



# Child Welfare Council

March 11, 2026



State of California  
Child Welfare Council





# Housekeeping Items

- **Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act:**  
Per the Bagley–Keene Open Meeting Act, CWC Members who are participating remotely must be visible on camera during the open portion of the meeting, unless it is technologically impracticable to do so. If you are unable to be on camera, please indicate so in the Zoom chat.
- Council Members attending via Zoom – Please **rename** yourself as follows: First Last – Member (i.e., Jane Smith – Member)
- Please **remain on mute** when not presenti<sup>n</sup>g or planning to speak.



# Options for Member Comments



## In person

- Members **participating in person**, seek recognition of the Co-Chairs by raising your hand and wait for the microphone before speaking

## Virtual

- Members **participating virtually**, “Raise Hand”

# Options for Public Comment



## In person

- Members of the public **participating in person** may seek to make comments during the Public Comment portion of the meeting by letting one of the meeting staff know

## Virtual

- Members of the public **participating virtually** should raise their hand in Zoom if they want to make a comment during the Public Comment portion of the meeting

# Call to Order

**Justice Laurie Earl, Co-Chair**

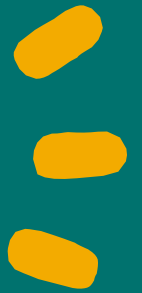
**Secretary Kim Johnson, Co-Chair**



Child Welfare Council Meeting



# ANNOUNCEMENTS





# **PUBLIC COMMENT**

# Options for Public Comment (b)



## In person

- Members of the public **participating in person** may seek to make comments during the Public Comment portion of the meeting by letting one of the meeting staff know

## Virtual

- Members of the public **participating virtually** should raise their hand in Zoom if they want to make a comment during the Public Comment portion of the meeting

# Committee & Task Force Updates

- Permanency Committee: Bob Friend & Hon. Leonard Edwards (Ret.)
- Data Linkage and Information Sharing Committee: Dr. Daniel Webster
- Behavioral Health Committee: Karen Larsen & Pete Weldy
- Prevention and Early Intervention Committee: Kathryn Icenhower & Dana Blackwell
- CSEC Action Team: Leslie Heimov & Kate Walker Brown
- Empowerment Committee: Jevon Wilkes



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# **CSEC Action Team**

## Child Welfare Council Report Out



*A workgroup of the California Child Welfare Council*

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# Intersections of Trauma and Trafficking: Principles of Trauma-informed Care and Practice Applications

Hosted by the CSEC Action Team on January 14 in partnership with the National Center on Child Trafficking (NCCT) and the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) during Human Trafficking Prevention Month. This training grounds participants in foundational trauma concepts, explores how complex trauma intersects with trafficking, and offers practical, trauma-informed strategies for responsive, youth-centered care for young people and families

- **Password: CSECATJan14!**

Watch the Recording!





## Touchpoint with Direct Service Providers

 Wednesday, March 25, 2026 | 1:30 - 4:00 PM PST

This session is designed for connection and collaboration. Hear directly from participants across disciplines as they share what they are seeing on the ground, surface emerging needs, and discuss what's working, and what isn't, in supporting youth. Participants will break out into moderated small groups to share insights, learn from one another, and help shape the CSEC Action Team's plans the rest of the year.

We strongly encourage early registration so we can build breakout rooms thoughtfully and get a sense of who will be attending, your participation helps make these discussions richer and more impactful!

**REGISTER NOW**





# Looking Ahead: 2026 CSEC Action Team Quarterly Meetings

Our 2026 Training Series provides a dedicated space for our multidisciplinary community to **come together, share promising practices, and strengthen the vital work of supporting youth and families impacted by exploitation.** Whether you are a long-time partner or new to the table, your partnership is essential to driving this work forward.

## Upcoming Quarterly Meetings:

- **March 25:** Touchpoint with Direct Service Providers
- **June 17:** Intersection Between Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Labor Trafficking
- **September 16:** Peer-to-Peer Recruitment Training (Pt. 2)
- **December 9:** Caregiver Supports Training (Pt. 1)



*Please note that meeting topics are subject to change.*



## Connect. Collaborate. Learn

**Access Past Trainings & Resources:** Explore our full library of recorded trainings, toolkits, and resources from previous Action Team meetings. See below for some past meeting highlights:

- Intersections of Trauma and Trafficking: **Principles of Trauma-informed Care** and Practice Applications
- Strengthening Courtroom Practices for Youth and Families: **Harm Reduction** in Action
- Understanding and Responding to **Peer-to-Peer Recruitment**
- **Supporting LGBTQIA2S+ Youth** Impacted by CSE





# Consult With the Advisory Board

The CSEC Action Team [Advisory Board](#) is here to help shape policies, strategies, and services that support youth vulnerable to or impacted by CSE. By consulting with the Board, you will gain access to invaluable expertise that can drive meaningful change in your community.

