



Office of Youth and
Community Restoration

Child Welfare Council Update: Youth Justice Committee

December 3, 2025

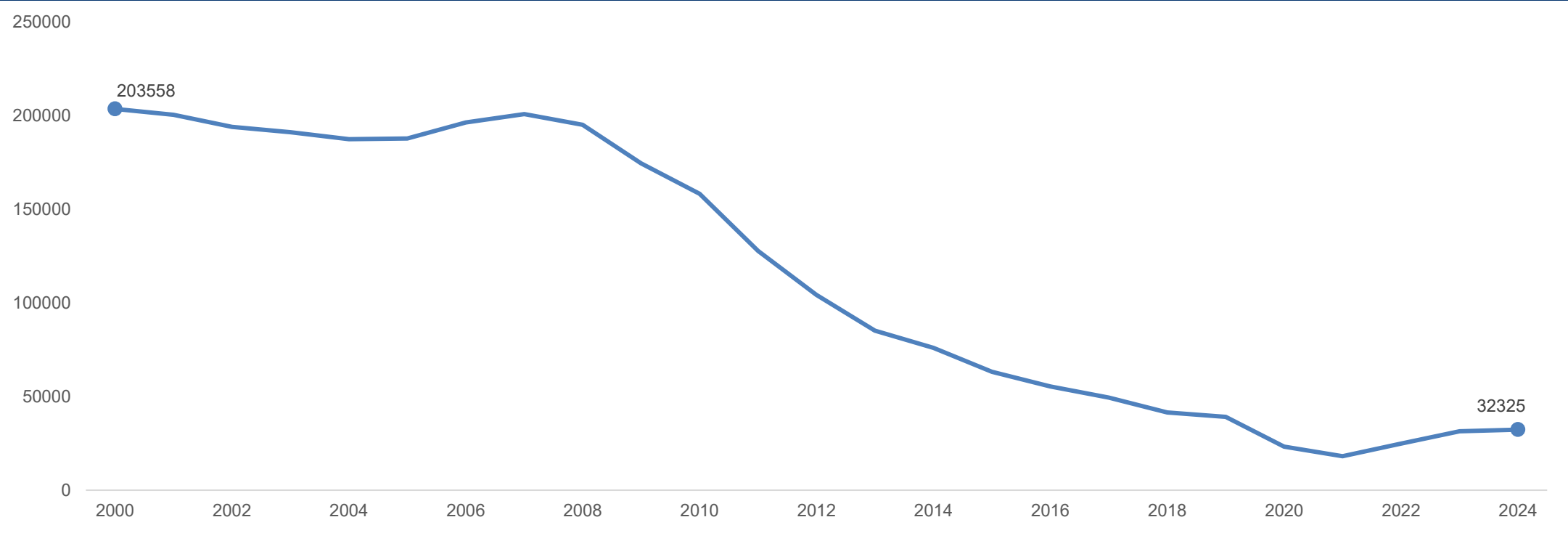


Youth Justice Committee Updates

- **Prior YJC Priority Area Updates**
 - Stepping Home Model Implementation
 - Higher Education
 - Community Based Organization Capacity Building
- **New Priority Areas Identified by the YJC**
 - Diversion
 - Data with a Focus on Outcomes
- **Youth Justice Committee Membership Updates**

