facilitate violence prevention and safe neighborhoods</td>
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<tr>
<th>Employment/Career/Life Skills</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase focus on job development, including career readiness and professional skill-building, vocational training, creative and alternative career training</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support access to community college courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Providers should be able to subsidize employment for up to 6-months to increase the likelihood that employers will hire youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase opportunities for vocational skill development, and align vocational training with career opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Loosen the restrictions on the type of accepted employment opportunities to support internships, seasonal employment, and subsidized employment that support career pathways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Leverage and align HRHN Employment with existing LA County youth employment programs, such Youth Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act-funded YouthSource Centers.</td>
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<td>• Support financial literacy components to employment and educational programs</td>
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<th>Socio-emotional support</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Contract with community-based organizations to provide programming focused on personal growth and expression, including creativity, mindfulness, and spirituality – including programs that cultivate leadership and empowerment, and conflict resolution such as restorative and transformative justice,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide peer and adult mentoring services, particularly for young men of color</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide gender-specific, culturally-responsive services for males</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Partner with schools or CBOs to provide restorative justice models in schools</td>
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4 Most of these are adopted entirely and/or adapted from Resource Development Associate reports evaluating probation or JJCPA.
• Provide CBOs discretionary funding that can be used for supplemental services to support youth and their families (e.g., incentives, household goods, field trips).
• Increase services that serve youth and families together, as well as those specifically for parents/caregivers
• Support community-based programs with a focus on racial equity, historical trauma, and racism
• Prioritize providers who work across the continuum so as to provide continuity of services for youth

Housing
• Support housing linkage assistance for youth and families with unstable housing
• Support alternative housing for youth who cannot live at home
• Partner with the LA County Homeless Initiative, particularly housing navigation and housing problem-solving for TAY5
• Establish pathways to LA County’s Coordinated Entry System (CES)6

Parent/caregiver support
• Fund wraparound services that include the family
• Support with basic needs, homelessness
• Fund individual and group mental health support to parents/caregivers
• Fund family liaisons into existing services

Arts and Recreation
• Support arts-focused programming in the areas of employment/career and socio-emotional development

2.4. The following outcomes at three levels – system implementation, service provision, and youth and family impact – can guide evaluation and systems and program improvement.7

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<tr>
<th>Systems level</th>
<th>Service provider level</th>
<th>Youth/Family level</th>
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<tr>
<td>See CMJJP guiding principles</td>
<td><strong>Probation Practice</strong> - Successful completion rates for supervision - Average length of time under supervision and in specific Probation programming - Average length of detention in juvenile hall pending disposition or post-disposition awaiting placement or camp - Factors related to the increase or decrease of length of time under supervision - Level and type of interaction and contact between</td>
<td><strong>Improvement in Protective Factors—Individual and Family Strengths</strong> - Change in protective/strength assessment scores - Stable living situation - Stable educational plan (enrollment in school, improvement in attendance, improvement in performance, improved behavior at school, access to</td>
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CES aligns the Single Adult, Family, and Youth Systems into a seamless, collaborative, county-wide platform for housing and service delivery to homeless households. The main objectives of the system are to:
• Reduce the length of time a family is homeless and permanently house them as quickly as possible, using Rapid Re-housing and linkages to supportive services.
• Build upon existing community-based infrastructures to serve homeless families, leverage resources, and provide more targeted and cost-effective interventions.

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) is the department that controls CES and has annual budget of $234 million. [https://www.lahsa.org/ces](https://www.lahsa.org/ces).

The outcomes for service delivery and improved youth and family well-being are adopted from the 2017 Probation Working Group’s report.
| supervising probation officers and their clients | an IEP, school progressions (increase in credits, graduation, GED) |
| Relationship between the use of a validated risk and needs tool, case plan goals, and referred/completed services | - Economic stability (e.g., employment for older youth) |
| Relationship between risk and needs identified by a validated tool and the services received | - Increase in positive, supportive family relationships |
| Relationship between services, supervision, and achieving case plan goals | - Connection to positive, supportive adults |
| Amount and type of service delivery for youth in placements | - Connection to positive, extracurricular activities |
| Continuity of services once youth leave placements and reenter the community | - Connection to employment |
| Level of coordination between agencies (e.g., Probation, DCFS, and DMHH) | Reduction in Risk and Need Factors |
| Strengths/challenges related to interagency collaboration | - Risk/need assessment scores |
| Program Delivery by Community-Based Agencies | - Decreased family conflict |
| Types of programs accessed by clients | - Decreased substance misuse/abuse |
| Successful completion rates for programs | - Decreased mental health stress |
| Average length of time in programs | - Access to basic legal documents needed for employment |
| Retention rates for programs | |
| Fidelity of service delivery across programs | |
| Average time between service referral & service provision | |
| Cultural competency of programs (including gender specific programs) | |
| Youth & Family Engagement Experiences | |
| Extent to which youth and family felt they understood juvenile justice process | |
| Extent to which youth and family were satisfied with their experience in the juvenile justice system | |
| Extent to which youth and family found experiences with Probation and community-based providers helpful | Recidivism |
| |
| 3. Los Angeles County Probation Workgroup Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan (March 2017) |
| 3.1. Goals and Objectives |
| 3.1.1. Goal: Establish a County-based coordinating body to align, coordinate, and oversee policies, practices, and services along a continuum of prevention and rehabilitative intervention programming for children, youth and their families prenatally through the age of 25. |
| 3.1.1.1. Connect individual partner plans (as they relate to the prevention and/or rehabilitative intervention services for delinquency—e.g., practice models and agency specific strategic plans) with the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan. |
| 3.1.1.2. Connect the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan to other critical documents that are related to community wellness and safety but focus on issues beyond delinquency (e.g., systemic problems, child maltreatment, educational success, etc.). |
3.1.1.3. Present and gain investment in the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan across all key partners and identify leaders/champions for the implementation of the Plan.

3.1.1.4. Hold leadership across County agencies accountable for implementing and adhering to the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan on an annual basis.

3.1.1.5. Identify and address policies and/or practices across County agencies that distract or become barriers to the implementation of the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan.

3.1.1.6. Establish a method to regularly incorporate the voices of system impacted communities, families, youth, and children in the discussions and recommended reforms of County policies and practices.

3.1.1.7. Develop and support flexible funding streams that cross agency boundaries and ensure funding follows and responds to children, youth, and family needs regardless of immigration status.

3.1.1.8. When eligibility criteria cannot be established across agencies, coordinate the use of funding to meet the overall needs of children, youth, and families.

3.1.1.9. Develop, implement, and sustain a wide array of training to support the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan, including multidisciplinary and cross-training curricula and/or opportunities.

3.1.1.10. Train and incentive staff to (1) meaningfully engage children, youth, and families/caretakers; (2) treating children, youth, and families/caretakers with dignity and respect; and (3) building trust by demonstrating integrity in all their actions.

3.1.1.11. Incentivize county and city agencies to work in close partnership with the community and key stakeholders to establish consistent and positive support system for the children, youth, and family.

3.1.1.12. Provide pathways to support the self-sufficiency of children, youth, and families—teach families how to access services and address needs without the necessity of government intervention.

3.1.2. **Goal:** Whenever possible, reduce contact between youth and the juvenile justice system (i.e., law enforcement, Probation, and the delinquency court) through the use of evidence-based juvenile justice system diversion programs and other community-based resources.

3.1.2.1. Take steps to divert youth at the earliest possible points of contact with the justice system (i.e., pre-arrest).

3.1.2.2. Only divert youth who would otherwise be processed through the formal juvenile justice system and incorporate safeguards to prevent net-widening.

3.1.2.3. Focus diversion programming toward positive youth development and community engagement.

3.1.2.4. Use validated risk and needs assessment tools to inform decision-making and to develop responsive treatment plans, including services and support for all parties involved including families.

3.1.2.5. When appropriate, provide safe spaces to give all impacted parties a voice (i.e., share what they need, how they were harmed) and contribute to the development of a resolution that repairs the
harm to the victim and community, meets youths’ underlying needs, and promotes accountability, responsibility, and community connection.

3.1.2.6. Use evidence-based practices and ongoing data collection to evaluate program impacts (e.g., program and youth characteristics associated with youth outcomes), monitor fidelity, and if applicable, track victim satisfaction.

3.1.2.7. Provide training and education to juvenile justice and community-based partners to advance evidence-based diversion practices and facilitate opportunities for networking and collaboration.

