



Standards of Excellence for Stepping Home Practices

The model adheres to research-informed practices that are conducive to healing, accountability, and rehabilitation:

Approach must center youth, family, and community needs to transition youth through a continuum of least restrictive placements to home, with the goal of accountability, healing, and rehabilitation, to support the youth's successful reentry to their community.

- Advances equity to eliminate biases that have caused disproportionality and disparities, including among youth of color, youth who are gender expansive, youth who have physical and/or developmental disabilities, and their families in the youth justice system.
- Addresses the needs of the youth, not their offense(s)
- Rooted in principles of adolescent development
- Must be healing, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and therapeutic at all levels, including services and placements that are community based in the neighborhoods where the incarcerated youth come from
- Encourages meaningful ways for youth to take responsibility, make amends with victims and communities, and be leaders in the solutions that support families to help their children

The model prioritizes community safety:

Approach must be grounded in **scientific and community-defined evidence**¹ with personal and system accountability.

- Utilizes healing and trauma informed evidence-based or evidence-informed services, restorative justice programs, interventions, and placements
- Elevates uniformity of assessment tools for judges, probation officers, behavioral health providers, educators and impacted youth, families, and community leaders to work in multi-disciplinary teams to design the best individualized plan that builds a continuum of care for justice-involved youth
- Applies rigorous implementation standards and ongoing assessment to evaluate effectiveness and ensure program fidelity
- Provides the correct level of supervision along the continuum from least restrictive to most restrictive placements

The model is fully resourced in the best interest of the youth and the community:

Approach must be fully resourced in both community and carceral placements, moving toward a transformation of culture and infrastructure for youth to thrive at home in their communities.

- Leverages and supports existing innovation and programming in counties to prevent avoidable detentions.
- Encourages collaboration and partnership across counties, regions, and youth-serving systems, and among impacted youth, families, and communities
- Services must be robust and promote youths' wellness in all placements
- Services should target: Physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health; substance use; gang intervention; accountability; housing; vocational programming; education; and life skills training
- Supports community engagement, including through funding streams for implementing and overseeing Stepping Home and access to supporting youth in carceral placements

Community-defined evidence is “a set of practices that communities have used and determined to yield positive results as determined by community consensus over time and which may or may not have been measured empirically but have reached a level of acceptance by the community” (Martínez, K. (2008). Culturally defined evidence: What is it? And what can it do for Latinas/os? El Boletín Newsletter of the National Latina/o Psychological Association, Fall/Winter.)