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## OYCR Summer 2023 Newsletter



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### From OYCR

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#### Director's Corner

Happy Summer!

The Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) closed on June 30, 2023. This moment could not have been achieved without the commitment and efforts of all partners involved, and we are so proud that we have reached our vision of a California without statewide youth prisons.

In order to ensure that each county has the capabilities to meet their youths' unique housing and services needs, my staff and I have visited the Secure Youth Treatment Facilities ([SYTFs](#)) in all 36 counties where they are located. Today, our youth who

are court-involved are now largely being provided care and services in their own counties.

At OYCR, we are committed to making sure youths are placed in alternative places of care and less restrictive settings whenever possible. Thus, additional Less Restrictive Programs (LRPs) are being developed alongside community-based organizations. We know from experience, research, brain science, and data that longer youth incarceration times do not equate to better public safety outcomes.

Over the next year, OYCR is committed to offering technical assistance as well as trainings on how to increase the development of trauma-informed care, and how to transition youth into less restrictive programs based in their communities as soon as it is recommended by a youth's individualized treatment program and team. Filled with hope, self-forgiving, and a new sense of connection and purpose, youth will be able to step back into our communities valued and supported in the LRPs designed by each county and community.

The page has turned, and a new era of county-based support is underway for all youth who are court-involved. OYCR was created to be a resource and a partner in the development of each county's continuum of care for youth who are court-involved and their families by providing technical assistance, resource mapping, relationship building, linkages to resources, policy leadership, and the implementation of best and promising practices.

Onward!



**Judge Katherine Lucero (ret.)** Director

Office of Youth and Community Restoration  
California Health and Human Services Agency

**Recent News / Announcements**



We have been thrilled to see the interest that this opportunity has generated across the state and believe that with targeted support, **these four counties have the potential to become leaders for their peers in California and nationally.**

KATHERINE LUCERO | DIRECTOR OF OYCR

## OYCR Technical Assistance Initiative: Ending the Incarceration of Girls

On April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the California Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) and The Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) announced the four counties selected via a competitive process to participate in the Ending Girls' Incarceration in California Action Network (the Action Network). Through their participation in the Action Network over the next year, Imperial, Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Diego Counties are committing to implement equitable policies and gender-responsive programming to immediately reduce girls' incarceration and set in motion multi-year plans to end youth incarceration as we know it. These counties will receive grants from OYCR and technical assistance from Vera to help improve programming, collect data and close policy gaps for girls and gender expansive youth.

For more details, please read the full [press release](#).

Additional information on girls' incarceration in California can be found on [Vera's website](#), where users can explore the data and compare their county to others across the state.

- The OYCR Technical Assistance and County Coordination Division has been renamed to the Systems Change and Equity Division. Its purpose remains the same: provide technical assistance to county and community partners. The name change better reflects the nature and purpose of the technical assistance being provided.
- Since Winter, the division completed 29 technical assistance requests, including answering questions about dual enrollment and vocational programming, clarifying less restrictive programs, and many more.

## Ombudsperson Division Updates

**Publications.** The Ombudsperson Division has developed and provided [posters](#) to each juvenile justice facility that included the contact information below. In addition to the posters, the Ombudsperson Division has designed and disseminated a trifold [brochure](#) with similar contact information to be provided to youth and families. As of May 2023, 1,495 posters and 8,200 trifold brochures have been disseminated to all juvenile facilities.

- Toll-free telephone number: 1-(844)-402-1880
- Physical mailing address: 1215 O Street, MS-08, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Email address: [OYCRombuds@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:OYCRombuds@chhs.ca.gov)

**Youth Bill of Rights.** The Ombudsperson Division is required to disseminate information and provide training and technical assistance on the Youth Bill of Rights and services provided by their division to youth who are court-involved, and other interested parties.

The OYCR Ombudsperson is responsible for developing a youth friendly document that explains the Youth Bill of Rights for youth that are in juvenile justice facilities in California. The law also requires that the Youth Bill of Rights be translated into Spanish and other languages. The OYCR Ombudsperson is required by law (Welfare and Institutions Code 224.74) to get feedback from youth, youth advocates, support groups, and groups representing children, families, and children's facilities. Overall, we want to ensure that all people interested in developing this document are able to explain their rights in a way that is easy for youth to understand.

