



Office of Youth and Community Restoration Summer 2022 Newsletter

Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) Newsletter

- Introducing New OYCR Staff
- OYCR Committee priorities selected
- Request For Proposals (RFPs)
- Current Contracts
- County Plans accepted/posted
- Site visit updates
- Ombudsperson Division updates

Introducing New OYCR Staff

We are growing! OYCR is excited to share that we have several new staff, including key leadership, and have nearly staffed the County Coordination Unit. Please find brief introductions below; we look forward to continued collaboration and team growth.

- Executive Team
 - Alani Jackson – Deputy Director, alani.jackson@chhs.ca.gov
 - Austin Dickman – Special Assistant, Associate Governmental Program Associate (AGPA), austin.dickman@chhs.ca.gov
- Data and Research Division
 - Holly Child – Data and Research Chief, holly.child@chhs.ca.gov
- County Coordination Unit ([Regional Map](#))
 - Krystall Moore – Staff Services Manager II, krystall.moore@chhs.ca.gov
 - Angel Garcia – County Liaison (Specialist), Northern California and Bay Area – Staff Services Manager I (SSM I), angel.garcia@chhs.ca.gov
 - Miguel Garcia – County Liaison (Specialist), Central and Southern California – SSM I, miguel.garcia@chhs.ca.gov
 - Ramon Leija – Southern California County Resource Coordinator, AGPA, ramon.leija@chhs.ca.gov
 - Debra Lewis – Bay Area County Resource Coordinator, AGPA, debra.lewis@chhs.ca.gov
 - Ebony Sylvester-Baptiste – Northern California County Resource Coordinator, AGPA, ebony.sylvesterbaptiste@chhs.ca.gov
- Special Consultants/Retired Annuitants
 - LaRon Dennis, laron.dennis@chhs.ca.gov
 - Les Fujitani, les.fujitani@chhs.ca.gov
 - Mack Jenkins, mack.jenkins@chhs.ca.gov

- Intern
 - Eric Gottlieb, Brown University

OYCR is currently hiring across a few divisions; please share these postings widely with your networks.

- Health Policy Division
 - [Chief Health Policy Officer \(CEA A\) – August 12, 2022](#), final filing date
- Technical Assistance & County Coordination Division
 - [Chief Technical Assistance Officer](#) (CEA A) – August 15, 2022, final filing date

Stay tuned for more OYCR opportunities to come and be sure to subscribe to our OYCR listserv to receive the latest updates! Please email OYCR@chhs.ca.gov to subscribe.

[OYCR Committee of the California Child Welfare Council](#)

The OYCR Committee of the California Child Welfare Council met on March 29, May 4, and June 1, 2022. Agendas and meeting materials are available on the Child Welfare Council [website](#).

- At the March 29th Committee meeting, members expressed their thoughts on potential priority areas for the Committee to address within the next year.
- At the May 4th Committee meeting, three priority topics were selected from among the ideas generated by the Committee, specifically:
 1. Higher education and vocational training;
 2. Community-based organizations; and
 3. Step-downs and alternatives to incarceration.

For each of these topics, the Committee will designate a deliverable that will be drafted by staff and revised and approved by the Committee, with the goal of finalizing all three deliverables by the end of June 2023.

Additionally, Professor Phil Harris of Temple University gave a presentation on Positive Youth Outcomes, and Emily Grichuhin of the Council on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health (CCJBH) provided an update on CCJBH's Juvenile Justice Toolkit and Compendium project.

- The June 1st meeting was focused on the topic of higher education and vocational training. It included presentations by outside experts---Tarik Ross, Jr. [Project Rebound] and Director Bruce Saito [California Conservation Corps]--- and a diverse group of committee members---Chief Dan Prince, attorney Frankie Guzman [National Center for Youth Law], community provider Danielle Lowe [Shields for Families], and the Hon. Robert Leventer [Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County]. The Committee came to a consensus decision that the deliverable for this topic would:
 1. Identify the key principles for delivering higher education and vocational training to court-involved youth;
 2. Identify existing effective programs in California and beyond with implementation strategies; and
 3. Identify barriers to delivery of such programs with recommended solutions.

- The virtual September 14th meeting will focus on community-based organizations and is scheduled for 10:00am – 12:00pm.
- The hybrid December 16th meeting will be held in Sacramento and will focus on Step Downs and alternatives to incarceration – stay tuned for more details.

