Youth Justice Work Group Discussion:
Key Themes and Initial Design Concepts from Each Subcommittee
June 16, 2020
YJWG Subcommittee #1 Synthesis
By 2030, we envision all young people in Los Angeles County being surrounded by holistic youth development resources and opportunities that keep them and their families safe and help them thrive in their schools, local parks, neighborhood youth centers, and all interactions with county systems.

In every community, community-based responses to conflict address the root causes of that conflict and empower young people and systems to build accountability and responsibility to repair harm without tools of punishment or isolation.
• Center racial equity by using quantitative and qualitative data to address the root causes of system involvement, using a social justice approach to youth development, family engagement, and community investment that produces conditions in which all youth and families have equitable opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential.

• Move Los Angeles County away from a suppression model of responding to youth crime towards advancing strengths-based, social-ecological responses that focus on repairing harm and building accountability through support and connection rather than punishment and isolation. This includes diverting as many young people as possible away from formal justice system involvement and into community-based youth development and restorative and transformative justice programs.

• Integrate the Youth Justice Work Group’s holistic competencies of youth development in all youth-serving initiatives across the county through cross-agency collaboration, shared learning, and strategic investment.

• Support and grow a network of community-based youth-serving providers through learning collaboratives and capacity-building, with a focus on areas of the county that need the most resources and support.

• Prioritize transparency, trustworthiness, and the accountability of systems through true involvement of youth and community in program, policy, and budgetary decision-making with a focus on meaningful data and research infrastructure with support for participatory evaluation.
1. Immediately and dramatically reduce resources dedicated to youth incarceration and supervision and divert them to a community-based continuum of care for youth development and reentry, with a focus on capacity-building for providers and identifying geographic and service areas that need additional investment and expansion.

2. Establish a new agency focused on coordinating, supporting, and funding the range of youth services needed to equitably shrink the size and scope of the youth justice system, including community-based programs, youth centers, learning collaborative facilitators, and multi-disciplinary teams. This agency must have the availability and authority to fully implement creative models for contracts and grants, research and data infrastructure, communication and transparency that minimize administrative and bureaucratic barriers that currently limit successful county-community partnership.

3. Develop a framework for ensuring accountability to youth, families, and communities, including measures of success, an active oversight structure, and participatory budgeting process that centers youth leadership and involves youth-serving organizations.
4. Support an initial cohort of 24-hour crisis response connected to youth centers across the county that provide resources and supports to youth in their communities and operate as spaces of connection and coordination for other youth-serving systems, providing real-time alternatives to arrest (i.e., partnerships with schools, co-located services, regular restorative and transformative justice and community-building circles, in-house multi-disciplinary teams).

5. Launch a youth development learning collaborative that can advance a shared set of standards for youth services, provide educational resources and curricula, trainings, and coaching for existing youth-serving departments and programs, and create a pipeline for community members to become professional youth workers.

6. Build on the YDD infrastructure to have staff receive and assess referrals for young people in lieu of suspension, expulsion, citation, and arrest as the functions of Probation’s Citation Diversion Program and School-Based Probation are replaced with a youth development approach coordinated by a new department.
• Continue to expand youth centers, focused on areas of the county that need most resources and support ending the criminalization of neighborhoods and engaging in the new model.

• Continue to expand youth development training and coaching so that all youth workers are trained in youth development and restorative practices.

• Establish funding / incentive structures for schools and other agencies to hire and support youth development workers.

• Build robust employment structure to support young people in attaining jobs.

• Invest in a workforce pipeline that trains formerly incarcerated and system-involved youth to place them in jobs with youth-serving organizations across the county.

• Launch training and education process for justice system staff who want to transition to the growing youth development workforce.
YJWG Subcommittee #2 Synthesis
Subcommittee #2: Principles and Values

• Principles of Youth Development
• Re-defining justice: “Seeing justice, not as punishment for those that break laws, but rather as healing and support in equal measure for those that have caused harm and those that have been harmed.”
• Recognize and acknowledge the impact of structural racism and white supremacist ideology on the lives of Black and brown young people.
• Power Sharing: power with, not power over.
• Address culture of fear that prohibits institutional actors from taking a chance on youth.
Subcommittee #2 Design Concepts: MDTs (to be re-named)

1) **Potential Members:** Youth, someone youth feels comfortable with, mentor, family members, school supporters, case managers, etc.

2) **Location:** Community hubs/youth centers

3) **Coordinating Body:** New Office of Youth Development (or something similar)

4) **Referral source:** schools, parents, law enforcement; MDT will screen referrals so that minor incidents go no further, avoid net widening.

5) **Functions:**

   1) **1st Point of Contact:** Team A responds to many incidents in lieu of police with non-emergency number.

   2) **2nd Point of Contact:** Team B, which includes TJ/RJ practitioners
      a. Facilitates conversations relative to who has been affected and how they were impacted.
      b. Refers youth to CBOs for services (diversion).
      c. Assesses whether or not youth will be admitted to a non-carceral setting

   3) **3rd Point of Contact:** Team C explores arrest/re-arrest, prosecution.
      a. No cases outside of 707(b), inclusive of misdemeanors and felonies, referred to prosecution.
      b. Creates disposition plans: Probation supervision is eliminated and so no longer an option, will refer youth to CBOs for the appropriate level of services. This may include a Credible Messengers program in which a youth is connected to a mentors with similar life experiences.
      c. Create Investigation/progress reports
Subcommittee #2 Design Concepts: Legal System

• **Point of Contact/Arrest**
  • Increase number of youth returned home by law enforcement at initial point of contact (warn and release)
  • MDT subset responds to many incidents in lieu of police with non-emergency number
  • Law enforcement is always accompanied by MDT subset members
  • Limit the number of police officers that respond; develop protocols