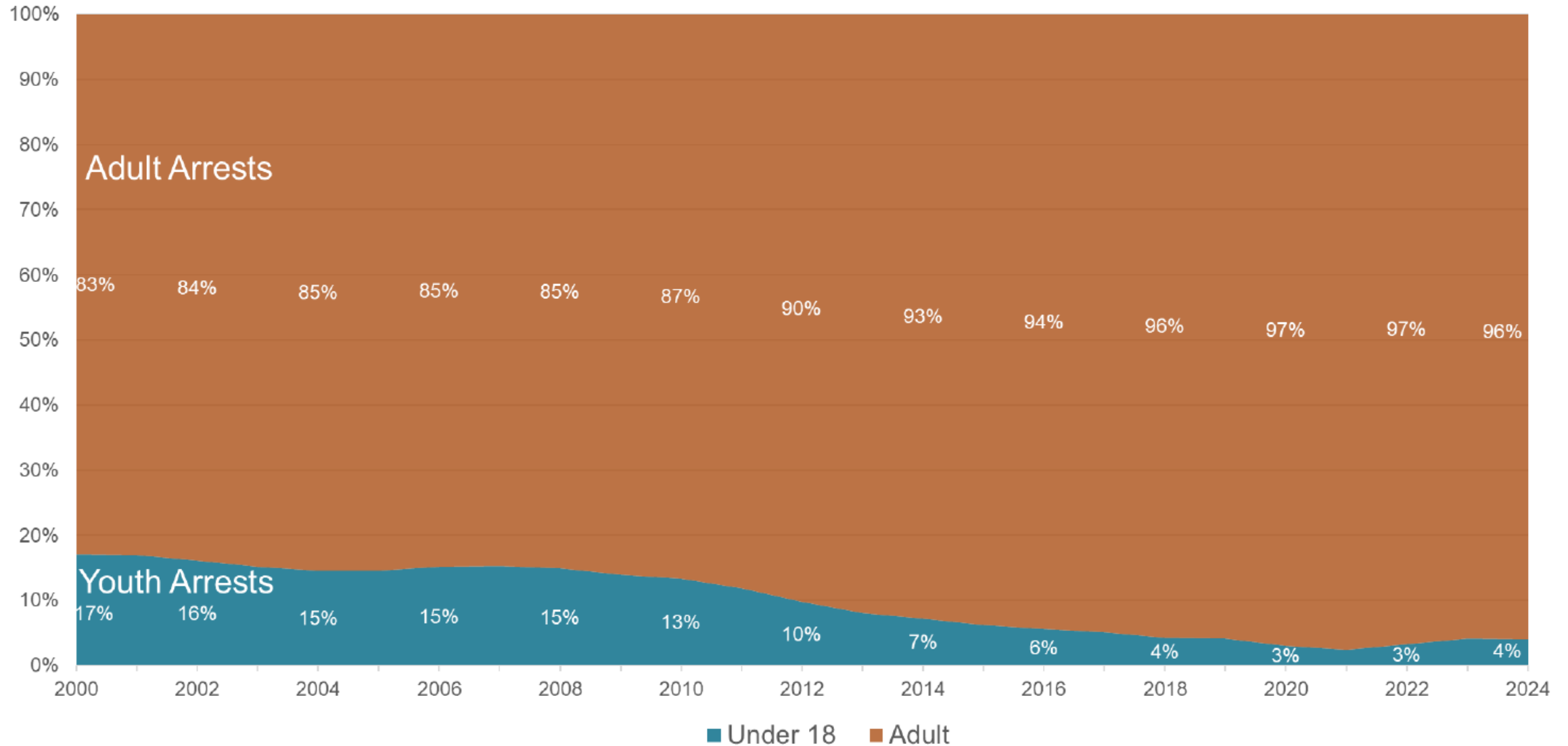


Total Youth Arrests in California, 2000-2024



Source: Department of Justice, 2025; Youth (under 18)

Youth Arrests as a Percentage of Total Arrests in California 2000-2024 (DOJ 2025)



Stepping Home Model Overview

- Establishes a research-based framework, best practices and a series of elements to inform California's policy goals regarding care of youth committed to Secure Youth Treatment Facilities (SYTFs)
- Offers a model for stepping youth out of custody and into the community that will be informed by ongoing partnership with the field and emerging research



Stepping Home Model Continuum and Key Elements

A process and continuum of care

- Begins in SYTF and ends at home and in communities
- Usage of LRPs to increase community engagement
- Goal is to optimize healing and accountability, enhancing community safety
- Key strategies: robust care **at or close to home** to strengthen youth, families, and communities

Key Elements of the Model

- Safe and secure facilities
- Trauma-informed facilities, programs, and staffing
- Comprehensive screening and assessments
- Positive youth development
 - Restorative justice
 - Credible messengers
- Less restrictive programs
- Robust reentry services

Stepping Home Model Implementation

- UCLA is currently conducting a round of in-depth confidential interviews with a small group of counties that represent various geographic regions across the state
- The interviews, which include a diverse group of stakeholders within and outside of probation are designed to gather insight into
 - understanding of and progress with implementing the elements of the Stepping Home Model
 - successes, challenges and support needs at the county level
- A full analysis of findings will be shared with OYCR and used help guide how the agency
 - shares best practices
 - supports counties in ongoing implementation efforts, and
 - evaluates impact