Current and Upcoming OYCR Contracts

- UCLA Clinical Team
 - OYCR has contracted with an expert team from UCLA to provide a clinical perspective to its initiatives. The team, with deep clinical and research expertise in health and wellness outcomes of court-involved youth, is led by pediatrician, [Dr. Elizabeth Barnert](#), psychiatrist, [Dr. Eraka Bath](#), and professor and researcher in the Department of Social Welfare, [Dr. Laura Abrams](#).
- Communications
 - OYCR has contracted with [We Are Rally](#) to assist OYCR in developing its website, communications materials, and strategic communications plan.
- Education Equity Consultant
 - Evaluations are underway for any proposal(s) received for expert advice, training, and support on restorative and rehabilitative practices in education. Specifically, OYCR seeks assistance in identifying best practices in reducing educational practices that can cause school pushout and justice system involvement, particularly for youth of color; identifying effective educational supports (such as transportation, tutoring, positive youth development activities, family engagement, and mentoring) that allow youth to remain in school and can help them reenter the community; identifying key issues in the current system and opportunities to improve it; and recommending policy and program changes that will allow youth involved in court systems to reach their full potential and meet their goals. The goal is to help OYCR identify upstream solutions to prevent youth entry into the court systems and create pathways for success for all youth in California, notably youth overrepresented in the justice system such as Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other children and youth of color.

Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant County Plans

All counties submitted their Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) plans to OYCR by the deadline of January 1, 2021. During the month of March, the OYCR team reviewed all the plans and met with each county's probation chief or designee and their teams to discuss the plans and identify areas for expansion. OYCR approved all the plans and is in the process of preparing them for publication, along with a summary of the plans, as required by statute. OYCR appreciates the efforts of all counties in developing their plans and the collaborative spirit with which they engaged OYCR staff in the plan meetings.

OYCR County Site Visits

The OYCR team has started conducting informational site visits around the state, prioritizing counties that have Secure Youth Treatment Facilities. In addition to touring the facilities, visits have involved observing programming and meeting with staff and youth. To date, Director Lucero and staff have visited facilities in San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, Fresno, Kern, Monterey, and Sonoma counties, with plans to visit numerous additional facilities through the fall. The OYCR team also meets with Youth Advocates and other community-based or government partners from the counties in order to ensure that we are hearing from a diverse range of stakeholders from each jurisdiction. OYCR appreciates being welcomed into county facilities, important planning conversations, and learning from all whom we are fortunate to connect with about how OYCR can support local needs.

OYCR Ombudsperson Hotline

OYCR is preparing to launch its Ombudsperson Division Hotline. As a first step, OYCR will be mailing each juvenile facility posters and brochures with the toll-free number for posting and distribution, starting with the Secure Youth Treatment Facilities as a priority.

Notable Legislative Updates

The budget process brought a number of items that impact OYCR and its stakeholders.

- Ombudsperson statutory augmentation
 - On June 30, 2022, the Governor signed into law [SB 187](#) which included modifications to the OYCR Ombudsperson Division as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 2200, as well as the addition of sections 2200.2, 2200.5, and 2200.7. These modified and added sections to clarify the Ombudsperson's investigatory authority and add procedural requirements for ombudsperson investigations, among other things. Specifically, they give the Ombudsperson the authority to access agency records, meet and communicate privately with youth, and access and visit local facilities, with 48 hours notice to the facility.
- Annual funding for OYCR technical assistance, grants, and best practices
 - [AB 178](#), Sec. 22, Item 0530-001-0001, appropriates \$10 million each year to OYCR for "providing technical assistance, disseminating best practices, and issuing grants to counties and probation departments for the purpose of transforming the juvenile justice system to improve outcomes for justice involved youth."
- Funding through the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) for county facility improvements
 - [AB 178](#), Sec. 171, provides \$100 million in funds to counties through the BSCC for the renovation, repair, and improvement of county youth facilities. Specifically, "[w]ith a focus on providing therapeutic, youth-centered, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate rehabilitative environments for youth," these funds "shall be used to modernize units and sleeping rooms; create more normative space; add treatment, vocational, educational, recreational, visitation, and family engagement space; and enhance security infrastructure to the extent it promotes creation or expansion of these specified spaces."

- Housing assistance through the BSCC for youth being released from the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
 - [SB 154, Item 5227-124-0001](#), provides \$3 million to the BSCC “to contract with one or more nonprofit organizations to secure and fund up to one year of transitional housing for youth that will be discharged from the Division of Juvenile Justice . . . that are at risk of homelessness.”
- Access to Community College
 - The 2022-2023 budget has been signed by the Governor which includes an additional \$15 million in on-going funds for the Rising Scholars Network. This new money comes in addition to the \$10 million in on-going funds that was previously allocated. The new \$15 million is devoted entirely to building high-quality Rising Scholars programs for juvenile justice-impacted students.
 - [SB 178](#) amends the Budget Act of 2022 (SB 154) to allow the state to continue building a network where detained and supervised youth have access to high-quality community college programming in and outside of facilities with wrap-around supports such as basic needs support, mentoring, outreach, career and college planning, and financial assistance.

DO YOU WANT OYCR NOTIFICATION?

Please email us at OYCR@chhs.ca.gov to register for the OYCR email list.

Thanks for all that you do to serve our youth,



Katherine Lucero, Director

Office of Youth and Community Restoration
California Health and Human Services Agency
katherine.lucero@chhs.ca.gov