

2024 Annual Report



Office of Youth and
Community Restoration



A Message from Director Lucero

Reflecting on 2024, I am proud of the journey the OYCR team and our partners have been on since the closure of the Division of Juvenile Justice on June 30, 2023—and more hopeful than ever about the futures of our young people as they are served closer to home. As this work continues across the state, OYCR continues to evolve to align with the vision set forth by [Senate Bill 823](#).

Over the past two years, we’ve focused on establishing a solid foundation for this transition by strengthening our internal capacity, fostering statewide partnerships, and shaping funding priorities to support the development of a more healing-centered and youth-focused system.

The work to strengthen the foundation of OYCR and plan for the future is ongoing, but 2024 marked a turning point where we saw much of this work bloom. Our team, always working hand-in-hand with our county partners, continued to engage young people with lived experience through our Youth Advisory Board. We deepened relationships across the state, bringing together more than 400 stakeholders for our first California Youth Justice Summit. We launched a new Operations and Program Support Division and expanded the role of the Health Policy Division through our Educational Health agenda. Across all of this work, we ensured that OYCR’s technical assistance efforts remained sustainable, effective, and grounded in evidence.

This report reflects the progress we’ve made, the momentum we’re building, and the future we’re shaping across California.

JUDGE KATHERINE LUCERO (RET.), DIRECTOR

Office of Youth and Community Restoration

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List of Acronyms

AB	Assembly Bill	NCN	National Compadres Network
BSCC	Board of State and Community Corrections	PWA	Public Works Alliance
CalHHS	California Health and Human Services	OYCR	Office of Youth and Community Restoration
CBO	Community-Based Organization	RFA	Request for Applications
CCC	California Conservation Corps	RFP	Request for Proposals
CM3	Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement	SACJJDP	State Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention
CTFC	California Tribal Families Coalition	SB	Senate Bill
DJJ	Division of Juvenile Justice	SC&E	Systems Change & Equity
EGI	Ending Girls' Incarceration	SYTF	Secure Youth Treatment Facility
HPD	Health Policy Division	TA	Technical Assistance
JJDPA	Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act	UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
JJRBG	Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant	YAB	Youth Advisory Board
LARNB	Los Angeles Room and Board	YBOR	Youth Bill of Rights
LRP	Less Restrictive Program	YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
		YJA	Youth Justice Action

Building Pathways to Justice and Lasting Impact

2024 marks another year of significant progress in our state’s work to transform the youth justice system. The Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), working alongside county and state partners, community organizations, and advocates, guided California in its first full year of providing young people with supportive, healing-centered care close to home.

Our Mission
OYCR promotes trauma-responsive, culturally informed, gender-honoring, and developmentally appropriate services for youth involved in the justice system that support the youths’ successful transition into adulthood.

Our Vision
OYCR envisions a youth justice system framed by accountability and healing rather than punishment, driven by on-the-ground advocates, researchers, and probation departments, alongside policy, funding, and practice changes that work together to create meaningful change.

While juvenile justice reform in California has been an ongoing effort for decades, this journey took a major step forward in October 2020, when the State passed [Senate Bill \(SB\) 823](#) (Chapter 337, Statutes of 2020). This law closed the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), prohibiting further commitment of wards to DJJ from July 1, 2021, and created OYCR. As the first state office solely dedicated to youth justice work, we are guided by a clear mission and vision that inform every effort we undertake.

In 2023, we helped successfully transition 410 young people from statewide DJJ facilities and worked to prepare our counties to better support them, laying the foundation for lasting systems change. In 2024, our focus has been on strengthening this foundation—expanding our technical assistance (TA), advancing key initiatives, and ensuring the sustainability of county and community progress for years to come.



Our Approach

OYCR collaborates across divisions and with external stakeholders to build community capacity, limit the transfer of young people into the adult system, expand access to education and careers, address disparities, and enhance data transparency—ultimately ensuring that the holistic well-being of young people who are systems-involved remains centered and unaffected by future political shifts.

Key to this work are the often-unseen efforts that drive much of our progress towards system change, such as building trusting relationships and providing TA. While these activities may not always be immediately visible, their impact becomes clear when reflecting on how far we’ve come and recognizing what wouldn’t have been possible without them.

TA serves as a cornerstone of our efforts to support counties and community partners, spanning across OYCR divisions and empowering organizations with the tools and expertise they need to strengthen their work with young people. Through training, guidance, and resource-sharing, we help build capacity and foster connections that extend beyond individual projects.

In 2024, OYCR responded to a total of 168 TA requests—165 direct requests and three capacity-building requests—more than doubling the 70 TA

requests addressed in 2023. This growth reflects both the rising demand for assistance and our dedication to meeting those needs. We provided TA to 39 of California’s 58 counties, with requests spanning a wide range of topics, including education, housing, reentry supports, and funding guidance. A more detailed breakdown of TA request types and county participation can be found in the Appendix.

The following sections of this report delve into the more concrete initiatives and progress shaping the future of California’s youth justice system, all driven by our steadfast commitment to our mission, vision, and approach. However, it’s important to recognize that the work happening behind the scenes, alongside the efforts of many other organizations, as well as broader advocacy, play a vital role in driving meaningful reform and creating new opportunities for young people statewide.

“You need a village in order to succeed. You can’t do it by yourself. We can’t work in silos... We hear that all the time, but *it really does take a village.*”

—Krystall Rollins, Former OYCR Chief of County Coordination



Youth Alliance

Centering Youth

The young people who are systems-involved are at the heart of our work, guiding the initiatives OYCR prioritizes each year. Beyond leading youth-focused efforts, we actively provide opportunities for young people to share their perspectives and feedback, understanding that their involvement is essential to ensuring services, resources, and programs contribute effectively to their rehabilitation and success. By equipping youth and young adults with the right tools and opportunities, we help them thrive, fostering stronger, more resilient communities and contributing to reduced recidivism rates.