Stepping Home Model Implementation

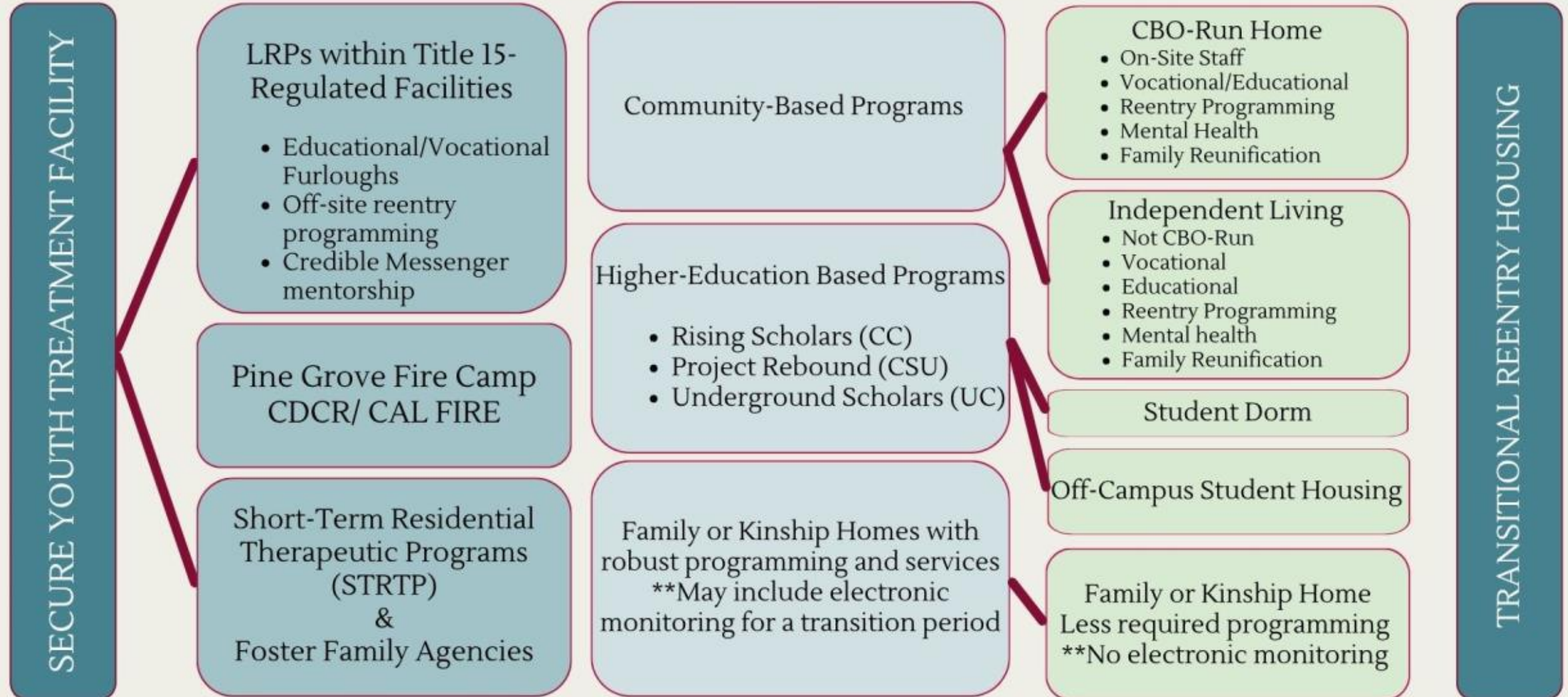
- Emerging themes from interviews with two participating counties
 - Strong alignment with the values that inform the Stepping Home Model
 - Familiarity with the Stepping Home Model itself is limited.
 - Strong collaboration and partnership with community-based organizations.
 - Individualized plans are made for the youth in both counties.
 - Both counties expressed that a lack of access to less restrictive programs (LRPs) is a major challenge.



The Continuum of Less Restrictive Programs

Most Restrictive

Least Restrictive



Less Restrictive Programs (LRPs)



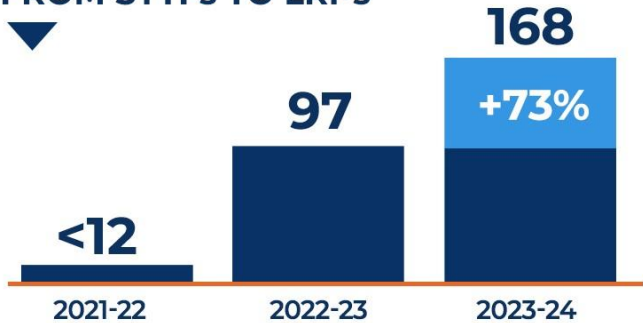
Progress Across the State

Not all counties currently have or use LRPs, though this has been expanding.



LRP USE EXPANDING





TOTAL YOUTH TRANSFERRED
FROM SYTFs TO LRPs



SOURCE: AB102 DATA BY COUNTY (C)

34 counties now operate LRPs
(up from 16) and youth transfers from SYTFs to LRPs are **up by 73% in one year.**

SOURCE: INVENTORY OF STATEWIDE CAPACITY TO SERVE YOUTH RETURNING FROM DJJ (MARCH 2023) AND LESS RESTRICTIVE PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA DIRECTORY (NOVEMBER 2024)

	RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS	These can be community or county based and offer a structured, supervised living environment outside of a secure facility.
	ELECTRONIC MONITORING	Youth live at home independently while being monitored through electronic devices with wraparound teams for high touch support.
	FIRE CAMPS	Youth may be placed in state-run camps such as Pine Grove where they receive firefighter training, or local-run fire camps.
	ENVIRONMENTAL/ VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS	State-run programs like California Conservation Corp (CCC) provide hands-on environmental or job readiness training.