The Ombudsperson has circulated a document for stakeholder feedback on the youth-friendly language and design of the publication. The document can be viewed on the OYCR website [here](#). The stakeholder comment period is from **July 7, 2023 to July 31, 2023**. All stakeholder feedback may be sent to [OYCR@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:OYCR@chhs.ca.gov). The Ombudsperson Division continues to work on their timeline for implementation, including receiving feedback from youth who are court-involved.

Finally, the Ombudsperson Division is also developing an interim document that will be disseminated in July- to ensure that youth and their families are provided with the bill of rights as written in statute (Welf & Inst. Code 224.71). This interim document is available in English and Spanish and will be emailed to all county Probation Chiefs this month.

## **Child Welfare Council Youth Justice Committee**

The OYCR Committee of the Child Welfare Council (CWC) was scheduled to sunset at the end of June 2023. However, CWC adopted Director Lucero's proposal to create a permanent standing committee focused on youth justice issues so that the needs of youth who are court-involved continue to be accounted for as CWC considers the State's children- and family-serving entities. CWC, now known as the [Youth Justice Committee](#), will continue to meet quarterly and move through its adopted priority areas and deliverables. Agendas and materials from their [March](#) and [June meetings are posted](#).

The Youth Justice Committee is making substantial progress on its three priority areas:

- **Community Based Organization Capacity Building**

The Community Based Organization (CBO) Capacity Development workgroup, meeting monthly, is creating the framework by which CBOs can define what kind of resources they need to strengthen, nurture, expand and

sustain their pivotal role in serving youth, families and communities as they navigate youth court involvement. Additionally, OYCR has released a related [Request for Proposals](#), described below in “Funding Opportunities.”.

- **Higher Education/Vocational Training**

OYCR’s contractor Forward Change presented a draft report to the Youth Justice Committee during the June meeting. The report is intended to help legislators, probation system leaders, educators, and the broader public understand the drivers of educational and life outcomes for youth who are court-involved, proven and promising interventions to improve these outcomes, and the recommended elements for building higher education pathways for youth in secure treatment facilities in California. It draws on an extensive scan of the research literature and 65 interviews with stakeholders connected to the juvenile justice system across California. To receive a copy of the draft report and provide comments, please contact [OYCR@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:OYCR@chhs.ca.gov).

- **Stepping Home/Alternatives to Incarceration**

Stepping Home, a model developed for OYCR by UCLA, is a process for all youth, starting from the beginning of a youth’s confinement in a secure youth treatment facility (SYTF), to returning safely and successfully to their communities as thriving, successful young adults. The model transitions the youth from the SYTF to less restrictive programs (LRPs) to gradually increase their involvement in the community as they achieve the goals in their case plan until they are successfully home without supervision from county oversight agencies. The Stepping Home Model encourages counties and partnering entities to include key elements. Key elements of the model have been identified and are currently undergoing stakeholder review and input. Materials related to this Model are available in the [Youth Justice Committee Meeting Materials](#).

OYCR intends to award a small number of grants for county probation departments and community partners who demonstrate innovative

alternatives to incarceration, specifically approaches that are able to quickly assist youth's transition from secure track facilities to less restrictive programs (LRPs). Funds will be provided for a 24 months to support a combination of strategically targeted services to transition an identified population of youth from SYTF placement to the community, in stages through LRPs and evaluate success. An [Invitation for Letters of Interest](#) was submitted to County Probation Departments.

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## **OYCR Response to the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Haaland v. Brackeen***

On June 15, 2023, the United State Supreme Court voted 7-2 to uphold the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), ruling that the law does not impermissibly impose a federal mandate on a traditionally state-regulated area of power, in this case, family law. This decision is monumental.

ICWA was implemented to mitigate the tragic history of abuses, by both federal and state governments, of Native American children, hundreds of thousands of whom were taken from their families and tribes to be raised by people with no connection to the children's history and culture. The court's ruling ensures ICWA remains as protection for Native children and the sovereignty of tribes.