As we reflect on the progress made in 2024, we remain committed to putting young people at the forefront, and that starts with the new Youth Advisory Board.



SPOTLIGHT

Youth Advisory Board

OYCR’s Youth Advisory Board (YAB) was formally launched in October 2024 to provide young people with a direct platform to share their experiences, highlight gaps in support, and influence the policies and practices that affect their lives.

As written by the members themselves...

Mission

The Youth Advisory Board works to empower young people and facilitate their growth by creating spaces of respect and trust to allow all individuals to engage and collaborate on important policies and projects. We aim to bridge the gap amongst counties and amongst youth and young adults so they can connect with, uplift,

and advocate for one another. We build partnerships with communities and systems to transform systems of harm and failures into networks of care and success.

Vision

To work towards the abolition of the carceral system by providing alternatives to incarceration that set young people up for success and creating real solutions and

opportunities for youth where incarceration is not a reality. We aim to decrease incarceration rates by 50% over the next 5 years by centering and amplifying youth voices to facilitate conversations that will turn their experiences into expertise and their expertise into sustainable solutions for all.

Values

Integrity, Innovation, Respect, Empowerment, Empathy

“I feel tremendously proud of my team and very thankful for the opportunity. I feel like the fact that people come and want to listen and learn from the lived experience that we have is very humbling.”

—Juan, Youth Advisory Board Member



Since its inception, the YAB has been deeply engaged in OYCR’s work, meeting weekly to discuss issues that directly affect young people in the youth justice system, with one public meeting on the third Monday of each month. In 2024, the YAB played a critical role in co-authoring a state report with The Social Changery and led two full days of sessions at OYCR’s first California Youth Justice Summit, where the members shared their insights and sparked conversations with a wide range of stakeholders. More details and photos from the transformative Summit are featured throughout this annual report.

Additionally, the YAB successfully recruited new members, broadening the diversity of voices participating in their work, and trained OYCR staff on best practices for engaging with young people.

The YAB represents a unique achievement for OYCR and California. A model of youth-centered advocacy, it gives young people a direct channel to influence decision-making processes. This initiative is critical not only because it amplifies young people’s voices, but also because it helps shift the youth justice system to be more responsive and accountable to the needs of the young people it serves.

You can learn more about the YAB—and meet its members—[on their webpage](#).



YAB logo, designed by YAB member Juan

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD



Marco



Mikaela



Mikey



Nathan



Peyton



Reid



Rosaline



SaVaun



Tony



Victoria

Daisy, Rony, and Juan not pictured

Our Ombudsperson Division plays a critical role in supporting young people in California’s youth justice system. Established by [SB 823](#), it is the first statewide Ombudsperson office for youth incarcerated in facilities across California. It consists of one Ombudsperson, Chief of the Ombudsperson Division, and four liaisons—independent problem-solvers who investigate complaints and work to resolve issues for youth in facilities, ensuring their rights are upheld.

One of the key accomplishments of the Ombudsperson Division in 2024 was the widespread dissemination of the **Youth Bill of Rights (YBOR)** materials, a resource created through [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 2417](#) and made youth-friendly by OYCR in 2023. In 2024, the Division ensured these materials were widely accessible across the state—posting

The Ombudsperson Division conducted mandated **visits** to 132 facilities located across 62 sites in 2024, which provided an opportunity to engage directly with young people in the facilities and share the Division's mission. These visits were crucial in expanding awareness and trust, both with staff at the facilities and with youth. Additionally, staff completed 22 investigative visits to facilities, apart from the mandated visits, aimed at addressing urgent or egregious concerns. The increase in complaints received is 101 more than in 2023, which reflects a growing awareness of the

**Received 296
new complaints,**
including 173 from
youth and 123 from
non-youth sources
such as parents,
attorneys, and staff;

Conducted 84 site visits, of which 62 were mandated annual visits and 22 were investigative;

**Fielded 2,490
helpline calls (in-
and out-bound);**

Delivered
8 presentations
on the complaint
process to various
stakeholders.

These efforts reflect the Division's ongoing commitment to protecting the rights of young people as outlined in the YBOR—ensuring their voices are heard,

[illegible]

If you need to file a complaint or request information from OYCR's Ombudsperson Division, please visit the [Ombudsperson website page](#) for more details and contact information.



Health Policy Division

The Health Policy Division (HPD) has been instrumental in addressing the complex health needs of young people who are involved in the youth justice system, with a particular focus on behavioral health in 2024. As the HPD expanded, the team strengthened its ability to deliver training, TA, and resources to probation departments, community-based organizations (CBOs), and other partners. These efforts ensure stakeholders can effectively implement statewide initiatives to benefit young people who are systems-involved.

The HPD expanded its TA efforts across the **statewide behavioral health reform initiatives** CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal), BH-CONNECT (Behavioral Health Transformation, Behavioral Health Community-Based Organized Networks of Equitable Care and Treatment), and CYBHI (Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative). These initiatives, led by the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) and its departments, aim to improve access, equity, and outcomes for vulnerable young people. They uphold public safety while prioritizing the well-being of youth and young adults, including those involved in the justice system.

The HPD also provides **TA for specialized programs** that address a range of specific needs, including interventions for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, prevention strategies for substance use disorders, supportive services for LGBTQ+ youth, and family engagement initiatives. The HPD has guided the use of interactive journals in rehabilitation, promoted best practices

for treating and supervising young people who have committed sexual offenses, and emphasized the importance of therapeutic environments in rehabilitation.

Officially launched in April 2024, another of the HPD’s most significant ongoing accomplishments has been the **California Juvenile Justice Compendium and Toolkit**. This resource provides stakeholders—including probation officers, behavioral health professionals, and community organizations—with research-backed practices to enhance the holistic health of young people involved in the youth justice system. As a living resource, it will continue to evolve based on emerging research and community needs, ensuring more effective and rehabilitative youth justice practices and support systems.