3.1.3. **Goal: Drive decision-making based on:** (1) engaging children, youth and their families based on their developmental stages and with respect to their respective cultures; (2) understanding and interacting with children and youth within the context of family in a trauma-informed manner; and (3) prioritizing children, youth, and family voices and experiences.

3.1.3.1. Recognize an expanded definition of family for children and youth that includes supportive non-traditional positive adult influences

3.1.3.2. Look comprehensively at family—identify supportive and consistent adult(s) for this child/youth and engage them as part of the support system. Undertake family finding efforts to locate potential family support.

3.1.3.3. Engage children, youth, and their families/caretakers as early and as often in the process as possible (i.e., see them as collaborative partners), and provide education, support, understanding, and communication throughout the process.

3.1.3.4. Interact with children, youth, and their families/caretakers as collaborators—engage with them in a developmentally appropriate way and understand their experiences from a unique and holistic perspective.

3.1.3.5. View fathers and paternal relatives as an essential part of the support system and include fathers and paternal relatives in planning and services. Undertake family finding efforts where father’s whereabouts are unknown.

3.1.3.6. Build a mindful and trauma informed connection with the children, youth, and family—take the time to really understand why something happened without attributing negative motivations to them—children, youth, and families/caretakers have more positive outcomes when someone took the time to listen, understand and come to know who they were.

3.1.3.7. Work with children, youth, and their families/caretakers with empathy and help them to find hope in their situations and to identify a pathway to realize those hopes.

3.1.3.8. Recognize and respond to the trauma and needs of parents/caretakers (e.g., previous abuse, intergenerational gang involvement, mental health and substance abuse issues, unemployment, etc.) and find ways to connect them to appropriate services, workshops and other resources to accomplish positive change and their own healing—family/caretaker participation in their own change process inspires change in their children and potentially breaks a cycle.
3.1.3.9. Address trauma in the family; families may need support to address their own trauma histories or intergenerational trauma in order to stabilize the family so that they can be part of the recovery/treatment process for their own child.

3.1.3.10. Prioritize the building and/or strengthening of positive relationships between children, youth, and their families including their system-involved siblings and their own children as well as build avenues for children and youth to connect with families out of contact.

3.1.3.11. Build on children, youth, and family strengths and celebrate their milestones, using this as a leverage point to address risks and needs directly and indirectly.

3.1.4. **Goal:** Recognize and address the racial and ethnic disparities related to the access to services and juvenile justice processing and the needs of special populations including (but not necessarily limited to): females, LGBT youth, crossover/dually-involved youth, youth who become parents, undocumented, and transitional age youth without family/caretakers/support systems.

3.1.4.1. Develop and track data that have the ability to identify the points of contact with the juvenile justice system (e.g., arrest, intake, court, etc.) and the critical decision-making points (e.g., placement decisions) that are driving Racial and Ethnic Disparity and Disproportionate Minority Contact.

3.1.4.2. Use data to strategically implement targeted programs or practices that reduce RED and DMC.

3.1.4.3. **Work with the early education system to reduce the “preschool to prison pipeline.”**

3.1.4.4. Train staff, including law enforcement, on implicit bias and best practices in reducing RED.

3.1.4.5. Develop and utilize diversion and community-based programs.

3.1.4.6. Provide training to agency/provider staff on the needs and best practices related to serving LGBT youth.

3.1.4.7. Ensure that gender responsive services are available to all youth.

3.1.4.8. Institutionalize seamless collaboration and coordination across the Department of Children and Family Services and Probation as well as other relevant agencies for youth who cross into both the dependency and delinquency systems.

3.1.4.9. Prepare youth for the transition from childhood to adulthood—connect youth age 14 or older to independent living and other services that prepare them for successful lives as adults.

3.1.4.10. Provide parenting classes and support for youth who are or become parents.

3.1.5. **Goal:** Use comprehensive, multidisciplinary and evidence-based screening and assessment tools to build meaningful case plans and appropriately connect children, youth, and families to appropriate services.

3.1.5.1. Institute a consistent and multidisciplinary screening process using validated and standardized screening tools as early as possible. These screening tools should assess for educational needs, developmental disabilities, mental health problems, suicidality, traumatic stress reactions,
substance abuse problems, sexual victimization, domestic violence issues, gang involvement, and physical health in order to identify critical issues that should be addressed in case planning.

3.1.5.2. Use validated risk/resiliency assessment tool(s) as early in the process as possible to assess criminogenic needs and areas of dynamic risk factors in need of rehabilitative intervention services.

3.1.5.3. Coordinate the tools used across agencies to avoid duplication and redundancy and to improve accuracy and maximize resources.

3.1.5.4. Institute a process/protocol for stakeholders to share screening and assessment results when appropriate in order to:
   3.1.5.4.1. Connect children and youth to appropriate services by prioritizing immediate needs and risks
   3.1.5.4.2. Reduce service lag times
   3.1.5.4.3. Reduce duplication of assessment processes and services.

3.1.5.5. Establish a method to share important background information and history of the children and youth across agencies and providers to enhance the appropriateness of services and reduce duplication while protecting the children, youth, and families’ right to confidentiality.

3.1.5.6. Build cumulative case plans that address risk and needs based on results of the screening and assessment tools (i.e., youth should have one case plan that is updated and amended over time by all partners involved with the child, youth, and family/caretaker).

3.1.5.7. Communicate results of screening and assessments to court and request orders consistent with case plans that are developed for court-involved youth.

3.1.5.8. Build case plans that equally build on risks, needs, strengths and positive support systems; facilitate pro-social connections with the community, and work to remove barriers facing the children, youth, and family success with appropriate partners.

3.1.5.9. Re-administer the risk/resiliency tool and other relevant screening measures in regular intervals to assess progress and areas that need attention/intervention (e.g., every 6 months until case termination)—based on these results, reward progress and adjust supervision, programming, and case/treatment plans levels as necessary. Inform the court of progress, lack of progress, and any adjustments necessary.

3.1.6. **Goal: Deliver services using promising practices, best practices, and a continuum of evidence-based programs.**

3.1.6.1. Establish seamless connections with community-based providers to facilitate access to a continuum of services.

3.1.6.2. Ensure case plans match services to the needs of children, youth, and family based on the outcomes of screening and assessment and prioritize their input. Communicate to court what services are necessary/unnecessary for court-involved youth.

3.1.6.3. Connect children, youth, and families/caretakers to appropriate services and support systems within their communities.

3.1.6.4. Establish continuity in relationships between children, youth, families/caretakers, agency staff, and service providers—reduce the number of fragmented relationships in their experience.
3.1.6.5. Deliver programming that is individualized, interdisciplinary, strength-based, and trauma informed (when appropriate).

3.1.6.6. Deliver services in a timely, unified and coordinated way across different agencies—avoid duplication and redundancy and do not overload children, youth, and families with unreasonable expectations.

3.1.6.7. Engage children, youth, and families in a developmentally-appropriate way, meeting them where they are in the process of change and helping them to become a strong family unit—build positive interpersonal interactions utilizing motivational interviewing and using positive reinforcement.

3.1.6.8. Recognize and incorporate cultural competence and the availability of bilingual providers when delivering services to children, youth, and families.

3.1.6.9. Deliver services to children, youth, and families in diverse, consistent, and affordable ways and through a variety of service providers in their communities to increase the level of engagement and willingness to participate. Immediately address any gap in services in under-resourced regions of the county.

3.1.6.10. Provide an array of services and support to children, youth, and families in a convenient and effective manner through in-home family-based services (e.g., wraparound) and/or “one-stop shop” locations.

3.1.6.11. Strengthen family/caregivers’ understanding of the educational process, foster effective communication skills between family/caregivers and school, and empower them to advocate for their youth educational needs.

3.1.6.12. Use restorative pathways to facilitate a process of healing and recovery for victims and to forge foundations for strong, positive connections between the community and children, youth, and their families.


3.1.6.14. Ensure that each child or youth has at least one significant adult who will continue to support the child/youth into adulthood.

3.1.6.15. Hold service providers accountable for serving children, youth, and families and achieving effective outcomes with their clients (see Goal 8).

3.1.6.16. Maintain a database of County contracted services for youth and families to assure timely access to and prioritize necessary services.

