



**State Advisory Group on Youth Justice (SAGYJ)
Community Investment & System Accountability (CISA) Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 15, 2026
12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

Chair Dierkhising called the meeting to order.

Present:

Carly Dierkhising (Chair), Andrew Garcia (Co-Chair), Krystal Lewis (OYCR), Carol Biondi, Michelle Guymon, Lucero Noyola, Anthony Ortiz Jr., Christian Lucchesi (OYCR), Protima Pandey (OYCR), Jorja Leap, Matt Cervantes, Tara Layne, Mike Duncan, Mabel Aburto, Adrianna Vasquez, Nico Rosco, Conexión Humanity staff members.

Presentation: FY25 Title II NOFO Updates (Krystal Lewis)

Purpose:

To provide updates regarding California's FY25 Title II Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the continuation of the current three-year plan, budget allocations, and future funding timelines.

Topics Discussed:

California is continuing the existing federally approved three-year Title II plan due to delays in the federal application timeline.

Members discussed annual resubmission requirements and the historical process used to develop statewide Title II priorities.

OYCR representatives explained that no substantial revisions were required this year, allowing the state to submit a continuation memo instead of a completely revised plan.

Discussion occurred regarding terminology and language connected to equity-related initiatives and how California Health and Human Services is approaching federal review processes.

The committee reviewed the projected FY25 Title II funding allocation of approximately \$4.2 million.

Budget categories discussed included planning and administration costs, staffing, training, subgrantee funding, and SAGYJ subcommittee project allocations.

Members discussed future Request for Proposal (RFP) timelines and acknowledged that new funding opportunities cannot move forward until federal approval and fund distribution are completed.

Discussion also included possible streamlining of future funding priorities to create greater statewide impact.

Member Input:

Members asked questions regarding how Title II plans are created, updated, and approved.

Discussion highlighted the importance of periodically reassessing statewide funding priorities based on current youth justice needs.

Members emphasized the importance of accountability, transparency, and ensuring that state and federal youth justice funds are effectively utilized.

Needs Assessment and Grantee Engagement Discussion (Carly Dierkhising)

Purpose:

To discuss ongoing efforts to engage current Title II grantees and gather feedback to improve future collaboration, accountability, and technical assistance efforts.

Topics Discussed:

Members reported challenges obtaining participation from current grantees in needs assessment interviews.

The committee discussed possible reasons for low engagement, including timing issues related to grant closeout periods and concerns about participating in public discussions.

Members considered replacing interviews with shorter anonymous surveys to encourage greater participation.

The possibility of hosting a virtual town hall-style public meeting for grantees was discussed.

Suggestions were made to expand invitations beyond executive leadership to include program staff directly implementing services.

Members discussed incorporating stronger engagement expectations into future RFP language while avoiding punitive or compliance-based framing.

Committee members emphasized that engagement efforts should focus on support, collaboration, and relationship-building.

Member Input:

Members noted that this was the first time the subcommittee had attempted this type of statewide engagement process and acknowledged that adjustments would likely improve participation in the future.

Discussion highlighted the importance of clearly communicating the role of OYCR and the SAGYJ to funded organizations.

Members expressed interest in creating more structured opportunities for grantees to help shape future funding priorities and technical assistance efforts.

Discussion Regarding Los Angeles Youth Facility Concerns

Purpose:

To discuss concerns regarding conditions affecting girls housed in Los Angeles County youth facilities and identify opportunities for future oversight discussions.

Topics Discussed:

Members described worsening conditions for girls housed in Los Angeles County youth facilities.

Concerns included insufficient staffing, lack of female supervision during evening hours, and transportation barriers limiting nonprofit service access.

Members noted that youth moved farther from existing support systems and community resources.

Discussion referenced testimony presented to the Los Angeles Superior Court concerning staffing and safety concerns.

OYCR staff shared that presentations from state and county oversight offices will take place at future SAGYJ meetings.

Members emphasized the need for continued accountability and oversight discussions regarding county facility operations and youth treatment.

Grantee Presentation: Conexión Humanity – Bright Futures Program

Purpose:

To present the structure, goals, services, and outcomes of Conexión Humanity's Bright Futures youth mentoring and after-school support program in San José, California.

Topics Discussed:

Conexión Humanity representatives described the Bright Futures program operating within Yerba Buena High School, Overfelt High School, Bridges Academy, and Freedom Academy.

The program focuses on high-risk and system-impacted youth living in high-priority neighborhoods affected by poverty, gang involvement, trauma, and limited community resources.

Program staff described the Alcanzar, Step Ups, and Step Aheads program levels designed to support middle school and high school youth at different developmental stages.

Youth participate in one-on-one coaching sessions focused on educational, personal, and family goals.

Weekly SPARK curriculum workshops focus on emotional regulation, resilience, social-emotional learning, and executive functioning skills.

The program provides mentorship opportunities through partnerships with mentors who offer guidance, accountability, and long-term support.

Family check-ins help identify barriers including food insecurity, transportation challenges, and emotional support needs.

Staff emphasized the importance of relationship-building, emotional safety, and creating a community environment where youth feel heard and supported.

Representatives shared multiple youth success stories involving reductions in aggression, improved school attendance, gang avoidance, academic improvement, family reconciliation, and increased leadership skills.

One student successfully recovered enough credits to graduate on time after previously being at risk of remaining in high school for an additional year.

Another youth who initially believed he would not live beyond age eighteen ultimately earned a football scholarship and developed long-term educational goals.

Program staff explained that success is measured individually based on each youth's circumstances and growth rather than only academic performance.

Conexión Humanity staff highlighted the importance of mentorship, peer support, and helping youth develop confidence and healthy support systems.

Member Input:

Committee members praised the program's strong relationship-centered approach and its ability to redirect youth away from gang involvement and system contact.

Members discussed the importance of balancing accountability and reporting expectations with the limited staffing capacities of many nonprofit organizations.

Discussion also focused on how community-based organizations define and measure success based on individualized youth progress and engagement.

Adjournment

Chair Dierkhising thanked all participants and presenters for their contributions. The committee discussed continuing conversations regarding accountability, funding priorities, grantee engagement, and youth facility oversight during future meetings. The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting:

Friday, July 17, 2026

Resources Shared

[ConXion Bright Futures Presentation 5-15-26](#)

[FY 25 Title II Updates for CISA](#)

[CISA Agenda 05-15-26](#)