



**State Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Community Investment & System Accountability (CISA) Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 16, 2025
2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Call to Order: Welcome; Roll Call

Chair Dierkhising called the meeting to order and welcomed participants.

The following members were in attendance:

Chairs: Dr. Carly Dierkhising, Andrew Garcia, Members: Carol Biondi, Anthony Ortiz Jr., Mariana Mora, Johny Diaz, Presenter: Russ Degnan (ONH), OYCR Staff: Krystal Lewis-Britton, Christian Lucchesi

Nominate and Vote on Co-Chair

Chair Dierkhising nominated Andrew Garcia to be the co-chair of the Subcommittee. Andrew is the Director of Intervention and Prevention at Reedley Peace Building Initiative. He is also a Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commissioner for Tulare County.

The Subcommittee confirmed his nomination through a vote.

Racap & Approve July 2025 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes. Minutes approved

Grantee Presentation: Operation New Hope

- Operation New Hope is based in San Bernardino County, under the leadership of CEO Russ Degnan, who continues the mission initiated by his father.
- Russ discussed questions such as: Are we truly seeing the outcomes our young people deserve? And if not, we must ask where is the money really going? These are the hard questions we must face as we evaluate the impact of our investments in education, career readiness, and employment programs especially for system-impacted youth.
- Operation New Hope uses an ACE Model which stands for Assessments, Career Readiness, and Employment. It serves as a framework to ensure that young people not only gain access to opportunities but are genuinely prepared to succeed in them. ACE is more than a checklist; it's a commitment to aligning resources, support systems, and accountability around meaningful outcomes. If we're serious about change, then we must use ACE not just to measure progress but to demand it.

- The end goal is long-term workforce integration and self-sufficiency. To achieve this, funding is directed toward partnerships with local colleges and high schools (among other partners), helping young people pursue educational opportunities after incarceration.
- To date, the program has served 5,138 students, with 618 earning their high school diplomas a meaningful step toward long-term career readiness.
- Notably, the program reports a recidivism rate of just 13%, a significant improvement compared to state and national averages and is listed as a promising practice. Evaluations have been done with researchers in Southern CA.
- Beyond education and employment, the initiative includes a Resource Center designed to support not only the youth but also their families addressing broader social and emotional needs that contribute to successful reintegration and reduced reoffending.
- Discussion following the presentation included questions about how to connect grantees across the state, considering partnering grantees up in a mentorship model, how grantees can blend funds, and the importance of having the range of resources available such as the Operation New Hope model.

Discussion of Resources: Overview of Funding

Not discussed – tabled for next meeting

Brainstorm Next Steps

Not discussed – tabled for next meeting

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 21, 2 pm

Public Comment

No public attendees or comments.

Announcements, Call for Agenda Items & Adjourn

Chair Dierkhising called for any final announcements, thanked members and adjourned the meeting at 11:00 am.