3.1.7. **Goal:** When the use of out of home placements—non-secure or secure—is necessary, utilize family-based settings (e.g., relative, NREFM, and foster care placements) whenever possible, maintain safe environments in placements, engage/deliver services within a therapeutic milieu, and provide reentry services to ensure a seamless and positive return to the community.

3.1.7.1. Address school of origin issues prior to placement. If youth to remain in school of origin, create a transportation plan in consultation with placement and local education agency.
3.1.7.2. Ensure that services required in the youth’s Individualized Education Plan and/or Individual Program Plan through Regional Center will continue without interruption once youth is placed.

3.1.7.3. Begin transition case planning before a youth goes to the placement, continue while in placement, and drive their transition back into the community (particular emphasis on aftercare should be placed on school programming, transitional planning, immediate needs, and permanency).

3.1.7.4. Operate youth-centered and innovative facilities that build, support, and maintain relationships with family/caretakers, siblings, and their own children throughout the time spent in placement and are located in close proximity to the communities in which the youth’s family resides.

3.1.7.5. Interact with youth using a trauma-informed care approach.

3.1.7.6. Prioritize, encourage, and facilitate family/caretaker connections while in placement through in-person visitation, family engagement activities, and the use of technology (e.g., video conferencing) when appropriate.

3.1.7.7. Deliver treatment using the small-group care model and within a therapeutic milieu focused on consistency, building positive relationships, creating homelike living spaces, and sharing responsibility for daily activities.

3.1.7.8. Create supportive and innovative learning environments in which children, youth, and families can build the skills they need to be successful (e.g., utilize the performing and visual arts, provide access to extracurricular activities, and offer programs to enhance educational success; parenting skills and techniques; life skills, and employment) and provide opportunities to reinforce these skills in their communities through reentry planning.

3.1.7.9. Ensure that group homes serving youth promote the youths’ safety, well-being, educational progress, and successful completion of probation, and progress toward the new standards set by the Continuum of Care legislation regarding provision of core services; access to mental health care; accreditation, etc. Facility staff should maintain hands-on relationship with the youth’s Education Rights Holder and the youth’s school, and monitor attendance, grades, and behaviors.

3.1.7.10. Placements should provide a drug and alcohol free environment.

3.1.7.11. Integrate facility staff into program delivery and train them to be mentors for youth.

3.1.7.12. Provide structure for youth and access to opportunities to build skills for independence to prepare youth for transition to adulthood including work readiness training and exploration of transitional housing and independent living programs when available.

3.1.7.13. Provide aftercare services for youth that connect them to continued services structure/expectations, prosocial activities, and supportive relationships in the community.

3.1.7.14. Promote safety at placements through positive mechanisms (e.g., praise and reward positive behaviors) integrated into daily interactions and activities to facilitate an atmosphere for learning and recovery.

3.1.7.15. Respond to non-compliance in a proportionate, equitable and personalized way—de-escalation techniques should be used as a first response.
3.1.8. **Goal: Collect and report consistent and meaningful outcomes** on program impact and effectiveness on an annual basis (at minimum) to assess the impact of policies, practices, and programs.

3.1.8.1. Clearly define and consistently measure and report a list of clearly defined key outcomes (e.g., dashboard outcomes).

3.1.8.2. Establish a clear definition of recidivism and track recidivism whenever possible.

3.1.8.3. Regularly collect data within an agency-based information system that aligns with practice, supports case management, and is capable of real-time analysis.

3.1.8.4. Identify new technologies to facilitate an effective case management information system, real-time reports and dashboards, and interagency data-sharing.

3.1.8.5. Continuously assess effectiveness and improve practice based on a data-informed feedback loop that includes input from youth, families and community-based service providers.

3.1.8.6. Institute a comprehensive case review process of successful and challenging cases to augment the use of data dashboards and to ensure practice aligns with best practices generally.

3.1.8.7. Ensure opportunities for staff feedback in order to recognize and support effective case management strategies as well as identify areas for improvement and training.

3.1.8.8. Conduct full-scale evaluations of the various programs and services provided to Probation clients as part of the research, practice and policy feedback loop.

3.1.8.9. Collaborate with external researchers and evaluators to develop and implement a research agenda and generate a regular data reporting plan.

3.1.9. **Goal: Encourage transparency and accountability** from all partners engaged in delinquency prevention and rehabilitative intervention services for fiscal management, measuring outcomes related to their work, and implementing effective practices.

3.1.9.1. Give authority to the County based coordinating body to (see Goal 1) to monitor progress on the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan and hold County agencies (and other key partners as appropriate) accountable for implementing and adhering to the Strategic Plan.

3.1.9.2. Develop a clear, multisystem data linkage and sharing plan that would operate as a single, coordinated system—this should include agencies such as: DCFS; DPSS; DMH; DPH; DHS; Probation; LACOE; and school districts.

3.1.9.3. All community-based service providers who provide services to Probation children, youth, and families should be held accountable for the services they provide and the impact of those services on outcomes.

3.1.9.4. Annually produce a summary of all juvenile justice funds across stakeholders and how funds were expended to support the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan.

3.1.9.5. Annually produce a list of outcomes related to the Countywide Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan
3.2. Proposed Referral Process for Accessing Services

3.2.1. The proposed referral process is intended to be interdisciplinary and strength-based, focusing on positive reporting within and across agencies serving a probation-involved youth and their families. It is not driven by compliance principles nor is it intended to be a vehicle for punishment. Importantly, it is intended to align Probation’s assessment and service provision procedures with best practices in the field; incorporate youth and family voice; create a transparent and accountable system; and most importantly, create an infrastructure to contribute positively to the well-being of youth, families, and communities.

3.2.2. Role and Responsibilities of CBO Service Providers: All service providers who receive referrals from Probation and provide services to Probation-involved youth as a result of those referrals must be an “Approved Provider,” regardless of whether the provider is paid by Probation for the services or not.

3.2.3. Approved Providers are Community Based Organizations (CBO) providers who:
- Can demonstrate experience and effectiveness in serving youth receiving prevention services (i.e., WIC 236) and Probation-involved youth at varying levels of risk;
- Can provide information on the population they are able to serve including (but not necessarily limited to): gender, race/ethnicity, age, risk level, areas/zip codes served;
- Can provide information on the specific services they provide, frequency of contact, and their competency levels related to:
  - Understanding of criminogenic risk and strengths-based programming;
  - Delivering services to (but not necessarily limited to) youth with trauma histories, developmental disabilities, deficiencies that affect learning and education, substance abuse, and mental illness, and LGBTQ identity; and, on-going training of staff.
  - Engaging both the youth and family effectively by delivering culturally competent, gender appropriate, and inclusive programming with ongoing feedback from youth and families to assess and improve service delivery;
- Utilize evidence-based practices and/or programs or, if applicable, can demonstrate that programming is aligned with best practices;
- Utilize standardized or commonly used screening and assessment tools to match youth to appropriate treatments and/or develop treatment/programming plans;
- Agree to align CBO services with the Probation juvenile case plan; participate regularly in Probation trainings;
- Agree to regularly record and share core data elements (as defined by Probation) and designate staff responsible for data entry; and
- Agree to County non-discrimination policy and federal confidentiality agreement.

3.2.4. Once a provider meets the “Approved Provider” criteria and signs an agreement with the Department of Probation, they must:
- Meet with and coordinate programming for youth and their families with the DPOs and stakeholders in the community;
- Follow the case plan agreed to by the DPO, the youth and his/her family;
- Provide ongoing communication to the DPO if programming changes;
- Review background material received from probation;
- Enter data consistently and accurately (no missing data) into a designated database to determine fidelity of the program;
- Provide monthly reports to the DPO through the database; and
- Demonstrate evidence of effectiveness with the target population with outcomes by the end of the first year of services.
3.2.5. **Role and Responsibilities of Probation Administration**
- Identify and mandate the consistent use of effective screening and assessment and on an on-going basis to ensure youth are appropriately matched to services—this should be done both initially to develop appropriate case plans and monitor progress over time.
- Build tools for family assessment and identify “Approved Providers” that build on youth strengths and resiliency.
- Develop Memorandums of Agreement/Service Agreements with “Approved Providers” and create a web-based, searchable database in which they are entered.
- Require all service referrals to be generated from the inventory of “Approved Providers”—build the searchable database of “Approved Providers” in PCMS or connect the two databases so DPOs have easy access. To the extent possible, connection between relevant agency databases should occur.
- Provide technical assistance to CBOs on the provision of services to probation-involved youth, how to become an “Approved Provider” and compliance with data reporting requirements.
- Monitor provider compliance in providing data through clear and consistent quality assurance processes.
- Monitor and regularly evaluate DPO performance/compliance with responsibilities and provide ongoing training, feedback, and remedial measures. Produce a feedback loop with “Approved Providers” to support on-going improvement of services.
- Produce regular (e.g., quarterly) data reports to providers and DPOs to establish and support an on-going feedback loop to inform practice (e.g., next steps for success).
- Publicly disseminate regular data reports (i.e., annually) on the use and effectiveness of services.
- Utilize data produced on the fidelity and effectiveness of services to drive funding decisions—use funding to incentivize service providers to continuously improve their services.
- Facilitate and support service provider capacity to provide effective services over time by providing on-going training, oversight, feedback, and funding (when available).