**Here's are a few of the ways the Board can help you:**

- Develop policies and practices to better identify and support youth
- Create effective prevention and intervention strategies
- Improve housing and placement services
- Build impactful training curricula
- Navigate complex casework and provide individualized support and guidance
- And so much more!

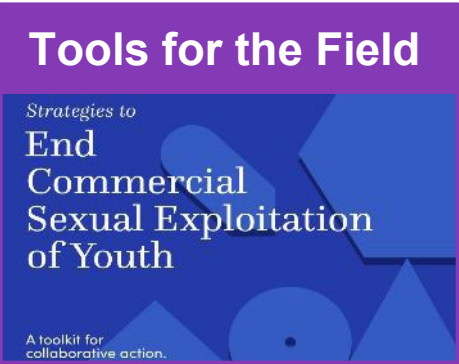
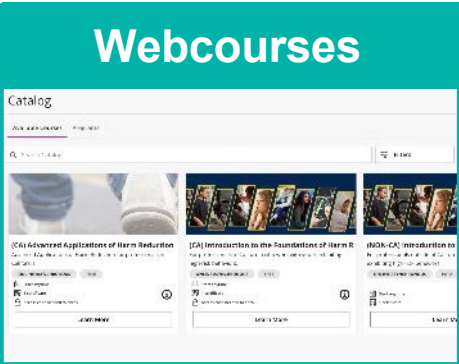


Consult With the Board





# Resources



Guides providers' interactions and interventions using HR principles

Learn practical harm reduction strategies to support children, youth, and families

Working together to stop the sexual exploitation of children

Support leadership of lived experience expertise

Develop collaborative, trauma-informed practices on the ground





## LGBTQIA2S+

**WHAT WE KNOW**

**LGBTQIA2S+ Youth in the Sex Trade**

- In a 2019 study of 193 youth involved in the sex trade in six cities across the U.S., nearly half of all youth were LGBTQIA2S+ (53% of youth were multi-racial, 19% were Hispanic/Latino, and 28% identified with an additional race or ethnic category).  
*71% youth involvement in the sex trade is national level.*
- A study from 2014 to 2015 with 647 homeless youth across ten cities in the U.S. and Canada found that 24% of LGBTQIA2S+ youth were trafficked for sex, compared to 12% of non-LGBTQIA2S+ youth. While LGBTQIA2S+ youth comprised only 16% of sex workers, they comprised 33% of those who were trafficked and 38% of those involved in the sex trade.<sup>1</sup> The study also found that half of the LGBTQIA2S+ youth had engaged in their trade at some point during their lifetimes.<sup>2</sup>

**nearly 50%**  
OF YOUTH IN THE SEX TRADE IDENTIFY AS LGBTQIA2S+

**LGBTQIA2S+ youth are 2x more likely**  
TO BE SEX TRAFFICKED THAN NON-LGBTQIA2S+ YOUTH

Learn practical tools to better support LGBTQIA2S+ youth impacted by CSE



## Boys & Men

**WHAT WE KNOW**

**Prevalence**

While it is difficult to identify prevalence, studies suggest that between 31% and 71% of youth impacted by CSE are male.<sup>1</sup> And while the prevalence data varies, researchers agree that the number of boys and young men impacted by CSE is much greater than many believe. As with females, there are significant racial disparities among those impacted by CSE.

- A 2018 national study of youth involved in the sex trade found that 38% were sex male who (less than 1% of youth total) were trans male.<sup>2</sup>
- Of all male youth, 69% were Black/African American, 19% were white, 7% were multi-racial, 8% were Hispanic/Latino, and 2% more ethnic.<sup>3</sup>
- A national longitudinal study found that the prevalence and frequency of adolescent CSE was significantly higher among boys.