OYCR will lead the project’s training and TA phase, helping counties adopt and sustain the approaches outlined in the toolkit.

“It’s important to talk about...the real life, human needs of individuals who are experiencing the system, and how so often the environment is the initial cause of the trigger for involvement.”

—Kelly Rain Collin, Ed.M.,
Healthy Minds Consulting
Founder and Director



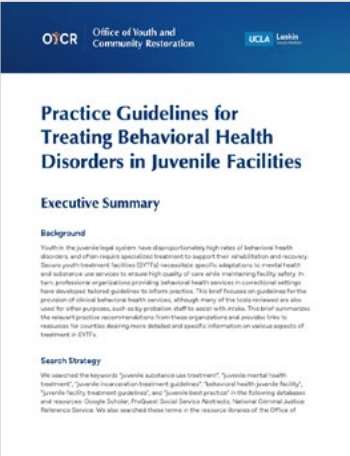
Everything OYCR does is rooted both in research and ongoing commitment to system improvements for youth and young adults across the justice system, ensuring that our programs and reforms are consistently informed by evidence and evolve to meet changing needs. The HPD plays a critical role in applying existing research and advancing our understanding of effective physical and behavioral health strategies aimed at reducing symptoms, supporting overall wellness, and promoting healthy living for young people involved in the justice system.

A key partner in building this evidence base is the **University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)**, which introduced the **Stepping Home Model** in 2023 to assist youth transitioning from confinement to independence. This model provides a structured framework to guide young people from SYTFs to Less Restrictive Programs

(LRPs), allowing for a gradual reintegration into their communities as they meet key milestones. These LRPs might take the shape of halfway houses, camps, ranches, or community residential or non-residential service programs.

Evidence shows that programs like LRPs, which connect youth and young adults to their families and communities, decrease recidivism significantly. In one study, youth diverted to community-based programs had a 37% lower recidivism rate than their peers in secure confinement.¹

UCLA researchers have built upon the Stepping Home Model with a series of informational briefs in 2024, designed to help the field implement the model and other research-backed approaches. The briefs cover critical topics such as “[Practice Guidelines for Treating Behavioral Health Disorders in SYTFs and Other Facilities](#),” “[Less Restrictive Programs: Considerations and Possibilities](#),” “[Trauma-Informed Care](#),” “[Reentry](#),” “[Credible Messengers](#),” and “[Restorative Justice](#).” These efforts aim to ensure young people successfully return home without county oversight and are prepared for long-term stability.



California Juvenile Justice Compendium and Toolkit Timeline of Progress

DEVELOPMENT

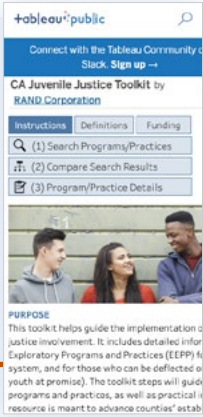
Developed by the RAND Corporation in partnership with the Council on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health, the toolkit compiles research-backed practices and programs to support young people who are systems-involved.

2023

PUBLIC LAUNCH

Now publicly available, [this searchable resource](#) provides stakeholders with evidence-based strategies to improve outcomes for youth and young adults.

2024



IMPLEMENTATION

OYCR will lead the project’s training and TA phase, helping counties adopt and sustain the approaches outlined in the toolkit.

2025

Educational Health Initiatives

Many of this year’s key Educational Health initiatives are extensions of those we celebrated in 2023, further demonstrating how OYCR is building on existing projects and relationships to provide ongoing support and achieve lasting benefits for more young people and communities. Success in supporting young people who are systems-involved depends on a consistent, comprehensive approach to health, with advancing educational opportunities for young people as a critical focus.

In 2024, the Education Team continued its work to ensure that every young person in the youth justice system has access to multiple pathways to achieve their post-secondary goals. Each month, expert organizers presented a wide range of topics through the **Education Advisory Committee**. In December, a new [Educational Health Website Module](#) replaced the previous SharePoint site, becoming the most comprehensive resource for juvenile court school educators and stakeholders with essential tools they need to better support their students.

The Education Team has made significant progress in **literacy intervention** this year as well, particularly with the launch of a 30-day pilot program targeted at students in pre-adjudicated detention. This program was specifically designed to aid young people with IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) and English

learners, addressing the unique challenges that these groups face in accessing educational resources. The success of this initiative highlights OYCR’s commitment to providing opportunities and resources to bright, capable young people who have been historically underserved, ensuring they have the tools they need to succeed outside of the system.

Additionally, the passage of California’s [AB 2176](#) in September marked a significant milestone, granting OYCR enhanced authority to drive transformative change for young people in the youth justice system. This new legislation will strengthen the Education Team’s ability to implement more comprehensive initiatives and expand its TA efforts in 2025, building a more robust and responsive educational framework for youth and young adults across the state.

Left to Right: State SELPA Alternative Dispute Resolution Conference; “Serving Justice-Involved Youth in California Health Initiatives” Workshop for Los Angeles CBOs; California Youth Justice Summit; PEP-CPOC-OYCR Forum



Collaboration and Partnerships

Neither OYCR’s work nor any shifts of the California youth justice system towards a health and healing approach would be possible without collaboration and input from a wide range of stakeholders.

Our collective ability to make progress is rooted in the partnerships we foster with a wide range of organizations and individuals who impact the lives of young people and share our commitment to creating a more equitable, youth-centered justice system. As OYCR staff continues to reach and engage new audiences, we’re able to broaden the network of stakeholders dedicated to improving outcomes for young people and communities. The following section highlights key partnerships and initiatives that have bolstered OYCR’s work in 2024 and will remain essential to our mission in the years ahead.