3.2.6. **Role and Responsibilities of Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs)**
- Administer screening and assessment tools consistently and appropriately to determine the risks, needs, and strengths of a youth and his/her family initially to develop appropriate case plans and to monitor progress over time.
- Build and align youth plans based on the outcome of the screening and assessment tools and be aware of family dynamics, youth strengths, and needs.
- Make referrals based on the case plan goals and refer only to “Approved Providers.”
- Provide readily available background information as needed to providers and comply with confidentiality.
- Be an engaged partner with service providers in the delivery and monitoring of services—meet regularly with service providers and encourage local providers to become “Approved Providers.”
- Solicit feedback from youth and families to help improve and monitor service provision.
- Record updates on youth progress regularly and consistently into PCMS. (Figure 2 and 3 provides a system mockup demonstration that illustrates a case plan that tracks service referrals and progress updates).
- Reassess youth progress on regular intervals (e.g., every 6 months) to identify areas of success and continued challenges. Readjust youth case plan and services based on the reassessment.
*Note that Camp Kilpatrick was built as the LA Model and opened in July 2017, but then closed in November 2018 after being evacuated during the Woolsey Fire, and was partially reopened in January 2020.

4.1. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE LA MODEL

4.1.1. The following essential elements were defined by the stakeholders as the necessary foundation for evidence-based programming and skill-building activities. Within the therapeutic milieu:

4.1.1.1. Multi-disciplinary team planning occurs with collaboration across agencies and at all levels.

4.1.1.2. Programming is engaging and meaningful for youth and staff with a focus on skill-building, mental health, healing, and personal growth. It consistently and meaningfully includes families and community members as critical partners.

4.1.1.3. Families are engaged early and often, treated with respect, and seen as partners in the treatment and aftercare process.

4.1.1.4. Aftercare and reentry are the core drivers of case planning from the day of arrival, in order to build a continuum of care and to support stability when back in the community.

4.1.1.5. The small-group care model includes cohort consistency, a focus on relationships, homelike living spaces, and shared responsibility for daily activities, self-care and ordinary maintenance of shared spaces.

4.1.1.6. Safety, both psychological and physical, is a priority for staff and youth and is promoted through a variety of positive mechanisms integrated into daily interactions and activities.

4.1.1.7. Academic achievement and engagement are critical to each youth’s program, and input from education providers is a fundamental element of case and reentry planning.

4.1.1.8. Probation and all other staff are mentors and are consistently integrated into program delivery. Support for staff mental health and wellness is provided as an integral component of the LA Model.

4.1.1.9. Approach to programming is individualized, strength-based, and developmentally-appropriate, meeting youth where they are at in the process of change and focusing on empowerment, problem-solving, and the promotion of protective factors.

4.1.1.10. Data is continuously collected and analyzed in order to drive decision-making, guide case planning, support continuous improvement, and evaluate implementation and effectiveness of activities/programming.

4.1.2. In order for the LA Model to be successful:

4.1.2.1. The juvenile courts and stakeholders – including judges, District Attorneys, and Juvenile Defenders – must be trained on the LA Model and its goals in rehabilitating youth. These stakeholders should be invested in the model so that they can be held accountable for maintaining its mission once it has been formalized and implemented.
4.1.2.2. Prospective employees will have access to this document – as well as orientations and trainings – in order to have a baseline understanding of the LA Model and the expectations for staff.

4.1.2.3. Budgeting for programming will contemplate the long-term cost savings of effective intervention.

4.1.2.4. Community-based organizations and partnerships, which can often provide high quality services at a reduced cost, must be recognized and incorporated.

4.1.2.5. The Probation Chief, Superintendent of the Office of Education, Board of Supervisors, and other political stakeholders must endorse and advocate for the LA Model. The success of the model relies on ongoing public support.

4.1.2.6. As part of their continued involvement, experts and stakeholders from the subcommittees will provide consultation and feedback, including guidance in the selection and evaluation of providers.

4.2. Specific Recommendations to Implement and Support the Essential Elements of the LA Model: the following recommendations of the stakeholders are directed to the lead agency, the Los Angeles County Department of Probation, in coordination with all other service providers. Some recommendations are very specific and others are more general, reflecting both the time constraints of this process and the acknowledgement of the group that additional expertise in some domains is necessary. Where there was unresolved conflict, the source of disagreement is indicated.

4.2.1. Multi-disciplinary team planning occurs with collaboration across agencies and at all levels.

4.2.1.1. Multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) drive case planning and are structured to facilitate collaboration across multiple agencies. In order for this to be successful, all staff across all agencies must be trained in the therapeutic model (including kitchen staff, maintenance, teachers, probation officers, etc.). This necessitates cross-training that recognizes there is no separation of staff roles in supporting program goals. All direct care providers will be trained to support the therapeutic and rehabilitative components of the model and are expected to actively participate in the program.

4.2.1.2. In order to successfully incorporate all programming elements in a holistic and integrated manner, staffing patterns and schedules will need to accommodate regular (weekly) multidisciplinary team meetings, and allow sufficient time for planning and debriefing activities.

4.2.2. Programming is engaging and meaningful for youth and staff with a focus on skill-building, mental health, healing, and personal growth. It consistently and meaningfully includes families and community members as critical partners.

4.2.2.1. Recommended programs include cognitive-behavioral therapy and evidence-based trauma-specific programs validated with justice-involved populations.

4.2.2.2. Programming builds on youth strengths and identifies opportunities and linkages in the community (i.e., program or employment opportunities at release) to support the youth’s self-identified strengths and goals while in the program and upon reentry.

4.2.2.3. Programming must include community-based organizations with direct contacts in the communities to which participating youth will return and support in aftercare.
4.2.2.4. Programming addresses family strengths, risks, and needs and identifies positive community supports for youth and family, including partners who will assist and support the youth and family in treatment or aftercare (i.e., friends, neighbors, extended family).

4.2.2.5. Providers assist with removing barriers to success: tickets and fines, normalizing immigration status, securing vital documents, etc. and have a continuous focus on reentry and aftercare.

4.2.3. Families are engaged early and often, treated with respect, and seen as partners in the treatment and aftercare process.

4.2.3.1. An expanded definition of family is necessary in order to identify and include the appropriate people who can support youth success. This group of supportive individuals may include nontraditional positive adult influences who are able to contact and visit the youth after being screened and approved.

4.2.3.2. Meaningful family engagement that provides robust support for the diverse needs of families within a trusting relationship is a key component of the LA Model. Resources and planning are necessary to facilitate this and the committee considered the possibility of a staff position dedicated to family engagement and support. Systems must be in place to protect confidentiality and to allow families to disclose information in order to seek support without negative consequences.

4.2.3.3. Research indicates that visitation is linked to youth success; therefore, visitation hours and days should be both flexible and substantial to reduce family barriers to visitation and create more meaningful opportunities for youth and family engagement.

4.2.3.4. Providing transportation for family visits and providing childcare at the facility for families with young children should be explored.

4.2.3.5. Family visits are oriented towards fostering positive connections or skill-building (for example, family visits could start with a skill-building session that relates to what the youth are learning in the program).

4.2.3.6. Visiting space is protected and private when necessary and creates a homelike and welcoming feel for families.

4.2.3.7. Families should be included in case planning and treatment and have a meaningful say in the goals and case plans; the role of families goes beyond mere visitation.

4.2.3.8. Family rights should be known and respected. Developing and circulating / posting a family bill of rights should be explored.