LRPs can either be in a facility (governed by Title 15 standards) or outside of a facility (not governed by Title 15 standards).

Higher Education Update

- Fewer Chutes, More Ladders
 - In partnership with OYCR, Forward Change has produced a comprehensive report focused on preventing juvenile legal involvement and ensuring successful school reentry
- Education Advisory Committee
 - includes representatives from community colleges and universities, county offices of education, SELPA, State Board of Education, probation, advocates, and others
 - Meets regularly with a focus on identifying opportunities, barriers, and strategies to promote higher education and career opportunities for justice-involved youth
- Legislative Briefing



CBO Capacity Building Update

- CBO Capacity Building Workgroup
 - Includes representation from 3 CBOs, 1 philanthropic organizations, 2 probation departments, 2 TA providers and 1 Juvenile Judge
 - Meets regularly to support the capacity development of CBOs by developing materials and deliverables beyond traditional grant funding streams.
- CBO Capacity Building Initiative
 - In partnership with the **Public Works Alliance (PWA)**, **National Center for Youth Law (NCYL)**, and **Sierra Health Foundation (SHF)**, OYCR funds the capacity development of **8** community-based organizations (CBOs) across California
 - To date \$4M has been invested in CBOs through this initiative



Credit: 3 Sisters Garden

CBO Capacity Building Update

- PWA Justice Serving Network (JSN)
 - With **SHF and OYCR**, PWA provides technical assistance to **two cohorts of 10 CBOs** to access Medi-Cal funding through the CalAIM Justice Involved Initiative
 - [Access the JSN Provider Directory](#) – A resource that highlights carefully selected providers with demonstrated success in supporting youth across the justice involvement continuum.
- CBO Website and Resources (in development)- Goals
 1. Host resources to **assist non-OYCR grant funded CBOs** in accessing capacity-building guides and resources
 2. Uplift **sustainable funding methods** for organizations providing services to youth in community and detention
 3. Promote **the success stories of CBOs** offering developmentally-appropriate services throughout the state
 4. Connect **CBOs together to form regional networks** of community-based youth justice services



Credit: Homeboy Industries

New YJC Priority Areas

- In June 2025, YJC identified the following new priority areas
 - **Data with a focus on outcomes**
 - **Diversion**
- Currently the committee is gathering additional research in each area to inform meaningful deliverables, this includes:
 - Report outs on OYCR's work with the Council of State Governments on Diversion
 - Exploring the creation of a Juvenile Justice Data Inventory



Youth Justice Committee Member Updates

Incoming members

Honorable Sharonda Bradford
Los Angeles County Superior Court
Commissioner

Chief Melissa Romero
Butte County Probation

Chief Rachelle Gayton
Yolo County Probation

Departing Members

Chief Dan Prince
Imperial County Probation

Chief Robert Reyes
San Luis Obispo County Probation

Lauren Mendez
Child & Family Policy Institute of California
Youth Engagement Project

New Youth Justice Committee Roster

CO-CHAIRS

Director Katherine Lucero, OYCR

Brooke Harris, Executive Director,
Pacific Juvenile Defender Center

JUDICIAL BRANCH:

Honorable Tilisha Martin

San Diego County Superior Court
Assistant Supervising, Juvenile

Honorable Sharonda Bradford

Los Angeles County Superior Court
Commissioner

PROBATION REPRESENTATION:

Chief Melissa Romero

Butte County Probation

Chief Rachelle Gayton

Yolo County Probation

Chief Jennifer Branning

Lassen County Probation

JUVENILE LAW EXPERTS:

Elizabeth Calvin

Senior Advocate, Human Rights Watch

Frankie Guzman

Director, California Youth Justice Institute
National Center for Youth Law

Virginia Corrigan

Deputy Attorney General , Bureau of Children's Justice
Civil Rights Enforcement Section, CA Department of
Justice

Diana Becton

Contra Costa County District Attorney

TRAUMA RESPONSIVE/THERAPEUTIC CARE EXPERT:

Carly B. Dierkhising, Assistant Professor

School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics, CSULA

EDUCATION EXPERTS

Tyee Griffith

Associate Dean

Educational Partnerships and Associate Faculty,
Social Justice Studies, Norco College

VICTIM VOICE/RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:

Kasey Halcón

Deputy County Executive

Office of the County Executive- Santa Clara County

DIRECT YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM EXPERIENCE/ YOUTH ADVOCATE:

Juan Gamez

Direct Youth Justice System Experience

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Danielle Lowe, Director

Behavioral Health Services, Shields for Families

Rosalinda Vint, Program Director

Woman of Substance, Men of Honor