“When children are making their way through the system, they come in contact with many different stakeholders, teachers, counselors, social workers, therapists, [probation officers], judges, prosecutors, so the larger the collaboration, the better for youth success.”
—Anthony Brinkley (right), formerly involved in the youth justice system, mentor, gang intervention specialist, and public defender





SPOTLIGHT

California Youth Justice Summit

The inaugural **California Youth Justice Summit**, held in November 2024, brought together over 400 youth justice system partners—including educators, tribal representatives, probation officers, mental health professionals, judges, and more—to explore how to create a more equitable, community-centered approach to youth justice. With four distinct session tracks on Youth Voice, Behavioral Health, Educational Health, and Racial Equity, the Summit offered a dynamic platform for these diverse participants to break down silos and exchange insights, share best practices, and collaborate on shaping a future that prioritizes youth well-being and systemic transformation.

Through these sessions, the Summit not only reinforced OYCR’s role as a key convener and partner but, more importantly, reaffirmed the collective commitment to transforming youth justice in California and strengthened an interconnected network of advocates dedicated to this mission.



Building Networks for Greater Impact

Bringing diverse stakeholders together has been essential to strengthening our work and expanding the reach of the still-new healing-centered approach to youth justice. In 2024, beyond hosting the California Youth Justice Summit, OYCR facilitated several other important networks focused on advancing young people’s well-being, fostering meaningful connections and conversations.

Convened four times in 2024, the **Child Welfare Council Youth Justice Subcommittee** has become a space for ongoing discussions on critical issues affecting young people in the youth justice system. Public meetings like this one are essential for promoting transparency, accountability, and open dialogue, ensuring that the voices of diverse stakeholders are central to shaping the conversation around youth justice reform.

The **State Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (SACJJDP)**, too, plays an important role in influencing state policies, particularly through its oversight of Title II federal funds and with members appointed directly by the Governor. In 2024, OYCR facilitated the committee’s first meeting, during which leadership was elected, roles were defined, and key initiatives were reviewed. The SACJJDP will be in full swing in 2025, serving as a significant driver of long-term reform at the state level.

Building on the success of the 2023 launch of our **Youth Justice Action (YJA) webinar series**, OYCR has continued to offer webinars as another major tool for delivering TA, sharing knowledge, and engaging a diverse range of stakeholders.

The YJA webinar series has served as a platform for sharing research, best practices, and innovative strategies to improve outcomes for young people who are systems-involved.

“I’m so proud of our state. I’m so proud of all the stakeholders here. I think it’s the energy, it’s the radiance, it’s the warmth, it’s the compassion that we have in the state of California that is really leading the entire United States in terms of this movement.”

—**Dr. Renford Reese (right)**,
Prison Education Project Founder and Cal
Poly Pomona Professor of Political Science



Over the course of the year, OYCR hosted nine YJA webinars covering a range of critical topics relevant to practitioners, policymakers, and community members within the youth justice field. These sessions featured leading experts, researchers, and credible messengers—individuals with lived experience in the youth justice system—who provided valuable insights and practical strategies tailored to the needs of the audience.

Some of the topics covered by the YJA webinars included:

- 1

Race, Adolescence, and the Criminalization of Youth of Color

Examining systemic disparities and the impact of racial biases in the youth justice system
- 2

Keeping Youth at the Center: Principles and Strategies for Engaging Young People

Highlighting youth-centered approaches to justice reform and system transformation
- 3

Advancing Diversion: Research, Expansion, and Innovations in Practice

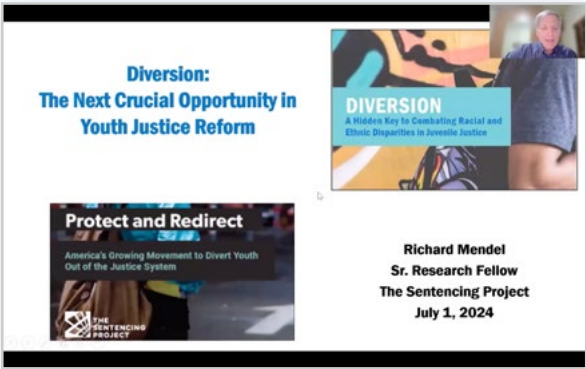
Showcasing research-driven strategies for expanding and improving diversion programs
- 4

Healing through Understanding Trauma: Brain Science and Transformation

Discussing the intersection of trauma, neuroscience, and behavioral transformation in systems-involved youth

With over 2,000 registrants from 54 of the state’s 58 counties, this year’s strong turnout highlights a wide-spread interest in improving youth justice practices. The YJA webinars are designed to be broadly accessible, allowing learning opportunities for as many people as possible. On average, more than half of registrants (55%) attended the webinars, surpassing both the government standard of 30% and the industry benchmark of 30–50%. This above-average engagement indicates that OYCR is not only reaching stakeholders but also that the content is resonating with them, keeping them engaged and participating.

Additionally, many of the YJA webinars qualify for STC (Standards and Training for Corrections) and MCLE (Minimum Continuing Legal Education) credits, making them even more valuable to professionals in the field. For those unable to attend live sessions, recordings are available under the “Resources” tab of the [OYCR website](#).



For the first time, OYCR hosted a three-part **webinar series for the Chief Probation Officers of California** in 2024, focusing on probation chiefs’ roles in caring for young people and fostering positive behavior change. With over 300 registrants, the series attracted strong interest from those in probation and law enforcement. Sessions included “A Coaching Model for Change,” “Roca’s Rewire CBT: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Cognitive Behavior Therapy Skill-Building for Youth,” and “Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Youth Justice”—each providing information on trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate approaches for youth in secure care.