4.2.3.9. Family input into the LA Model should be ongoing and meaningful (for example, developing a family council to provide advisory oversight).

4.2.4. Aftercare and reentry are the core drivers of case planning from the day of arrival, in order to build a continuum of care and to support stability when back in the community.

4.2.4.1. Education and other programming should have a substantial aftercare component including formal pipelines to supportive school environments and jobs in the community.
4.2.4.2. Youth should have ample opportunities to prepare for transition, including adjustment to their living situation, enrollment in school, engagement in a job, and/or any other programs that are part of their case plan. Furloughs to prepare for that transition should be explored.

4.2.4.3. Aftercare and field probation staff must receive the same training, or training similar to that given to those working at the campus. This will allow them to deliver services designed to create consistency and shared expectations for the youth.

4.2.4.4. In order to sustain and foster positive relationships, probation officers at the campus should have a mechanism available to maintain contact with youth once they have returned to the community. Additionally, the field probation officer to be assigned to the youth once released should begin to develop a positive relationship with the youth while still at the campus, including in-reach interactions. This should be examined as an enhancement to the current protocol.

4.2.4.5. Coordinated systems for reentry and transition counselors from public agencies (Probation, Los Angeles County Office of Education, school districts, etc.) and community-based organizations should be used to assist each youth and to bring aftercare providers up to speed on the particular strengths and needs of each youth. In addition, creative opportunities for mentoring and reentry counseling should be explored.

4.2.5. A small-group model with cohort consistency, a focus on relationships, homelike living spaces, and shared responsibility for daily activities and ordinary maintenance of the space.

4.2.5.1. Youth live in a cohort of up to 12 peers and a consistent group of adults. Staffing schedules support this relationship building and consistency.

4.2.5.2. Concerns about the existing structure of the 56-hour probation staffing shift have been discussed by all committees but no resolution was reached.

4.2.5.3. Groups (composed of both youth and their direct care providers) will be kept together to the maximum extent possible in order to nurture the development of a positive group culture.

4.2.5.4. Further discussion is needed to refine the process by which young people are assigned to cohorts and the ways in which that limits or enhances their opportunities to interact in mixed groups for specific therapeutic or educational experiences.

4.2.5.5. Youth take ownership and pride over their living spaces; ordinary self-care chores (e.g., laundry) are assigned only if they encourage accountability in the shared space and support the development of life skills. Youth should never bear sole responsibility for institutional maintenance and tasks necessary to the satisfaction of basic needs such as janitorial services or routine food preparation.

4.2.5.6. Living spaces are operated (i.e., schedules, routines, clothing) to foster a homelike feel and allow youth sufficient privacy and autonomy while still achieving safety and other objectives of the LA Model. Youth should be given as much autonomy and choice as they can safely manage including a selection of bedding, clothing, and personal care products.

4.2.5.7. Youth and staff attire should be consistent with the homelike, therapeutic model.
4.2.5.7.1. The stakeholders were unable to reach consensus on specific recommendations for attire but all agreed that at a minimum, youth should have clothing that is “theirs” for the duration of their term and, if they choose, ample quantities of appropriate underwear may be provided to individual youth by their families.

4.2.5.7.2. The majority of stakeholders also agreed that staff clothing ought to communicate their participation in a culture of care (for example, sneakers in place of boots and school-branded sweatshirts in place of badged uniform shirts). In addition, most believed that school uniforms or a similar ‘professional’ dress option for youth should be explored, including options for clothing incentives linked to program engagement.

4.2.6. Safety, both psychological and physical, is a priority for staff and youth and is promoted through positive mechanisms during daily interactions and activities.

4.2.6.1. A behavior management protocol is used and supported by all staff. Positive incentives are clearly linked to youth desires for both immediate and long-term rewards (e.g., activities offered during free time, specialty food, clothing that indicates achievement or rank, early release, etc.) in order to facilitate participation; these incentives may change over time as youth desires evolve. Treatment engagement should also be included in youth’s movement through the program trajectory.

4.2.6.2. Promotion through the ranks of the program trajectory should be celebrated and positively reinforced. Movement through the stages may be contingent on an application and interview processes in which a youth must request promotion and support their application. This process should be designed to build choice, accountability, and agency.

4.2.6.3. The program trajectory may include youth recognition of their peers and staff in order to encourage shared accountability and allow youth to take ownership of the positive reinforcement system.

4.2.6.4. Sanctions should be proportionate, equitable, and personalized. They may include the loss of something the youth desires so it is essential that youth are provided with pleasurable activities and goods that can be revoked without impacting participation in essential elements of the program (for example, loss of the opportunity to join a movie night is permissible but loss of an opportunity to call home is not). However, sanctions alone are insufficient. Each incident must also be a learning opportunity for staff and trigger an informal behavior analysis: What is the insight in the behavior? What is the purpose of the behavior that is being sanctioned? When the purpose of the behavior is understood, youth can be supported to replace the destructive behavior with an alternative prosocial behavior that achieves the same purpose.

4.2.6.5. Safety should be achieved primarily through positive and trusting relationships where youth have a genuine belief that the adults on campus care for their safety and wellbeing. Additionally, youth should help hold each other accountable to create a safe environment.

4.2.6.6. A restorative justice approach should guide the management of conflict that occurs on campus.

4.2.6.7. De-escalation techniques must be graduated and start with the least restrictive technique (e.g., talking or allowing the youth to calm down on their own). The focus of every intervention is to manage the behavior and to understand the root cause rather than enforce compliance.

4.2.6.8. A special note on isolation: Given the mental, emotional and physical harm that isolation has been shown to cause on young people, a solitary or isolated holding unit may never be used to punish or
discipline behavior. However, there should be safe and quiet spaces (e.g., a therapy room/office) where youth can calm down for a brief period of time (i.e., 15 minutes) when all other de-escalation techniques have been exhausted. Although youth may access this space voluntarily, use that is imposed should only be for the avoidance of imminent physical harm. Additionally, other practices like holding positions or use of force should be last resort interventions and ought to be followed by a debrief of staff involved to provide an opportunity for staff self-care and discussion of whether alternatives should have been attempted (or, if they were attempted, why they were unsuccessful). If use of a holding position is necessary, all efforts should be made to keep youth on their feet, to protect the physical safety of all involved. Pepper spray should never be used.

4.2.6.9. While questions still remain as to what practices should be followed for de-escalation of incidents, it is clear that there will be no measure that resembles punitive isolation. While situations may arise where kids need to be removed from their group, more discussion is needed to determine what to do in this situation. It was suggested that decisions around transfers or separation may only be made by an officer holding the title of at least Bureau Chief. It is important to note that the practice of isolation will not only be removed from this campus, but it will not be a practice used within the LA Model. Therefore a youth may not be sent to different facility to be placed in a Special Housing Unit or similar secured space.

4.2.7. Academic achievement and engagement are critical to each youth’s program and input from education providers is a fundamental element of case and reentry planning.

4.2.7.1. Los Angeles County Office of Education will provide education services for youth at the campus.

4.2.7.2. A rigorous and relevant education program is viewed as the locus of personal development for every young person on campus and is understood to be at the core of the rehabilitative program. Improved student outcomes at the Malibu Campus will be characterized by:

4.2.7.2.1. Measureable and significant academic progress (indicated by student growth measured by standardized and authentic assessment tools).

4.2.7.2.2. Transformation in student perceptions of self, with the confidence and desire to change their life trajectory through education and discovery of a passion and purpose.

4.2.7.2.3. Each student successfully i) enrolls in and attends an appropriate secondary education environment, ii) enters a post-secondary education program, or iii) begins or continues a career pathway upon release.

4.2.7.3. Intensive support for students as they transition back to the community by providing comprehensive and facilitated hand-offs to schools and service providers.

4.2.7.4. Community-based measures of success such as post-secondary enrollment and completion, job satisfaction, healthy personal relationships, and a reduction of encounters with the legal system.

4.2.7.5. Establishing a restorative and inclusive family relationship that actively participates in a nurturing academic community for themselves and the child.

4.2.7.6. The education program is rooted in social-emotional connections to content. Those specific and explicit connections permeate the campus through the LA County Office of Education’s Road to Success Academy (RTSA) themes that originate at the school but are shared with all staff and incorporated into all aspects of programming and interaction (for example, “courage” or “identity”).
4.2.7. The RTSA Model includes five key elements:

4.2.7.1. Core Education Program. This includes the core subjects required by the state, tiered intervention to allow students to make major educational improvements, and credit recovery courses. RTSA employs a positive behavior intervention system to encourage positive behavior that allows students to improve their educational scores. Teachers are able to come together to develop their curriculum in a professional learning community.