**31% to 71%**  
OF YOUTH IMPACTED BY COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ARE MALE<sup>1</sup>

Learn best practices to identify & support boys and young men impacted by CSE



## Criminalization of Girls

children while they were being exploited?<sup>1</sup> Thirty-five percent had children with their exploiter, and of those who had a custody battle with their exploiter, 62 percent lost custody.<sup>2</sup>

Systemic barriers create many challenges for individuals experiencing trafficking to access prenatal and postnatal care, maintaining relationships with and custody of their children, and navigating parenthood, all of which are exacerbated by criminalization and incarceration.<sup>3</sup> Youth impacted by exploitation report feeling judged by service providers during their pregnancy and while parenting, and experiencing increased surveillance that could lead to legal system contact or removal of their children from their care.<sup>4</sup> Harsh restrictions on contact between incarcerated parents and their children—such as removing babies born to incarcerated parents immediately after birth, strict rules preventing parents from hugging their children during visits, limited visiting hours, or allowingly visit—severely impact the parent-child bond and relationship building, which is detrimental to children's development.<sup>5</sup> Further, the collateral consequences of criminalization—such as limits on employment, housing,

**31%**  
OF EXPLOITED YOUTH (2012-2016) HAD BEEN PREGNANT

**18%**  
HAD EXPERIENCED TWO OR MORE PREGNANCIES

**35%**  
HAD CHILDREN WITH THEIR EXPLOITER

Learn how criminalization affects girls & gender-expansive youth impacted by CSE



# Committee & Task Force Updates:

- Empowerment Committee: Jevon Wilkes



# INFORMATION ITEM

**OFFICE OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY**

**RESTORATION DIVISION OF**

**JUVENILE JUSTICE UPDATE**

Hon. Katherine Lucero (Ret.)



# SB 823 DJJ Realignment Report

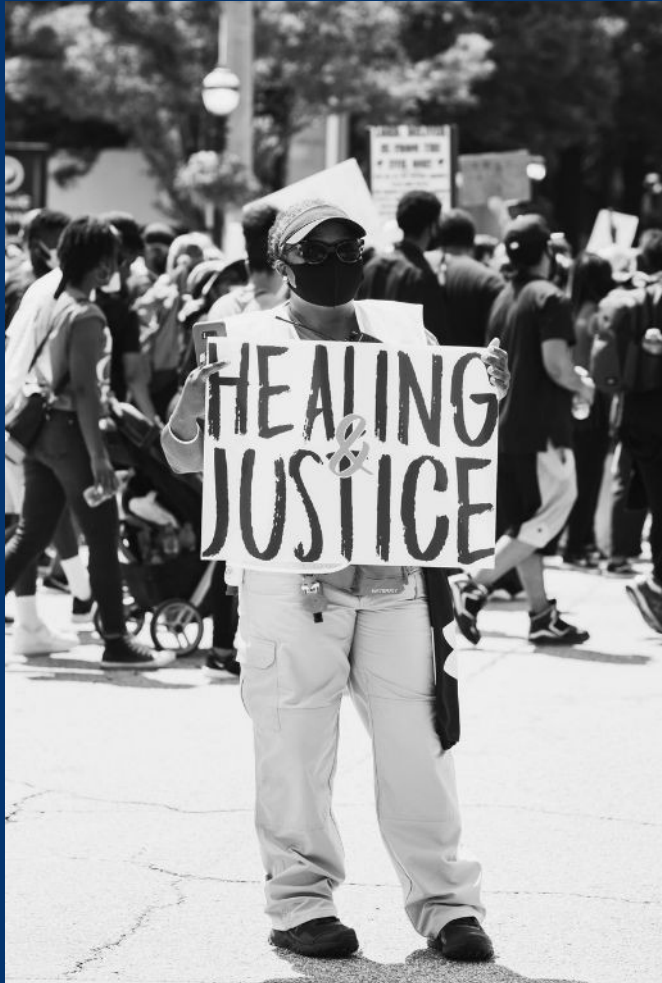
Presented By:

Kamilah Holloway, Data and Research Division Chief  
– Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR)