Recognizing the essential role that probation plays in shaping outcomes for young people, OYCR is committed to engaging this critical audience and providing meaningful support. County probation officers have been key partners in our work at OYCR from the start, serving as a primary connection between young people and the justice system, whether in facilities or during reentry. Their guidance and day-to-day interactions can significantly influence a young person’s path toward stability and success. To strengthen this partnership, we continue to tailor resources and outreach to probation audiences, ensuring they are equipped to foster meaningful, youth-centered systems change.

Systems Change and Equity Division

In 2024, OYCR deepened our commitment to collaboration and equity via the Systems Change and Equity (SC&E) Division. This Division enhances OYCR’s ability to provide targeted TA, supporting policy and practice improvements that reduce disparities for youth of color and other marginalized groups in the justice system—particularly through direct engagement with local stakeholders.

Throughout the year, the SC&E Division...

Conducted 31 site visits and in-person meetings, including visits to juvenile halls, CBOs, LRPs, and meetings with judges and probation leaders;

Held 77 virtual meetings with CBOs and probation agencies to foster collaboration and strengthen local efforts toward a more just and equitable system for young people;

Awarded more than \$20 million to probation departments, CBOs, and LRPs across 21 counties.

Ending Girls’ Incarceration

A key partnership within the SC&E Division is with the Vera Institute of Justice, which previously launched the **Ending Girls’ Incarceration (EGI)** initiative, a program designed to reduce the incarceration of female-identifying and gender-expansive youth by expanding alternative responses that meet their unique needs. Closing these gaps is critical—not only to more effectively help these young people but to build a more responsive and equitable justice system.

OYCR partnered with Vera in 2023 to select four California counties—Imperial, San Diego, Los Angeles, and Sacramento—through a competitive Request for Applications (RFA) process to join the **EGI California Action Network**. Each county, receiving \$125,000 annually for three years, has spent the last year identifying critical service gaps and unmet needs that could significantly reduce girls’ incarceration.

The EGI California Action Network’s work has led to several notable outcomes in 2024:

- Imperial County reached 0 girls in detention and has kept the number down through warm handoffs from probation to Rite Track, a CBO that offers gender-specific, community-based diversion programming.
- All participating counties submitted data to Vera, enabling a comprehensive analysis across system decision points. This analysis highlights the pathways that lead girls and gender-expansive youth into the justice system and, critically, where interventions can help divert them out.
- These insights directly informed a new RFA process in each county, focused on expanding diversion opportunities for girls and gender-expansive youth starting in Year 2 and continuing into Year 3 of the initiative.

In October 2024, another RFA was released, offering up to \$1 million in funding for CBOs to provide programming tailored to girls and gender-expansive youth in each county. Moving into 2025, the SC&E Division remains focused on ensuring the successful implementation of these programs while exploring further efforts to end girls’ incarceration.

Less Restrictive Programs

In 2024, the Division reinforced its commitment to supporting youth transitioning from SYTFs to less restrictive community living options through the **LRP grant initiative**, which encourages county probation departments and community partners to innovate and expand services.

Each grant, ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000 per youth in the county, funds a 24-month program offering strategically targeted services. These grants complement counties’ existing resources and encourage innovative approaches, enabling additional services and items that would not typically be covered by general county funds, ultimately improving outcomes for young people—and communities—as they transition back.

In 2024, using LRP grant funds, 20 young people transitioned from SYTFs into LRPs, and 16 were prepared to step down into less restrictive settings while in their SYTF facility. The counties with an active agreement under the LRP grant initiative in 2024 include El Dorado, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Riverside, Sacramento, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, and Stanislaus. The Appendix details the allocation of funds to specific LRPs within each county.

Separate from the LRP grant initiative, one standout LRP model in California that the Division funds directly is **Los Angeles Room and Board (LARNB)**, which received \$500,000 in October of 2024. Located near UCLA and other universities, LARNB provides unique opportunities for academic advancement outside of a probation-run setting and is using OYCR funding to develop, evaluate, and implement the pilot Court to College LRP specifically for court-referred, juvenile justice-involved young men of color in Los Angeles County. Through its residential education program, LARNB’s mission is to help California’s community college students achieve their postsecondary education goals by providing affordable transitional housing to prevent homelessness. LARNB promotes persistence, retention, and completion of certificate, associate’s, and bachelor’s degree programs.

Few other LRPs are structured similarly to LARNB, making it a valuable model of a community-based, holistic approach to youth rehabilitation to which we often point other LRPs and CBOs. While CBOs and LRPs serve distinct roles—CBOs can offer a variety of services and support, while LRPs are structured alternatives to incarceration—a CBO might also provide an LRP for young people who are systems-involved, as LARNB does. At the core of all of this work is the understanding that sustainable change in youth justice requires substantial investment in *communities*.

In 2024, the SC&E Division launched a new round of LRP grants, awarding a total of \$15.9 million to 11 counties that submitted proposals designed to:

Implement programs in SYTFs that prepare youth for LRPs and facilitate successful community reintegration;

Transition youth from SYTF placements to community living;

Develop, expand, or adapt community-based care options for youth.



The Opportunity House at Los Angeles Room and Board

Capacity Building Initiative

OYCR is committed to **building the capacity of CBOs**, which are essential for driving lasting, equitable change in youth rehabilitation and community safety. However, many CBOs face logistical and financial challenges due to the growing demand for community-based care and the availability of sustainable funding streams.

In October 2024, the SC&E Division selected eight CBOs to participate in a two-year initiative aimed at enhancing their capacity: Three Sisters Gardens, Ujima Adult and Family Services/Spearitwux, Amelia Ann Adams Whole Life Center, Restore 180, Kindful Restoration, Asian Pacific Islander Reentry through Inclusion, Support & Empowerment (API RISE), Operation New Hope, and Bright Futures for Youth. Serving traditionally underfunded communities in the counties of Kings, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, Siskiyou, Tulare, Nevada, and Yolo, the eight CBOs will receive intensive TA, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, at least three Community of Practice convenings, and \$500,000 each—\$4 million total—to expand their diversion and intervention services and improve outcomes for young people impacted by the system.