4.2.7.2. Thematic, Interdisciplinary, Project-Based Framework. The current themes being used are self-esteem/beauty, empowerment, hope, transformation, and new beginnings, which work together to support the social and emotional needs of students. At the end of each thematic unit, an exhibition will be held where students present to other students, staff, and the community, providing them the opportunity to gain leadership skills and have ownership over their learning. Every student will leave with a portfolio of their credits, workshops, and certificates.

4.2.7.3. Embedded Instructional Community Partnerships. There will be opportunity for community partners to serve as experts in order to enhance the curriculum.

4.2.7.4. Pathways to Higher Education. Curriculum is developed with the goal of college preparation in mind. Eligible students who are either enrolled in high school or have already graduated from high school are offered online college courses and career technical education. The goal is for each student to be ready for a job or higher education once they are back in their own community.

4.2.7.5. Instructional and Leadership Coaching. Administrators must be seen as leaders that guide the vision of the school. They will provide instructional guidance, classroom support, coaching, and professional development to teachers. The key to effectiveness of the RTSA model is strong leadership that fosters strong teachers.

4.2.7.8. Visual and performing arts of all kinds are integrated into academic learning time as well as out-of-class time via partnerships with artists and arts educators.

4.2.7.9. The five guiding principles released by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education will inform the education program:

4.2.7.9.1. Safe, healthy, facility-wide climate that prioritizes education, provides conditions for learning, and encourages the necessary behavioral and social support services that address the individual needs of all youths, including those with disabilities and English learners.

4.2.7.9.2. Funding available to support educational opportunities for all youth, including those with disabilities and English learners, comparable to opportunities for peers who are not system-involved.

4.2.7.9.3. Recruitment, employment, and retention of qualified education staff with skills relevant in juvenile justice settings who can positively impact long-term student outcomes through demonstrated abilities to create and sustain effective teaching and learning environments.

4.2.7.9.4. Rigorous and relevant curricula aligned with state academic and career and technical education standards that utilize instructional methods, tools, materials, and practices that promote college and career readiness.

4.2.7.9.5. Formal processes and procedures – through statutes, memoranda of understanding, and practices – that ensure successful navigation across child-serving systems and smooth reentry into communities. In order for this to be successful in the new campus there must be extensive re-entry planning, engaging school districts, wrap-around support, collaboration, family involvement, and a soft handoff into the community.
4.2.7.10. Instructional time must be protected as a key component of the rehabilitative program; except in extraordinary circumstances (e.g., medical emergencies, court appearances, etc.) youth should not be removed from the classroom.

4.2.7.11. School staff will manage school discipline. School-based discipline matters should involve Probation intervention only when necessary to prevent immediate physical harm. When appropriate, parents and other family members or caregivers should be contacted and their involvement should be requested. Holders of education rights must be notified and given an opportunity to participate in accordance with state and federal law.

4.2.8. Probation and all other staff are mentors and are consistently integrated throughout programming. Support for staff mental health and wellness is seen as critical to the success of the LA Model.

4.2.8.1. Priority in recruiting and hiring should be given to staff members who embrace best practice and evidence-based approaches to working with youth and who consider themselves to be mentors and role models. Individual department leaders offered either explicit staffing plans or support for committee recommendations.

4.2.8.2. The committees recommend a probation supervision staff-youth ratio of 1:6 and a student-teacher ratio of 1:12. Leaders from the Departments have expressed support for this recommendation.

4.2.8.3. It was proposed that a portion of the staff demand be filled by “youth development workers” – a category of employee that does not currently exist in any department. No agreement was reached on this suggestion.

4.2.8.4. Education staffing requirements offered by the Los Angeles County Office of Education include one principal, one academic counselor, one transition counselor to follow the students for up to 90 days after reentry into community, ten teachers, two psychologists, one part-time speech and language pathologist, and one part-time school nurse.

4.2.8.5. The Department of Mental Health (DMH) offered a staffing expectation of one mental health clinical supervisor, five psychiatric social workers, and one intermediate typist clerk, and a program manager (shared with other facilities as appropriate). An on-call psychiatrist is available 24/7/365. DMH will also have access to telepsychiatry.

4.2.8.6. Health Services will require a nurse seven days a week for eight hours per day and a doctor once a week. The campus will have access to telemedicine, which will make it possible for youth to be seen 24/7 by a physician assisted by probation staff and technology. An on-call nurse and doctor will be available to the camp 24/7/365.

4.2.8.7. A selection trajectory for site-based leadership and associated materials are currently in draft format awaiting revision and final approval by the Departments. Probation and LACOE have committed to onboarding site leaders six to 12 months before the campus opens in order to allow those leaders the opportunity to engage in the planning process (see Appendix C for a summary of the proposed process).

4.2.8.8. The selection of leaders should include representatives from County agencies and stakeholder groups. The subcommittees propose a six-person panel composed of two representatives from
the hiring agency, two representatives from other County agencies, and two representatives of stakeholder groups. These individuals have not yet been identified.

4.2.8.9. All staff (probation, administration, education, janitorial, etc.) must be trained in and committed to adopting a trauma-informed, positive, youth-centered approach. Staff should use collaborative learning, problem-solving, and supportive relationship building approaches. These practices ought to extend to staff’s work with each other and with youth. The ultimate goal is a staff that leads by example with acceptance, patience, integrity, and professionalism.

4.2.8.10. An effective and holistic plan for initial and ongoing training must be in place. No decision was reached about specific trainings or programs but potential ongoing, collaborative, cross-staff trainings include secondary trauma, positive behavior intervention, transformative justice, and trauma-informed care.

4.2.8.11. Other potential trainings explored include:
   - Integrative Behavioral Therapy
   - Mental Health
   - Small Group Treatment Model
   - Positive Youth Development
   - Aggression Replacement Training
   - Adapted-Dialectal Behavior Therapy
   - Cognitive Behavior Therapy
   - NCTSN (National Child Traumatic Stress Network) Think Trauma
   - TARGET by Advanced Trauma Solutions
   - Sanctuary Model
   - Seeking Safety
   - Missouri Approach

4.2.8.12. Trainings for all site staff should be collaborative and coordinated. An initial framework for integrated trainings was developed by a workgroup of members of the subcommittees from County agencies (attached as Appendix D).

4.2.8.13. Staffing schedules need to prioritize an individual direct care provider’s ability to work closely with a small group of youth in implementing the therapeutic program so they can build relationships and promote the program goals.

4.2.8.14. Staff mental health and wellness must be prioritized in policy and practice for the program to be effectively implemented, including addressing staff vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress. These issues should be addressed in team meetings and staff should be given time to debrief following incidents with (or disclosures from) youth. Staff must have sufficient backup and support to allow for de-escalation and processing of issues (for themselves and with youth).

4.2.8.15. Probation officers must be equipped with the skills to be mentors and build rapport with youth. These skills include recognizing that change is a process, relapse occurs, how to meet youth where they are, and how to ground oneself in the face of youth aggression. Supervisors and staff of each cohort/cottage are expected to model and encourage grooming skills, life skills, and interpersonal skills.
4.2.9. **Approach to programming is individualized, strength-based, and developmentally-appropriate, meeting youth where they are at** in the process of change and focusing on empowerment, problem-solving, and the promotion of protective factors.

4.2.9.1. Individualized support for youth is fostered by creating an individual plan for each youth’s success and reentry, and identifying and problem-solving potential challenges (i.e., relapse prevention and safety planning). This will include multi-disciplinary team planning that continuously addresses youth education, skill-building, mental health, and health needs with input from the youth.

4.2.9.2. An individualized approach maximizes autonomy and choice. It also means that the case plan must meet the youth where they are at in terms of development, risk level, and readiness to change.

4.2.9.3. Being strength-based means that staff do not give up on youth in the face of challenges. An individual cannot “fail” the program. If youth are struggling in the program it is the responsibility of the Multidisciplinary team (MDT) to create a revision/response that meets the needs of the individual youth.

4.2.10. **Data is continuously collected and analyzed** in order to drive decision-making, guide case planning, support continuous improvement and evaluate implementation and effectiveness of activities/programming.

