



Office of Youth and
Community Restoration

OYCR February Newsletter



Youth
Centered



Community



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Focus



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Innovation



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From OYCR

Director's Letter

January 19 marked my second anniversary as the Director of OYCR. In my time here, OYCR has grown quickly and has become an office with four robust divisions — always focused on the mental, educational, and physical well-being of youth in the justice system.

As a relatively new government office and the first-ever in California that focuses solely on youth justice, we understand the importance of strong partnerships. Each of the 58 counties has its own culture, priorities, complexities, and county plans. Our primary charge is to provide resources and technical assistance to support counties in implementing best and promising practices for their residents. OYCR is committed to investing in increasing the capacity of community-based organizations

(CBOs) and expanding community infrastructure to ensure youth can get the best possible care close to home.

Thanks to the work of county probation departments, CBOs, educators, researchers, mental health providers, and others who works with youth on the ground, we have made important strides over the past two years to create a more equitable youth justice system with all youth able to be more engaged with their families and lifelong connections in their own communities. Together, we will continue this progress as we reshape youth justice towards a developmentally targeted healing response that allows youth to lead productive lives, and allows families, communities, and individuals to be restored to health and wellness.



Judge Katherine Lucero (ret.) Director

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

OYCR Celebrates Black History Month



Celebrating Black History Month

This February, and always, we recognize the history of systemic racism and acknowledge the injustices that have caused Black youth to be overrepresented in the youth justice system. OYCR is working to advance alternatives to incarceration that provide California's Black youth with safety, healing, and opportunities in their communities — instead of punishment.

News and Updates

OYCR Begins Technical Assistance Partnership with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation

This month, OYCR's partnership with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation officially began. This partnership aims to build out community infrastructure and

increase capacity at community-based organizations (CBOs) to better serve young people in the justice system. OYCR has committed \$3 million over the next two years to invest in community organizations and reduce youth interactions with the justice system.



OYCR Ombudsperson Division Conducts First Annual Site Visits of 2024

As mandated by AB 505, OYCR's Ombudsperson Division staff conduct annual site visits to youth justice facilities on which they receive a facility tour, speak confidentially with youth, meet probation staff, and introduce the Youth Bill of Rights. The first site visits of the year were completed on February 9, 2024, and additional visits have been scheduled in March.

OYCR Awards TA Grants to Juvenile Justice Court Partners

In order to promote best practices for the implementation of SB823 during the court process, OYCR has awarded two grants to promote court partner collaboration among Defenders and Prosecutors and anticipates a third grant by the end of April 2024. The Prosecutor's Alliance and the Pacific Juvenile Defender Center were awarded these grants after a solicitation to all counties, and to juvenile justice attorney organizations. The focus of the grant will be on sharing best practices for keeping youth in the juvenile justice arena rather than transferring youth to adult

court, for conducting 6 month hearings, how to honor the voice of youth, their families, and the victims of harm with a focus on Restorative Justice. We are looking forward to working with these partners and all juvenile justice court professionals to educate, engage and to provide technical assistance through the state of California.

Recidivism Reduction for Prop 47 Participants

This month a comprehensive evaluation of the Board of State and Community Corrections' (BSCC) Proposition 47 grant program was published, and suggests participants who received services made available by the 2014 voter-approved initiative are substantially less likely to recidivate compared to those traditionally incarcerated in California. Linda Penner, the Chair of the BSCC, says "California should continue to build on this progress — investing in efforts that are effective in both reducing incarceration and improving public safety." Read the Statewide Evaluation Report [here](#).

New Report: Higher Education Pathways from Forward Change

Our latest report, produced by Forward Change, highlights proven and promising education interventions to improve outcomes for youth in secure youth treatment facilities and help them grow up to be healthy, successful adults. The report draws on extensive research literature and stakeholder interviews and provides key insights for legislators, probation leaders, educators, and the broader community. [Read the report on OYCR's website.](#)



Project Rise Removes Barriers for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Students

We know that when youth have access to education while incarcerated, recidivism decreases, and chances of successful reentry into the community increase.

To that end, last year, a \$1.5 million Juvenile Justice Program grant was awarded to Santiago Canyon College through the California Community Colleges Rising Scholars Network. Beginning this fall, SCC will use those funds to expand programs offering credit courses and a full associate's degree program for youth in Orange County Juvenile Hall. This is an important step in making sure Orange County youth have the tools they need to thrive. [Read the article in the Orange County Register.](#)

Did You Know Youth in Juvenile Facilities Can Vote?

A young person in California can vote if they are a U.S. citizen and California resident and 18 years old or older on Election Day. Juvenile adjudications don't impact voting rights so a felony juvenile case doesn't change a youth's ability to vote. How do you claim your right to vote? Check out this [flyer](#) from the Youth Law Center with more information.

For March primaries, the date to register to vote was February 20th, but if a youth is registered they have until March 5th to vote! If you haven't received your ballot,

contact your county elections office no later than February 27, 2024. This is the last date to request a ballot.

Open Call for Youth Art with FLY

Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY), together with Amplifier (a non-profit design lab) is asking artists ages 13-26 years old to tell the world to [#UnchainOurFutures](#) through the creation of artwork that to move us past juvenile incarceration and transition instead to a community-based system of care that provides a pathway for all young people to grow, prosper, and thrive! The winning artist will win a prize of \$500, swag, and a chance to have their artwork featured in public art activations across California. You can submit work by either emailing your submission to communications@flyprogram.org or tagging @flyprogram on Instagram now until March 12. Learn more online [here](#) and share this opportunity with the young people you work with.

Partner Highlights

California Black Women's Health Project (CABWHP)

OYCR is proud to work with CABWHP, an organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Black women and girls in California. CABWHP trains Black women to become health advocates through skill-based instruction in policy development, community organizing, coalition and network building, and outreach. They offer programs on maternal and reproductive health, mental health, domestic and community violence, the impact of COVID-19, and more. [Visit CABWHP's website to learn more about their work.](#)



SOAR Academy

Education and skill building are necessary for ensuring that youth who are court-involved can grow to be successful adults. Through SOAR Academy's Career and Technical Education program, youth who are court-involved are learning more than just woodworking — the program emphasizes valuable life and career skills. Run by the San Diego County Office of Education, the program was created about six years ago for youth serving sentences with the San Diego County Probation Department.

[Learn more from the San Diego Union-Tribune.](#)



Upcoming Webinars

Victims and the Justice System: Myths, Facts, and New Solutions to Better Serve Them

March 4, 2024, 12:00 – 2:00 pm PST

Join Lenore Anderson, Co-founder and President of Alliance for Safety and Justice, with OYCR Director Katherine Lucero for the upcoming webinar on supporting victims. This is an opportunity to learn about how the current youth justice system has failed victims, what myths and facts remain, and what can be done to improve the system. [RSVP here.](#)

Past Webinars

Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement

February 5, 2024

If you missed this month's webinar, OYCR Special Consultant LaRon Dennis provided an introduction to credible messenger mentoring and its efficacy research. Clinton Lacey, President and CEO of Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement discussed the necessary components to establish a successful credible messenger mentoring program. [View links to webinar information and recordings on our website.](#)

Active OYCR Recruitment Efforts



We're Hiring!



- OYCR is hiring an [Attorney III](#) in Sacramento County.
- OYCR is hiring an [Assistant to Deputy Director](#) in Sacramento County.
- OYCR is hiring a [Workforce Development Liaison](#) in Sacramento County.

Stay Connected with OYCR

To be added to OYCR's email list, please visit our ["Contact Us" page](#).

Thanks for all that you do to serve our youth.





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