As stated by Justice Neil Gorsuch in his concurrence, the "Constitution reserves for the Tribes a place—an enduring place—in the structure of American life. It promises them sovereignty for as long as they wish to keep it...." He goes on to say that in adopting ICWA, Congress was lawfully exercising its authority to "secure the right of Indian parents to raise their families as they please; the right of Indian children to



grow in their culture; and the right of Indian communities to resist fading into the twilight of history. All of that is in keeping with the Constitution's original design.” OYCR recognizes the essential and unique role of tribes, native families, and tribal advocates in supporting young people who are court-involved and celebrates this ruling's reaffirmation of that role. **OYCR looks forward to continuing collaboration with tribes and tribal representatives to help support their engagement with youth involved in the juvenile legal system and to continue to learn from their restorative, community- and youth-centered practices.**

## Events

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### Prison Education Project (PEP) Forum

On Friday, May 5, 2023, OYCR along with the Prison Education Project (PEP) and the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) hosted a Forum at Cal Poly Pomona in Los Angeles County. The County Coordination unit along with members of the Executive team attended the conference. At the forum, host organizations and partners shared best practices and insights on education as liberation for individuals who are impacted by the justice system. Partners included: Rising Scholars, Project Rebound, Depart of Rehabilitation, Underground Scholars, local Community-Based Organizations, and representatives from Probation Departments across the state.

## OYCR Team and Updates

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## Introducing New OYCR Staff

We are growing! OYCR is excited to share our rapidly expanding team of new staff.



### **Krystal Lewis-Britton – Staff Services Manager I, Specialist**

Krystal comes to OYCR from the former Office of Systems Integration (OSI) Acquisition and Contracting Services Division (ACSD) where she assisted with procurements. Prior to OSI Krystal worked at other state agencies including the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) in the Corrections Planning and Grants Programs (CPGP) Division, CalOES's Grants Administration Division, CDSS's Community Care Licensing, and the former Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) to name a few. Krystal is excited to join OYCR and to help establish grant administration policies, procedures and help facilitate the transition of juvenile justice grants from BSCC to OYCR under the current realignment.



### **Krystle Englehart – Research Data Specialist II**

Krystle Englehart has eight years of research experience for the State of California and an education background in Sociology with a focus on race and inequality in the United States. She has used her research skills to work on consumer protection initiatives at Department of Consumer Affairs, served as lead on an exploratory research team at the Department of Rehabilitation with the goal of expanding services for disabled Californians and, most recently, spearheaded an effort to ensure timely access to mental health care services for Medi-Cal beneficiaries at the Department of Health Care Services.



**Juan Carlos Argüello, D.O. – Chief Health Policy Officer**

Dr. Juan Carlos Argüello, comes to OYCR from the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) where he served as the statewide Associate Medical Director. Dr. Argüello completed his Child and Adolescent Psychiatry fellowship at Harvard Medical School/Children’s Hospital Boston. He began his civil service career at the Division of Juvenile Justice in 2007 as statewide Senior Psychiatrist Supervisor and later transitioning to the Department of State Hospitals (DSH). In DSH, Dr. Argüello assisted in the provision of clinical direction and clinical oversight for the five California State Hospitals. He worked closely with clinical leadership to design data collection methodologies which were used to better understand patients, identify patterns and trends, to create tools for mentoring clinical staff, to identify best practices within DSH and other forensic systems outside of California.



**Nancy “Desiree” Victor – Associate Governmental Program Analyst**

Nancy “Desiree” Victor joins OYCR as a County Liaison for Northern California. Ms. Victor brings nearly 20 years of community-based work and expertise to her role with OYCR. Desiree has served as Co-Chair of the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Gender Responsive Task Force and co-lead the initiative to End Girls' Incarceration in the county. Desiree has a Bachelor's in Sociology and Criminology from San Jose State University and her Master's in Chicano Studies with an emphasis in Education.



**Will Lightbourne – Special Consultant**

Will Lightbourne has over 47 years of experience as a director of state and county services, especially in safety net services – most recently as the prior Director of both the Department of Health Care Services and the California Department of Social Services. As a Special Consultant, Mr. Lightbourne assists OYCR with building a continuum of care blueprint for Juvenile Justice Youth in California. An emphasis will be placed on treating all youth who are court involved in a similar manner when it comes to accessing mental health, substance use treatment, housing, and other basic needs, including funding for juvenile justice youth exiting incarceration and the provision of living stipends. Additionally, Mr. Lightbourne will assist/lead UCLA in creating the Child Welfare Council Youth Justice Committee deliverable regarding Step Downs and Alternatives to detention.



### **George Maynard – Special Consultant**

George Maynard retired from state service in 2021 as the Deputy Director of Administrative Services at the Department of State Hospitals (DSH). Over his 38-year career in public service, he worked in a broad number of fields, ultimately culminating with a 17-year career with DSH managing the administrative functions of 5 state hospitals and an annual budget in excess of \$2 billion. His most recent role prior to retirement was coordination of DSH response to COVID, managing the procurement, delivery, and ongoing supply channel of critical resources for staff and patient safety.