4.2.10.1. Standardized, evidence-based screening and assessments should be used. Outcomes of screening and assessment should be clearly linked to the youth’s case plan. Existing tools (e.g., Los Angeles Risk & Resiliency Check-up, or LARRC) should be evaluated and, if appropriate, replaced with tools that better meet the goal of providing meaningful information to support case planning.

4.2.10.2. Achieving case plan goals or making positive movement towards these goals are markers of success and must be measured and recorded appropriately in youth case files.

4.2.10.3. Consistent challenges and setbacks in moving through case plan goals indicate a need for a reassessment and potentially a revision of the case plan.

4.2.10.4. Data is used to identify trends in implementation and outcomes. Data should be aggregated to understand trends in implementing the LA Model so course corrections can be made. Data should be collected on a broad range of potential outcomes including family engagement, academic success, safety, and more.

4.2.10.5. A core set of “dashboard” measures, based on available data collected by participating agencies and agreed upon by all partners, should be in place to guide cross-departmental and public-private planning for the new facility and for the LA Model. Dashboard measures and other outcome measures should be made publicly available to ensure accountability and community engagement.

4.2.10.6. A data collecting system, through which all departments and service providers may access youth data, should be explored. This system needs to be open enough for all those working with the youth to access information necessary to providing services, but must also maintain confidentiality.
5. PRIT Reform Plan Summary (August 2019) – Select Excerpts

5.1. Challenges identified as most pressing:

5.1.1. Juvenile Facilities: One of the most egregious problems facing Probation is its juvenile facilities. This includes poor physical conditions, inadequacy of staffing and training, and lack of sufficient structured time and meaningful activities for youth. Excessive use of force has ranged from room confinement and chemical spraying of youth, to sexual and physical abuse of minors resulting in criminal charges. The unavailability of meaningful grievance processes, the need for greater partnerships with community-based service providers to serve youth while in halls and camps, and the absence of validated assessment tools and inadequate data collection reflect the breadth of obstacles to rehabilitation in the juvenile justice system.

5.1.2. Community-based Services: Despite the fact that Probation has numerous contracts with community-based service providers, there is a lack of a robust continuum of community services for both youth and adults on probation, and no structured system for Probation officers to access services for their clients.

5.1.3. Bureaucratic and Administrative Inefficiencies: While any large agency will face its fair share of bureaucratic challenges, the sheer size of Probation as well as its specific bureaucratic malaise, significantly impede its ability to function at an optimal level. Probation suffers from a slow and cumbersome procurement process, extremely long and arduous hiring process, and existing labor agreements which do not allow for the effective use of staff.

5.1.4. Lack of Strategic Uses of Data and Information Technologies: Probation also faces significant challenges related to its data, research and evaluation systems; an important quality of any efficiently managed agency to hold it accountable to its mission and goals.

5.1.5. Organizational Culture: By far, the greatest challenge of Probation is its negative organizational culture, including the pervasive “us versus them” mentality and a deficit and punitive based approach that emphasizes corrections rather than rehabilitation and trauma informed strategies.

5.2. The Recommended Solutions

5.2.1. Culture Change: The Probation Department must engage in a major, intentional, organization-wide culture change initiative that includes the following actions:

- Adopt a new mission and vision statement that is widely distributed and posted throughout the organization. The statement should communicate the fact that Probation is moving away from a punitive, deficit-based system into one that is a positive, supportive, and developmental in its approach.
- Train all staff on positive client development, trauma-informed care, and the ineffectiveness of punitive approaches.
- Engage in consistent open and transparent communication regarding what policies, practices, and procedures are being changed and why the changes are being implemented.
- Establish a performance evaluation and accountability structure that holds staff accountable for adhering to the new positive and developmental approach.
- Acknowledge, reward, recognize, and promote staff who exemplifies the new positive and developmental approach.
5.2.2. Reduce and Eliminate Juvenile Facilities
   (i) Remove the Juvenile Services Division from the jurisdiction of the Probation Department, thereby separating youth and adult probation services in L.A. County
   (ii) Fund or build smaller home-like community-based detention housing alternatives to end youth incarceration in Los Angeles County by 2025:

We recommend that the Board:
   a. Direct Probation to immediately stop housing youth with different levels of risk and needs together and to produce the assessment of detained youth described in Section B (Solutions) and sub-section 5 (Data-Driven Decision-Making) of this report within 30 days, and;
   b. Authorize the Work Group described in recommendation (iii) below to assess whether the Community Detention Program is useful anymore, as too many bench officers undermine this program by using it as a form of threat, rather than for increased and meaningful supervision and;
   c. Authorize the Work Group in recommendation (iii) below to draft a strategy by December 2019, for L.A. County to develop and/or build smaller home-like, community-based housing alternatives in communities where high percentages of probation youth and their families reside;
   d. Shut down Central Juvenile Hall by July 2020. The County should redirect all justice-involved youth to more humane temporary facilities, and rather than spending millions to “improve juvenile hall,” should use public resources to fund alternative community-based, home-like facilities as described above;
   e. Authorize that as many youth as possible coming into contact with the justice system, between July 2020 and Jan. 1, 2025, be directed to diversion programs, alternative to detention programs, and to newly developed community-based housing alternatives, including secure, non-institutional settings, in cases where they are a harm to others or themselves. This would follow the outcomes demonstrated in national research, to keep youth closest to their families, where family engagement works best, and where youth have a more successful outcome in reentry, and;
   f. Finally, as alternatives to detention are fully in place across L.A. County, we recommend shutting down all juvenile camps by January 1, 2025.

5.2.3. Expand and Improve Community Services
   (i) Expand the initiative to disburse grants to community-based organizations via the public/private partnerships with foundations that support both capacity building and services. The current investment, an important initial effort, still only represents 1% of Probation’s budget
   (ii) Using a variety of Probation funds, including: JJCPA, YOBG, Title IV-E Waiver, AB 109, SB 678, and General Fund dollars saved through Probation downsizing, prioritize the expansion and improvement of services in: Education, Employment, Mentoring/Life Coaching, Housing, Drug Treatment, and Mental Health.
   (iii) Redefine the job of both juvenile and adult probation officers in the field so that their main duties and responsibilities are to work with the youth or adults on their case load and their families to identify their greatest needs and strengths, and to develop life plans to connect clients to services, supports, and opportunities; and
   (iv) Identify neighborhoods where large numbers of Probation clients live, and in partnership with those communities, establish offices and other operations in these areas. This may include renovating existing field offices to create community-oriented offices that are welcoming and supportive environments and co-location with other government agencies and community-based organizations. The recently opened “DOORS” Re-entry Opportunity Center, by the Probation Department’s Adult Services Division in the Exposition Park area of South Los Angeles is a major step forward that should be replicated across the County.
   (v) Leadership and staff should create community stakeholder groups or advisory panels to inform community members of Probation’s work and learn from neighbors what challenges and
opportunities exist in their home communities. In the example above involving the new re-entry opportunity center in Exposition Park, an important next step would be to establish a meaningful advisory board for that office that allows the co-located County and non-profit providers to collaborate with community members on further innovations and system changes.

5.2.4. Accountability Mechanisms
(i) The main three accountability measures that should be prioritized are as follows:
   a. Implement the external, civilian Probation Oversight Commission (POC) and a Probation Division within the Office of Inspector General detailed in a complementary report by the PRIT;
   b. Establish a performance evaluation system as outlined in the Culture Change section above; and
   c. Establish a new data-driven performance management process, detailed below.


6.1. Goal: Provide children and families with the upfront supports and services they need to prevent them from entering the child welfare system and/or limit their involvement with the system once they are known to it.

6.1.1. Ensure that families are provided with an array of upfront supports within their own communities to minimize their chances of entering the child welfare system and maximize their chances of living healthy and stable lives.

6.1.1.1. Work with First 5 LA, County departments, community partners, stakeholders, and others to develop and implement the first phase of a prevention plan that expands the infrastructure created by the Prevention and Aftercare Networks, builds on existing services and resources for families, documents gaps in community resources, and works with community partners to increase support for children and families where needed.

6.1.1.2. Work with DPSS, County departments, First 5 LA, community partners, and other entities to identify at-risk families and provide them with the supports they need to prevent them from entering the child welfare system.

6.1.2. Create a structure that promotes good communication and coordination of services across entities assisting children and families once they become known to the child protection system.

