



**CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE COUNCIL
Youth Justice Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 4, 2025
1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Call to Order, Roll Call, Announcements

Co-Chair Harris convened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Staff provided instructions to committee members for participation and for public comment, then took roll. The following members were present: Co-Chair Brooke Harris, Co-Chair Katherine Lucero, Co-Chair Chief Robert Reyes, Dr. Carly Dierkhising, Virginia Corrigan, Danielle Lowe, Chief Dan Prince, Chief Jennifer Branning, Diana Becton, Elizabeth Calvin

The following members were not present: Frankie Guzman, Juan Gamez, Hon. Tilisha Martin, Rosalinda Vint, Tyee Griffith, Kacey Halcon

Action Item: Approve March 2025 Meeting Minutes

When quorum was achieved, Co-Chair Lucero moved to approve the March 2025 minutes and Co-Chair Reyes seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Co-Chair Updates

Co-Chair Harris then provided an update on behalf of community advocate stakeholders. She first shared that the Keys House, an 8-bed community-based LRP is now open in Los Lomas, Monterey County and accepting referrals for young men 18 to 25 years old. It's modeled after Ramp LA, which is another recently opened house in Los Angeles. She also highlighted that a number of youth justice bills are moving through the legislature and encouraged the committee members to take an active role in researching them.

Co-Chair Lucero shared that OYCR has a lot of upcoming reports being issued throughout the summer and fall, including the mandated 5-year post realignment report by Applied Survey Research and a report compiling over 100 interviews with incarcerated youth called "Please Don't Give up on Us" by Social Changery. She also noted that the Data and Research team is in the process of collecting a lot of data and making themselves available for questions and information through office hours and outreach.

Presentation: Building Higher Education Pathways Report

Arnold Chandler, President of Forward Change presented emerging findings from the second education report his organization developed in collaboration with OYCR, sharing some of the highlights of the report and preparing the committee to give feedback at a later date prior to its publication. He summarized key sections of the report, which focuses on intervening and disrupting pathways from school to system involvement and better understanding predictors and risk factors in these spaces to improve subsequent outcomes.

Presentation: Less Restrictive Programs

OYCR Regional Specialist Hilary Gayhart shared a presentation highlighting how OYCR is helping implement step down options for youth and secure youth treatment facilities or sytf transition into less restrictive programs (LRPs). She also shared encouraging practice from some of the current efforts in the field; what OYCR is learning from the LRP grant initiative and technical assistance; and how it all connects to the broader stepping home framework, which centers on promoting healing and accountability in the transition.

Discussion: Data De-Identification Policies

Cal HHS Attorney Maggie Schuster led a brief discussion about the agencywide HHS data de-identification guidelines that cover OYCR's data analysis. The data de-identification guidelines were developed by the Health and Human Services Agency and are used by all of the departments and offices within the CalHHS umbrella, which includes OYCR and applies with respect to any data that will be made public, including data released in response to public records act requests, data that is published on the OYCR website, public facing presentations, et. Cetera. The guidelines, which are available on the CalHHS website, emphasize a public health lens that prioritizes individual privacy protections, include risk scoring for demographic variables that are intended to prevent re-identification of individuals, particularly vulnerable populations. This includes guidance to refrain from publishing data sets under 11. She noted the possibility of collaborative data sharing or data use agreements for those working with OYCR who need to get to a more granular level.

Presentation: AB102 Report

OYCR Research Data Specialist Melissa Lemus shared an overview of OYCR's analysis of the AB102 data, starting with the data and methods used to complete the analysis as well as some of the data limitations. She went on to highlight some of the report's key findings in the following areas: trends in the use of LRPs, whether or not there was evidence of net widening, racial disparities with respect to youth in the juvenile justice system broadly, and racial disparities specifically with respect to SYFT commitments.

Presentation: Ombuds Report

OYCR Ombudsperson Alisa Hartz and Ahmed Nemr, Chief of the Ombuds Division, provided some updates from the work of the Ombuds Division and noted the forthcoming Ombuds Report to the Legislature was forthcoming and would be published on the OYCR website. She highlighted some of the milestones the Division has achieved around creating a reporting system for the data they are collecting, fully staffing the Division, and continuing to distribute the Youth Bill of Rights materials to youth around the state to raise awareness of their rights while in facilities. She highlighted data about helpline calls- which is the primary source of complaints the Division receives from young people- and tracking of the number of facility visits the Division has collected, including planned annual visits to all facilities and unplanned investigative visits in response to complaints. Finally, she shared data on the complaints process- including closures, and a breakdown of the types of complaints received in 2024. She closed by encouraging members to review the full Ombuds Legislative Report when it is released and available on the OYCR website within the coming weeks.

Public Comment

Co-Chair Harris opened the floor for public comment and staff provided instructions. Laura Ridolfi from the Haywood Burns Institute provided a public comment, with respect to the data

de-identification guidelines. She expressed concern that it is so restrictive that it inhibits the public's ability to see problems at the local level and advocate for just solutions that are going to improve life outcomes for young people, acknowledging that the public was able to do better system accountability work when youth were committed to DJJ because it was possible to could see at the county level whether there were increases or decreases in commitments. The current data policy places advocates, researchers, policymakers and community members who are really trying to improve outcomes for young people in a challenging position because they can't craft evidence-based policies and identify problems and solutions without better access to the data. She also expressed concern that since almost every young person in California's Youth Justice system is a young person of color, and this means stakeholders can't fully measure the racial impact and are stymied in bringing forward Racial Justice Act claims. She noted that she appreciated the overview of the policy and hearing more about the justification for the policy and the desire to prioritize protection for vulnerable populations with a health lens. But ultimately, she stated that in practice the data de-identification policy makes vulnerable youth less visible through the data, undermining that goal.

Adjourn

Co-Chair Harris thanked the members and staff, reminding participants that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, September 3rd 2025. The meeting was adjourned.