What are “Community of Practice Convenings”?

CBOs selected through the Capacity Building Initiative must send teams of three to five staff members, organizational leadership and/or board members to attend at least three in-person Community of Practice Convenings throughout the agreement term. The purpose of the in-person convenings is to foster cross-site learning, build collaboration, and establish a network to adopt best practices. These meetings will include representation from all eight of the awarded CBOs.

Supported by the Sierra Health Foundation, National Center for Youth Law, and Public Works Alliance (PWA)—grantees of the 2023 CBO Capacity Development Grant—the CBOs conducted an initial operational and TA needs assessment and began developing work plans, proposed budgets, and budget justifications in late 2024. The Child Welfare Council’s Capacity Development Workgroup monitors their progress, ensuring the community practitioners have the resources to sustain their work and drive equitable change over the next two years and beyond.

Credible Messengers

Credible messengers—often community leaders with lived experience in the justice system or similar backgrounds to those they serve—play a vital role in building trust and offering mentorship, guidance, and support to systems-involved young people.

Contracted by OYCR through a \$1 million grant, the **Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement (CM3)** spent 2024 documenting and deepening its understanding of credible messenger efforts across California, including hosting five regional round table convenings in coordination with the California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice and other regional partners. These convenings brought together credible messengers in the Central Valley, San Francisco Bay Area, South Bay/Central Coast, San Diego, and Riverside—many for the first time—to share their perspectives, challenges, and focus on advancing their work. Key themes that emerged included the need for comprehensive training, organizational capacity and sustainability support, and improved understanding, respect, and collaboration from system stakeholders.

In addition to the convenings, CM3 provided TA to probation departments in 2024 to strengthen their relationships with CBOs. The SC&E Division intends to expand CM3’s reach in 2025 by offering webinars and developing a California Credible Messenger Learning Community.

Goals for 2025

Looking ahead, the SC&E Division will continue to work closely with community and system partners to address the complex challenges facing youth and young adults in the justice system—making sure reforms are equitable, community-driven, and responsive to those most impacted.

Here is some of what the SC&E Division is excited to work on next year:

The **Restorative Justice Advisory Committee**, formed in 2024, will continue its work by defining and then expanding Restorative Justice approaches for young people involved in the California youth justice system while strengthening victim services statewide.

The National Compadres Network (NCN) led the Racial Equity session track at the 2024 California Youth Justice Summit, sparking interest from counties seeking similar services. In 2025, the SC&E Division will help finalize NCN’s work plan and explore opportunities for collaboration with counties and OYCR staff to integrate **healing-informed practices** into youth justice services.

The **Justice Serving Network**, launched in 2024 through OYCR’s contract with PWA and a partnership between the SC&E and Health Policy Divisions, will expand in 2025 with a second cohort of CBOs. The first cohort of 10 CBOs—3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic, Eden Youth, Homeboy Industries, MILPA, Project Aware, Promesa, Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition, Two Feathers Native American Family Services, Underground Grit, and Young Visionaries Youth Leadership Academy—each received \$200,000 to build capacity to help young people who are justice-involved access Medi-Cal services designed for them, while engaging in shared learning, problem-solving, and peer support.

OYCR, largely through the SC&E Division, will continue our **advocacy for Native youth** to remain within their tribes as per the Indian Child Welfare Act, ensuring culturally appropriate services and engagement with probation departments to honor tribal connections.



“Without healing, I don’t believe there’s transformation, there is no growth. We should be focusing a lot of our attention on just that, helping hurt folks heal.”

—James “J.C.” Cavitt, Cal State Fullerton’s Project Rebound Executive Director



Continuous Learning

At OYCR, each division plays a unique role in advancing our mission. The Operations and Program Support Division and Data and Research Division are essential in ensuring our programs run smoothly, our stakeholders’ needs are met, and that California makes measurable progress toward a youth justice system centered on accountability and healing rather than punishment.

Our commitment to this work is rooted in continuous learning, recognizing that every challenge presents an opportunity to adapt, refine our practices, and drive meaningful, lasting change.

Operations and Program Support Division

OYCR’s new Operations and Program Support Division was established in the summer of 2024 to fill gaps and enhance the Office’s efficiency and impact. The Division oversees key functions that advance a rehabilitative approach to youth justice, particularly in cross-collaborative areas, including the effective delivery of TA, legislative tracking, workforce development expansion for young people, and federal grant administration and compliance monitoring. Through these efforts, the Division strengthens alignment across policies, programs, and funding to further OYCR’s mission of supporting young people involved in the youth justice system.

“We are a facilitator. We’re a connector. We’re a collaborator. It is our job, our charge, to make sure that the community, that probation, that everyone knows who [and what] is available and accessible.”

—Alani Jackson
(center), OYCR
Deputy Director



Workforce development is essential for youth and young adults who are systems-involved, providing critical opportunities they might not otherwise have that enable them to build pathways towards a successful future. For young people in custody or transitioning out of the youth justice system, workforce development programs don’t just offer employment opportunities but the tools and resources needed to achieve long-term success in their communities. Most youth in the justice system have physical, emotional, learning, or other disabilities and needs that must be addressed to support their acquisition of knowledge, skills, and success in adulthood.

To close these gaps, the Department of Rehabilitation and OYCR launched the **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)** in late 2023—a three-year, \$30 million investment to expand educational and vocational services for eligible youth ages 14–25 in secure settings, LRPs, and community placements under probation supervision. The initiative has been a central focus for both the Operations and Program Support Division and OYCR’s Education Team in 2024. By equipping youth with education, workforce opportunities, and essential skills, the YEI aims to break cycles of inequitable access and incarceration.