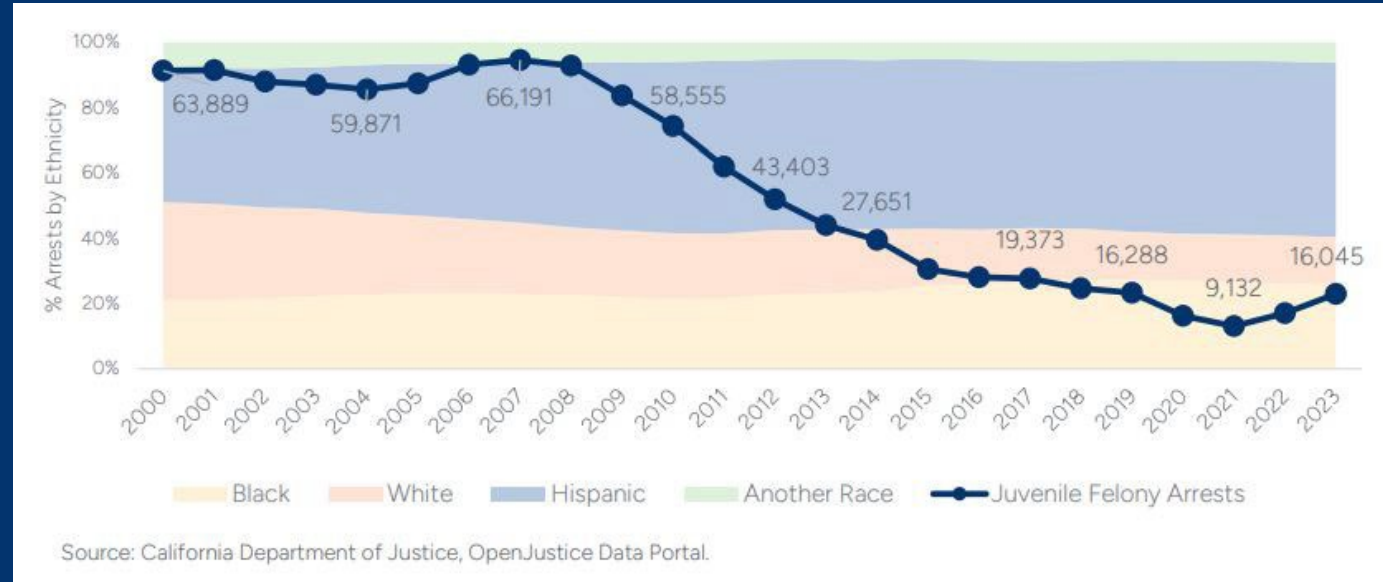
Susan Brutschy, President – Applied Survey Research  
(ASR)