## **Active OYCR Recruitment Efforts**

- Data and Research Division - OYCR has a [Research Data Specialist I](#) opportunity - please explore and share.
- Ombudsperson Division
  - OYCR is in the process of recruitment efforts for four Ombudsperson Regional Liaison positions. The [Alameda](#) recruitment is currently soliciting applications. Stayed tuned for additional recruitment announcements in other regions.
  - Additionally, OYCR is recruiting for the [Ombudsperson, CEA A](#). The recruitment closes on August 8, 2023.

- Systems Change and Equity Division – OYCR is in the process of hiring an Associate Governmental Program Analyst/Staff Services Analyst for a county liaison position in [Alameda](#) and for [Fresno](#). We are also in the process of hiring a [Staff Services Manager I](#).

## OYCR Funding Opportunities

- [Invitation for Letters of Interest relating to Less Restrictive Programs:](#)

OYCR plans to award a small number of grants for innovative alternatives to incarceration to county probation departments and community partners to demonstrate innovative approaches to assist youth in secure track facilities transition to less restrictive programs (LRPs).

- [Intensive Transitional Services for Youth](#)

OYCR is pursuing an Intensive Transitional Services for Youth Grants Program, which will award funding for programs throughout the state, each designed to provide a full range of services to young people with the greatest mental and behavioral health needs returning from the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facilities.

- [Request for Proposals: Technical Assistance for Community-Based Organization Capacity Building](#)

OYCR is seeking one or more contractors to support the capacity-building of community-based organizations that work with young people impacted by the juvenile justice system. The Contractor(s) will be responsible for evaluating and identifying the capacity development needs of CBOs, developing a process for identifying a set of CBOs that will receive such technical assistance from the Contractor and implementation funding from OYCR, tracking and evaluating the effectiveness of such technical assistance in increasing CBO capacity and sustainability, developing best practices relating to CBO capacity-building, and contributing to the work of the OYCR's CBO Capacity-Building Workgroup.

# Partner Opportunities

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## **Department of Education Accepting Applications for Its Transitioning Youth Who Are Gang-Involved to Higher Education Program**

The Department of Education is seeking applications for its 2023 Transitioning Gang-Involved Youth to Higher Education Program. This initiative provides funding to organizations to help gang-involved youth pursue higher education opportunities that will lead to certification or academic or occupational credentials. More information can be found [here](#).

## **Division of Apprenticeship Standards Requests Public Comment for California Youth Apprenticeship Grant**

The California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and its Division of Apprenticeships Standards (DAS) are seeking public comment on the [California Youth Apprenticeship Grant \(CYAG\)](#), a new funding source to develop and test innovative practices to increase the participation of opportunity youth in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

## **Two New Behavioral Health Scholarships**

The Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) is excited to announce two new scholarships in the field of behavioral health – [Golden State Social Opportunities Program](#) (GSSOP) and [Behavioral Health Scholarship Program](#) (BHSP). Both scholarships are aiming to increase behavioral health professionals for direct patient care in California. Both applications are due August 15th.

## **Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment (HIRE) Initiative**

The California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) is pleased to announce the [Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment \(HIRE\) Initiative](#), a new funding opportunity for community-based organizations (CBOs) and other non-profits to provide employment services to individuals who are justice-involved. Approximately \$50,000,000 is available to qualified grantees.

# Youth Achievements

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## Youth From Camp Singer Win Best in Show

Youth at the Maxine Singer Youth Guidance Center also known as Camp Singer were awarded Best in Show as well as Safety Officer of the Year on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> during a building competition in Sacramento. A team of 11 students at Camp Singer worked together to build a chicken coop over the course of the competition.

[read more →](#)

## San Diego Youth Participate in Woodshop Class

Youth in the SOAR program within San Diego County participate in woodshop class. This class was created about six years ago for youth and is part of a career and technical education program created to help youth transition out of incarceration and into the workforce to secure apprenticeships run by San Diego County of Education.

[read more →](#)

## Stay Connected with OYCR

To be added to OYCR's email list, please contact [OYCR@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:OYCR@chhs.ca.gov).

Thanks for all that you do to serve our youth.





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