• **Referral from Law Enforcement Into Legal System**
  • Short-term: Along with subset of MDT, probation determines whether youth is referred for prosecution.
  • Long-Term: MDTs determine whether youth will be referred for prosecution
  • Only 707(b) cases are referred to prosecution

• **Prosecution**
  • Collaborative Review Team: pilot the development of a process that includes community representatives from impacted communities in filing decision that includes the level of charges to be filed.
  • Institute a blind filing system where the race/ethnic identity and zip code of the young person are unable to be seen by those making the filing decision.
  • At any time during the process, 707(b) cases downgraded to non-707(b)s are automatically diverted.
  • Actively work to eliminate mandatory filing for 707(b) charges including statutory changes.
Subcommittee #2 Design Concepts: Legal System

• **Court Process/Probation/MDT Reports**
  - **Detention**: MDT subset or non-probation entity prepare the report; pilot mitigation reports.
  - **Pre-plea**: Eliminated
  - **Disposition**: Youth led dispo plans and full hearing on mitigating evidence; resource defender offices to be staffed with social workers. The court will accept and consider alternative dispo plans prepared by the a subset of the MDT. Phasing consideration while overcoming legal impediments.

• **Court Process**
  - Conduct case processing assessment to inform strategies to reduce unnecessary delays.
  - Develop metrics of accountability that ensure off ramps back to the community.
  - Court hearings scheduled during times that are not disruptive to working families and school attendance.
  - Attempts by the bench to order the detention of a youth for a violation of an alternative to detention and/or court condition will be reviewed in collaboration with the relevant MDT members.
  - Develop “collaborative team” approach with the Judge; may include providing guidance in the development of the dispo plan and/or arbitrate when there is disagreement amongst the MDT.
  - Conditions imposed by the court are tailored to the incident.
  - Establish legislation to limit court /probation conditions to 6 months with safety valves that prohibit the court from circumventing the letter and intent of the legislation.
  - Eliminate use of handcuffing and shackling in transport and in court.
  - Physical space of court is changed to adhere to youth development principles and cultural responsiveness.
Subcommittee #2 Design Concepts: Legal System

• Post-adjudication
  • Field Services
    • Short term: contract with and/or employ credible messengers and/or CBO’s to provide this function
    • Long term: legal impediments are overcome and probation no longer is implicated in Field Supervision. There are community-based organizations that currently embody the youth development and racial equity principles agreed upon by the YJWG. The workforce should be led by these organizations and be organized and trained by them.
  • Progress Reports
    • Short term: The court will accept and consider alternative progress reports prepared by a subset of the MDT. Phasing consideration while overcoming legal impediments.
    • Long term: a subset of the MDT prepares the Progress Reports, Probation is no longer implicated.
Avoid system involvement (both dependency and justice) 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 collection/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
Subcommittee #3: Key Implications of Principles and Recs

- Decision-making would be collaborative and inclusive at every stage of the justice process.
- Much fewer youth are in out-of-home settings – many more are at home and in the community with the appropriate youth development supports.
- A much smaller system exists that coordinates a continuum of secure and staff-secure facilities as alternatives to juvenile halls and camps.
- Smaller home-like community-based detention housing alternatives are funded and built.
- Juvenile halls and camps would close.
- Evaluation and a robust accountability mechanism, which centers community leaders, is built into the design and implementation of any model.
1. **Adopt the design of the LA Model** as a baseline (see LA Model report for detailed recommendations).

2. **Strengthen the design and implementation LA Model** through:
   1. Multi-disciplinary decision-making -- at every point, decisions should be multi-disciplinary and inclusive of health, community and other partners, and use a strength and need-based framework. Multi-disciplinary teams focused on youth and family well-being should make, not just inform, decisions about detention and any removal of a young person from their home and community, as well as programming.
   2. Effective staffing and hiring
   3. Smaller home-like community-based detention housing alternatives – that are potentially blended in serving residents and non-residents, and have various specializations

3. **Ensure evaluation and an accountability mechanism** that centers community and other experts around implementation of any new model and system.
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<tr>
<th><strong>Framework</strong></th>
<th><strong>Gone</strong></th>
<th><strong>LA Model</strong></th>
<th><strong>Beyond LA Model</strong></th>
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<td></td>
<td>• Containment/control/custody</td>
<td>• Youth development and culture of care framework underlies all decisions</td>
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<td><strong>Decision Makers</strong></td>
<td>• Law enforcement / Probation</td>
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<td>• MDT, inclusive of health, community and other partners with youth development/social work background</td>
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<td><strong>How Detention Decision is Made</strong></td>
<td>• Deficit-based, algorithmic tools with embedded racial bias</td>
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<td>• Strength-based assessment to promote objectivity and equity focused on serving youth outside of a facility</td>
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<td><strong>Facilities</strong></td>
<td>• Prison-like facilities</td>
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<td>• Smaller, home-like facilities/settings located in areas near the youth’s home neighborhood to facilitate parental/community engagement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Detention/juvenile hall</td>
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<td>• Blended models – settings that are part residential and part-day programming</td>
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<td>• Large congregate care</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cells and cages</td>
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<td><strong>Physical Tools</strong></td>
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<td>• Shackles</td>
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<td>• Prison uniforms</td>
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<td>• Chemical spray</td>
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<td><strong>Practices/ Policies</strong></td>
<td>• Compliance and control-oriented</td>
<td>• See LA Model report (therapeutic approaches, community-based supports connected to a broader youth/community dev. Infrastructure)</td>
<td>• Robust accountability mechanism with strong community leadership/engagement</td>
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