6.2. Goal: Minimize, if not eliminate, the risk that a child known to one or more entities in our system will be harmed.

6.2.1. Early Action—Ensure that immediate attention is given to the most vulnerable children once they come into contact with the County.

6.2.1.1. Assist County Counsel with reviewing the last five years of reports prepared by DCFS for County Counsel related to critical incidents/fatalities and recommendations to improve the County’s child welfare system.

6.2.1.2. Work with DCFS, the Sheriff, stakeholders, and others to ensure that effective risk assessment tools/processes are in place.

6.2.1.3. Work with County departments and others to determine how best to connect highly vulnerable families to comprehensive services and mitigate their risk of harm.

6.2.1.4. Evaluate the current use of public health nurses (PHNs) in child welfare and explore an expanded role to make the best use of their expertise.

6.2.2. Electronic Information-Sharing—Ensure that legally permissible information that is relevant to child safety is shared electronically by those who need it.
6.3. **Goal: No child leaves the system without a permanent family or a responsible caring adult in his or her life.**

6.3.1. **Reunification, Recruitment, and Retention**—Enhance the current efforts of DCFS, Probation, community partners, philanthropy, and others to provide services for parents seeking reunification, work with partners to increase the number of relative placements and other resource families, and expand supports for all caregivers (e.g., assistance with visitation, access to child care).

6.3.2. **Connections to Caring Adults**—Make sure that every DCFS and Probation youth has the opportunity to be connected with a responsible caring adult.

6.3.2.1. Work with County departments, community partners, and others to establish a network of caring adults by expanding existing programs and/or creating new ones, and supporting healthy, organic relationships.

6.4. **Goal: Ensure that system-involved youth achieve the physical, emotional, and social health needed to be successful.**

6.4.1. **Youth Empowerment**—Youth have an active voice in making key decisions about their own lives.

6.4.1.1. Support DCFS, Probation, DMH, and CSS in implementing the shared Core Practice Model Countywide that will allow youth to play a central role in their case-planning process, and ensure that supports are based on their needs, not their placement.

6.4.1.2. Work with California Youth Connection and other entities representing and working with youth to ensure that their voices are heard throughout all stages of their system involvement.

6.4.2. **Education, Employment, and Housing**—Champion collaboration among major stakeholders to raise the educational achievement of system-involved youth, expand their job opportunities, and ensure that youth who transition out of care have a stable place to live.

6.4.2.1. Implement the Education Coordinating Council’s (ECC’s) recently updated strategic plan that focuses on improving the educational achievement of DCFS and Probation youth.

6.4.2.2. Work with CSS, DHR, Parks & Recreation, DCFS, Probation, community partners, philanthropy, and others to develop a Countywide plan to increase job readiness and employment opportunities in viable career paths for eligible system-involved youth.

6.4.2.3. Work with DCFS, Probation, DMH, DPH, LAHSA, community partners, philanthropy, and others to ensure that transition-age youth are connected to stable housing.

6.4.3. **Health Care**—Provide system-involved youth with good health and mental health care that targets their individual needs.

6.4.3.1. Work with the Health Agency and others to coordinate health care for DCFS and Probation youth that includes regular physical, dental, and eye exams; developmental screenings; needed mental health evaluations; substance abuse services; pregnancy prevention; services related to expectant and parenting youth; recommended treatment; and follow-up care.

6.4.3.2. Work with County departments, First 5 LA, stakeholders, philanthropy, and other partners to create a trauma-informed system that effectively assesses and treats trauma for system-involved youth.

6.4.3.3. Work with partners, the Juvenile Court, and providers of care to develop and implement an improved plan for regulating psychotropic medication practices which ensures that system-involved children are properly assessed by qualified prescribers, that alternative treatments are considered as a first option, and, when children do receive these medications, that they are not
inappropriately medicated, that they are properly monitored, and that medications are administered in conjunction with other therapeutic interventions.

6.4.3.4. Work with the CIO, CEO, ISD, DCFS, DMH, DPH, Probation, the Juvenile Court, and others as needed to develop a web-based system for electronically processing Psychotropic Medication Authorizations (ePMA), and generating reports to facilitate the monitoring and quality management of psychotropic medication usage by system-involved youth.

6.4.3.5. Work with the various agencies to ensure that accurate, timely, and complete information is maintained in the Health and Education Passport, and that youth can access this information once they exit care.

6.5. **Goal:** Rethink the structures, programs, and processes that affect multiple entities to continually take advantage of new thinking and learning that meaningfully improve our child protection system.

6.5.1. **Broad Partnerships**—Address priority issues facing children and families by establishing partnerships across multiple sectors that offer fresh perspectives and solutions.

6.5.1.1. Establish a structure for bringing together the key partners in child protection to communicate and brainstorm solutions to difficult problems through the creation of one or more collaborative bodies.

6.5.1.2. Partner with the philanthropic community through the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships to develop a Shared Agenda for joint public-private initiatives that benefit children and families, and leverage public-private resources that support these initiatives.

6.5.2. **Eliminating Barriers**—Break down barriers that affect line staff’s ability to deliver optimal services.

6.5.3. **Innovation**—Research cutting-edge, proven practices in child welfare, both nationally/internationally, and determine which could be successfully implemented in or adapted for Los Angeles County.

6.5.4. **Resource Acquisition**—Secure the needed resources to successfully implement this plan.

6.5.5. **Cross-Training**—Promote cross-training efforts across organizations, disciplines, and sectors that affect the welfare of children.

6.5.6. **Continuous Evaluation**—Regularly track and monitor child protection outcomes and use the results to drive County policy and practice change.

7. **A Roadmap for Advancing Youth Diversion in Los Angeles County (2017)**

*Note that the first cohort of law enforcement and service provider partners was launched at 9 sites in 2019.

7.1. **CCJCC Youth Diversion Subcommittee Recommendations**

7.1.1. **Los Angeles County should establish a central office** responsible for providing countywide coordination and contracting for community-based youth diversion services.

7.1.2. **The central office should implement the County’s youth diversion initiative in a phased approach** that builds on existing capacity, addresses infrastructure needs, and allows for continued growth.
7.1.3. The central office should facilitate and support local partnerships between law enforcement agencies and community-based providers to implement diversion programs aligned with the County’s standards.

7.1.3.1. Law enforcement agencies should be the primary source of referrals to community-based diversion providers and should work closely with partnering organizations and the central office to develop program protocols and requirements.

7.1.3.2. In collaboration with partnering organizations and the central office, law enforcement agencies should develop eligibility guidelines that can help determine when a youth may be counseled and released or referred to diversion in lieu of further justice system involvement.

7.1.3.3. Community-based diversion partners should conduct a strengths-based assessment of the youth’s risks, needs, and interests during intake to inform the level of intervention and requirements for successful completion, consistent with established program guidelines.

7.1.3.4. Community-based diversion providers should develop program plans that offer a variety of activities and services that promote youth development and utilize effective interventions for youth who come into contact with the justice system.

7.1.3.5. Diversion partners should communicate regularly to inform program improvement and share information—guided by established agreements—regarding diversion referrals, participation status, and program completion, consistent with all applicable confidentiality protections and the best interests of participating youth, families, and public safety.

7.1.4. The central office should assess key indicators on an ongoing basis at both the program and County levels to monitor progress and inform adjustments.

7.1.4.1. Program evaluation efforts should incorporate formative, process, and outcome assessment efforts to make sure programs are effective.

7.1.4.2. Countywide progress in building capacity; advancing equity; and reducing the number of youth arrests, referrals to probation, and petitions filed should be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure the County is reaching its goals.

7.2. CEO Recommendations

7.2.1. The County should establish an Office of Youth Diversion and Development (OYDD) within the Office of Diversion and Reentry to oversee and manage the implementation of youth diversion countywide.

7.2.1.1. OYDD should implement a phased adoption of the recommended core components of effective diversion programs.

7.2.1.2. OYDD should develop and maintain a web-based diversion referral system.

7.2.1.3. OYDD should provide training and technical assistance to diversion partners.

7.2.1.4. OYDD should coordinate the evaluation of countywide progress.

7.2.2. OYDD should leverage County and external funding opportunities.

7.2.3. OYDD should provide annual reports of progress and future work.

7.2.4. OYDD should create a permanent Youth Diversion and Development Steering Committee, including representation by youth and families impacted by the system.