In February 2024, the Amity Foundation was selected as the master service contractor to support eight interested counties—Contra Costa, Imperial, Kern, Riverside, Sacramento, San Benito, San Mateo, and Solano—in identifying qualified community providers. By the end of 2024, Workforce Navigator contracts were executed with a mix of county offices, offices of education, and probation departments across all eight counties, with initial funding distributed based on each county’s capacity. San Benito County received \$210,000 based on its ability to serve an average of 15 youth per year; the other seven counties received \$600,000 each.

To ensure strong and inclusive implementation of the YEI, Amity also released a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) in November 2024 to gather feedback from experienced CBO providers in half of the counties—Imperial, Kern, Riverside, and San Mateo. This early engagement aimed

to improve the quality of potential partners and services. A formal RFP for those four counties, along with a draft RFP for the remaining counties, is expected in early 2025. Amity will also convene communities of practice to foster shared learning among government and CBO providers.

At the end of 2024, OYCR signed a memorandum of understanding with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to support the transition of young people from SYTFs, LRPs, and Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp into the CCC. This partnership provides career training, paid stipends, housing, and food security at the CCC’s nine residential and 16 non-residential centers statewide, then helps the young people successfully reintegrate from the CCC into their communities.

The Operations and Program Support Division’s **Juvenile Justice Grants and Compliance Monitoring** function is another critical component of OYCR’s ability to support transformative change in youth justice.



California Family Life Center (Programs pictured are not part of the Youth Employment Initiative but reflect the type of workforce development Riverside County is building)

This Division is also responsible for compliance with four core elements of the JJDPA, 34 USC 11133 et. seq.:

1. Deinstitutionalization of status offenders
2. Separation of juveniles from adult inmates
3. Removal of juveniles from adult jails and lockups
4. Addressing racial and ethnic disparities

To certify compliance with these four requirements, the Division is required to inspect over 900 facilities across the state during a three-year period. OYCR has taken over these duties as of July 2024.

By the end of 2024, we assumed responsibility for managing all juvenile justice grants and compliance monitoring under the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), duties that were previously handled by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). These changes, authorized by California legislation including [SB 823](#) and [AB 169](#), represent a significant shift in how resources are allocated to support youth justice reform in the state, allowing OYCR greater control over funding that directly impacts young people.

Specifically, the Operations and Program Support Division is responsible for overseeing the **Title II Federal Grant**, a federally funded program available to all 50 states to support youth justice reform. This includes managing the aforementioned SACJJDP, as well as issuing grants to California CBOs and agencies that apply for funding to implement critical programs and services—like those highlighted throughout the report—that aim to improve outcomes for young people and strengthen communities.

Data and Research Division

The Data and Research Division plays a crucial role in guiding OYCR and the broader justice ecosystem by providing evidence-based insights and advancing data-driven approaches to improve outcomes for young people and communities in California. By collecting, analyzing, and sharing critical data and best practices in data literacy, the Division helps stakeholders identify areas of progress, highlight disparities, and determine how to allocate resources for maximum impact.

The Data and Research Division manages state-funded grants and their reporting requirements.

The state grants that OYCR administers include:

- 1

Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant
(JJRBG; Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 1990–1995)

Continued responsibility — Provides counties with at least \$250,000 in funding to support youth who would have been eligible for DJJ, requiring them to submit comprehensive plans detailing their approach to care and rehabilitation. A comprehensive summary of all 58 counties’ JJRBG plans for 2024, along with individual reports, is available on the [OYCR website](#).
- 2

Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act & Youthful Offender Block Grants
(Welf. & Inst. Code § 1961–1962)

New responsibility in 2024 — Funds county programs for juvenile crime prevention, rehabilitation, and other support, including mental health, education, and vocational training. The most recent submissions and summary reports can be found on the [OYCR website](#).
- 3

Juvenile Reentry Grant
(Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 1980–1984)

New responsibility in 2024 — Supports county probation in supervising and assisting youth reentering communities with housing, employment, education, and behavioral health services. These reports will be published in 2025.

Three major accomplishments in 2024 highlight the Data and Research Division’s influence and success.

- 1

The Division guided counties through the JJRBG process under new [AB 505](#) requirements, which reinforced transparency and community participation in improving youth justice. It provided critical oversight and technical expertise to ensure plans met all criteria without impacting funding.
- 2

The Division hosted two webinars on the **Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System** and other assessment tools, attended by over 120 county representatives. By equipping agencies with better tools to collect and interpret data, the Division reinforced the role of data-driven decision-making in youth rehabilitation, helping counties move beyond compliance to more effective, individualized interventions.
- 3

The Division partnered with the **California Tribal Families Coalition (CTFC)** to conduct the first annual tribal listening sessions and a survey of probation officers, providing a data-informed foundation to address long-standing gaps in justice system support for Native youth. By leading this effort, the Division ensured that the experiences of tribal communities were systematically documented and analyzed, laying the groundwork for targeted improvements. With funding from OYCR, CTFC also began developing training materials and a report, set for publication in 2025, that will further inform data-driven strategies for better serving Native youth and young adults.

2025 will bring several game-changing developments, including the launch of the **OYCR Dashboard**. Developed throughout 2024 by the Data and Research Division, the dashboard is designed to support policy decisions, measure intervention effectiveness, promote transparency, optimize resource allocation, and empower stakeholders. A preliminary dashboard [featuring AB 102 data](#) was posted in 2024, offering a glimpse into how the larger OYCR Dashboard will take shape.

The data required by [AB 102](#) is also available in a [report](#) on the OYCR website—the first report published by the Data and Research Division under the bill signed into law in July 2023. The 2024 report analyzes county submissions from fiscal years 2021–22 and 2022–23 on youth committed to SYTFs, transferred to LRPs, or subject to transfer hearings, establishing a baseline for understanding statewide trends since DJJ realignment. It highlights disparities, identifies service gaps, and tracks progress. These insights will inform TA efforts, particularly in addressing the underrepresentation of female-identifying and Native youth and advancing more equitable, effective interventions.

In July 2024, the signing of [AB 169](#) into law extended this reporting for an additional five years. Beginning in 2025, counties will submit data biannually, and the Division will provide support through updated forms, guidance, and virtual office hours. Insights from these sessions will inform a county-facing resource outlining frequently asked questions, and the first AB 169 report will be published by the end of 2025.

Looking Ahead

A Message from the OYCR Leadership Team

In 2024, OYCR strengthened the infrastructure necessary to make a lasting, transformative impact on California’s youth justice system and the lives of thousands of young people, their families, and their communities.

The Leadership Team, comprising our Director, Deputy Director, Division Chiefs, and subject matter experts, is grateful to all those who dedicated themselves to putting accountability and healing at the forefront of youth justice so that all children, youth, and young adults are given the resources they need to thrive. We are especially heartened by the strides we have made in supporting communities across the state over the past year, all of which was made possible by partnership between us, CalHHS and its departments, CBOs, and system leaders.

The efforts highlighted in this year’s annual report represent just a portion of the ongoing work that is shaping the future of California’s youth justice system. The success of legislation, coupled with committee and workgroup engagement, strategic partnerships with CBOs, and numerous behind-the-scenes efforts, illustrates the power of a collaborative, ongoing, statewide approach to achieving meaningful change for our young people.

As OYCR moves forward, we remain committed to fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, providing hands-on support, and engaging those most involved and impacted by the system. By centering young people in all that we do, we will continue to make progress toward a more just, equitable, and responsive youth justice system—one that reflects the needs and aspirations of the young people it serves.

Appendix

Additional Organizations with Whom OYCR Worked in 2024

1. ACE Overcomers

2. Alianza Coachella Valley

3. Alternative Restorative Communities

4. Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC)

5. Arbor Youth Resource Center

6. Avenidas Health

7. Bay Area Creative

8. Bridge to Treatment

9. California Black Women’s Health Project

10. Community Justice Center

11. California Workforce Development Board

12. California Youth Outreach

13. Clover Agency

14. Community Intervention

15. Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)

16. CASA-Fresno and Madera

17. Centinela Youth Services

18. Davids Harp Foundation

19. Disability Community Resource Center

20. EvoLibri

21. Fitrah

22. Focus Forward

23. Hartnell College Rising Scholars

24. HC2

25. Healing Dialogue and Action (HDA)

26. Health Management Associates

27. Hoops for Justice

28. IEHP Foundation

29. Justice Center

30. Keyz 2 the Future

31. Kids in Konflikt

32. Kings Canyon Unified School District

33. Kings View

34. Impact Justice

35. Inland Empire CBO Alliance for JJCC

36. Lily of the Valley

37. Madera Coalition for Community Justice

Additional Meeting Information

CREDIBLE MESSENGER ROUND TABLE CONVENINGS

Convening Site	Date	# of Participants
Central Valley (held in Stockton)	9/6	25
Central Coast (held in Santa Cruz)	10/18	25
Bay Area (held in Oakland)	11/12	50
Riverside	11/14	50
San Diego	12/9	50
		200

COUNTIES SERVED THROUGH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

1. Alameda

2. Alpine

3. Amador

4. Butte

5. Contra Costa

6. El Dorado

7. Fresno

8. Imperial

9. Kern

10. Kings

11. Los Angeles

12. Madera

13. Marin

14. Mariposa

15. Mendocino

16. Merced

17. Modoc

18. Mono

19. Monterey
20. Napa

21. Nevada

22. Orange

23. Riverside

24. Sacramento

25. San Bernardino

26. San Diego

27. San Francisco

28. San Joaquin

29. San Luis Obispo

30. Santa Clara

31. Santa Cruz

32. Solano

33. Sonoma

34. Stanislaus

35. Tulare

36. Tuolumne

37. Ventura

38. Yolo

OYCR Funding Allocations

ENDING GIRLS’ INCARCERATION

County/Recipient	Total Funding
Imperial County Probation Department	\$125,000
Los Angeles County Probation Department	\$125,000
Sacramento County Probation Department	\$125,000
San Diego County Probation Department	\$125,000

CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

CBO/Recipient and County	Total Funding
Amelia Ann Adams Whole Life Center, San Joaquin County	\$500,000
Asian Pacific Islander Reentry through Inclusion, Support & Empowerment (API RISE), San Bernardino County	\$500,000
Bright Futures for Youth, Nevada County	\$500,000
Kindful Restoration, Riverside/San Bernardino County	\$500,000
Operation New Hope, Riverside/San Bernardino County	\$500,000
Restore 180, Kings/Tulare County	\$500,000
Three Sisters Garden, Yolo County	\$500,000
Ujima Adult and Family Services/Spearitwurx, Siskiyou County	\$500,000

LESS RESTRICTIVE PROGRAM GRANT INITIATIVE

County/Recipient	Total Funding
El Dorado	\$100,000
Fresno	\$2,000,000
Madera	\$1,000,000
Merced	\$1,000,000
Riverside	\$2,000,000
Sacramento	\$2,000,000
San Francisco	\$2,000,000
Santa Clara	\$2,000,000
Solano	\$1,400,000
Sonoma	\$1,400,000
Stanislaus	\$1,000,000

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE WORKFORCE NAVIGATOR CONTRACTS

County/Recipient	Total Funding
Contra Costa	\$600,000
Imperial	\$600,000
Kern	\$600,000
Riverside	\$600,000
Sacramento	\$600,000
San Benito	\$210,000
San Mateo	\$600,000
Solano	\$600,000

Endnote

1. Baglivio, M. T., Wolff, K. T., Jackowski, K., & Greenwald, M. A. (2022). Effectiveness of Youth Diversion Programs: A Propensity Score Matching Approach. American Journal of Public Health. <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2022.306946>