# Historical Overview

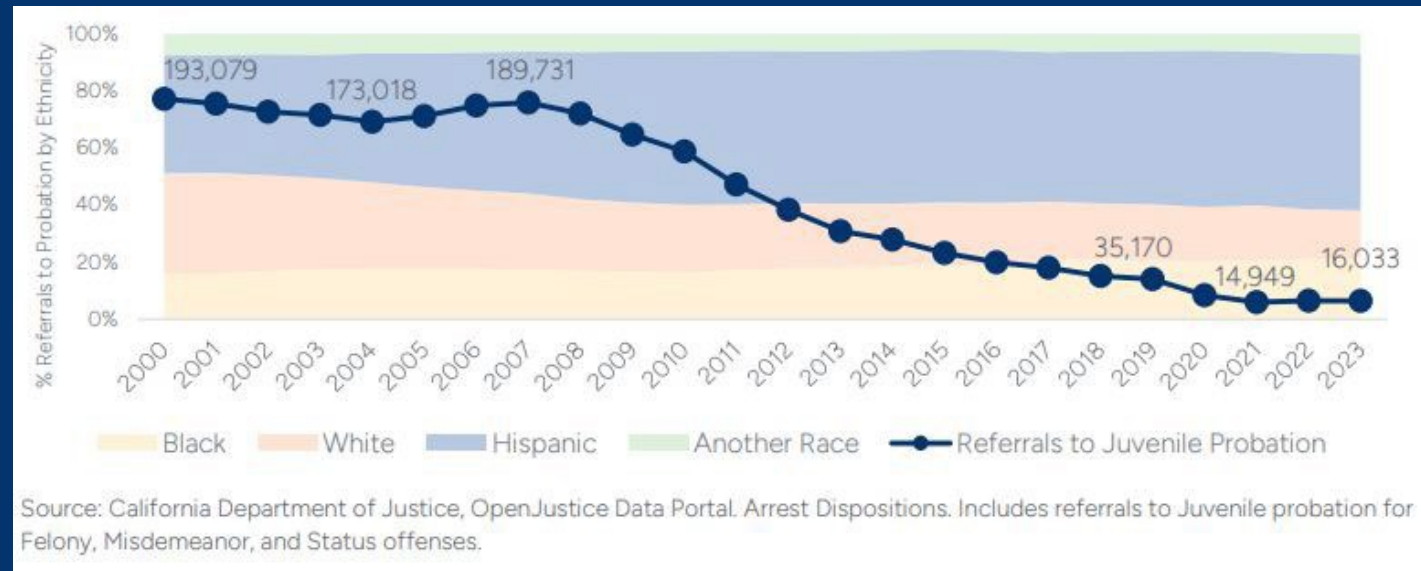


## Felony Arrests by Ethnicity



Between 2000-2023, juvenile felony arrests decreased by 75%

## Referrals to Probation by Ethnicity



Between 2000-2023, youth referrals to probation fell by 92%

# Legislative Milestones that Laid the Groundwork for SB 823



	<p><b>Senate Bill 81 (2007):</b> Mandated that only youth who committed the most serious offenses would be sent to state facilities.</p> <p>+ Aiming to transfer the responsibility of juvenile offenders from the state to counties</p>
	<p><b>Senate Bill 1021 (2013):</b> Eliminated “time adds” for youth incarcerated at DJJ; transferred DJJ parole function to counties and lowered the maximum age of confinement to 23.</p> <p>+ Aiming to reduce the duration in which youth are incarcerated</p>
	<p><b>Senate Bill 9 (2013):</b> Allowed juveniles who were sentenced in adult court to life without parole to petition for a new sentencing hearing, and potentially, a lesser sentence.</p> <p>+ Reflecting a shift toward more lenient measures</p>
	<p><b>Senate Bills 260 (2013-2014) &amp; 261 (2015-2016):</b> Provided early parole opportunities for those who were convicted as juveniles.</p> <p>+ Prioritizing rehabilitation over long-term incarceration</p>
	<p><b>Proposition 57 (2016):</b> Ended prosecutors directly filing juvenile cases in adult court, assuring only judges could make this decision.</p> <p>+ Aiming to reduce the number of youths tried as adults and sent to adult prisons</p>
	<p><b>Senate Bill 439 (2018):</b> Limited juvenile court jurisdiction to minors between 12 to 17, excluding younger children from the juvenile system.</p> <p>+ Emphasizing that younger children’s needs were met through systems better designed to support them</p>
	<p><b>Senate Bill 1391 (2018):</b> Prohibited the transfer of youth alleged to have committed a crime at 14- and 15-years of age from being transferred to adult court unless they were not apprehended prior to the end of juvenile court jurisdiction.</p> <p>+ Further reducing the number of youth tried as adults and sent to adult prisons.</p>
	<p><b>Senate Bill 823 (2020):</b> shifted California’s youth justice responsibilities from state to local jurisdictions, promoting community-based rehabilitation and reducing youth incarceration.</p> <p>+ Represents a shift toward a more rehabilitative and community-focused approach, aiming to prioritize accountability and healing</p>

# Key SB 823 Provisions



1	DJJ CLOSURE	DJJ facilities closed by June 30, 2023
2	STATE TO COUNTY	Responsibilities shift from state to counties to take over the care and custody of juvenile offenders
3	NEW OFFICE	OYCR established to provide practice and policy technical assistance for realignment initiative
4	NEW AGE LIMITS	Youth may stay in local facilities up to age 25
5	COUNTY FUNDING	Funding provided for local care, staffing and facilities
6	OMBUDS DIVISION	Ombuds division for all incarcerated youth

## OUR PURPOSE IS TO IMPROVE LIVES

In 1980, four researchers from UC Santa Cruz came together with a mission:  
**Gather data. Use data. Spark change.**

For over 40 years, Applied Survey Research (ASR) has been helping people build better communities. As a growing non-profit social research consulting firm, our offices in Watsonville, San Jose, and Sacramento, California help many cities, counties, foundations, coalitions and organizations measure and advance the quality of life for the people they serve. We offer award-winning research services such as community needs assessments, homeless assessments, strategic planning, program design, program evaluation, and online data dashboarding.

We are best known for our ability to help partners like you gather key data on the issues affecting your population, and to help you use this information to create strategic, lasting, and impactful solutions. Our diverse team of researchers enjoys the privilege of learning about your efforts, and helping guide your team each step of the way until you have the answers you need.

**Our job is to help you create a path toward your desired results, measure your impact and tell your story.**

Let's work together to spark lasting change.

*Susan*



**Susan Brutschy**  
President & Founder

# About

## Applied Survey Research (ASR)



Who we are



Why this report



Hopes for this work

# Report Overview



## Welf. & Inst. Code § 2200 (g)(1)

Conduct an evaluation of the efficacy of local programs for realigned youth (Welf. & Inst. Code § 1990)



## ASR's Approach

Baseline/ formative assessment that provides a statewide summary of impact and progress



Today is the beginning of the end of juvenile imprisonment as we know it.

Gavin Newsom, 2019

# Secondary Data Analysis

## Pre-S B 823 Secondary Data

- Large public databases, such as the Department of Justice, were used to establish the context that prepared the ground for the S B 823 reform.
- These data describe youth justice involvement trends for youth (under age 18) between the years 2000 (or earliest available) and 2023.



## Post-S B 823 Secondary Data

- Data on youth justice trends after S B 823 included the consortium report on youth during the DJJ closure and AB 102 data.
- These data describe youth demographics, commitments, transfers to less restrictive programs (LRPs), transfers to adult court, and net widening.



# Primary Data Analysis



Surveys of 44 Probation  
Departments



62 Interviews with 92 Youth  
Justice Stakeholders

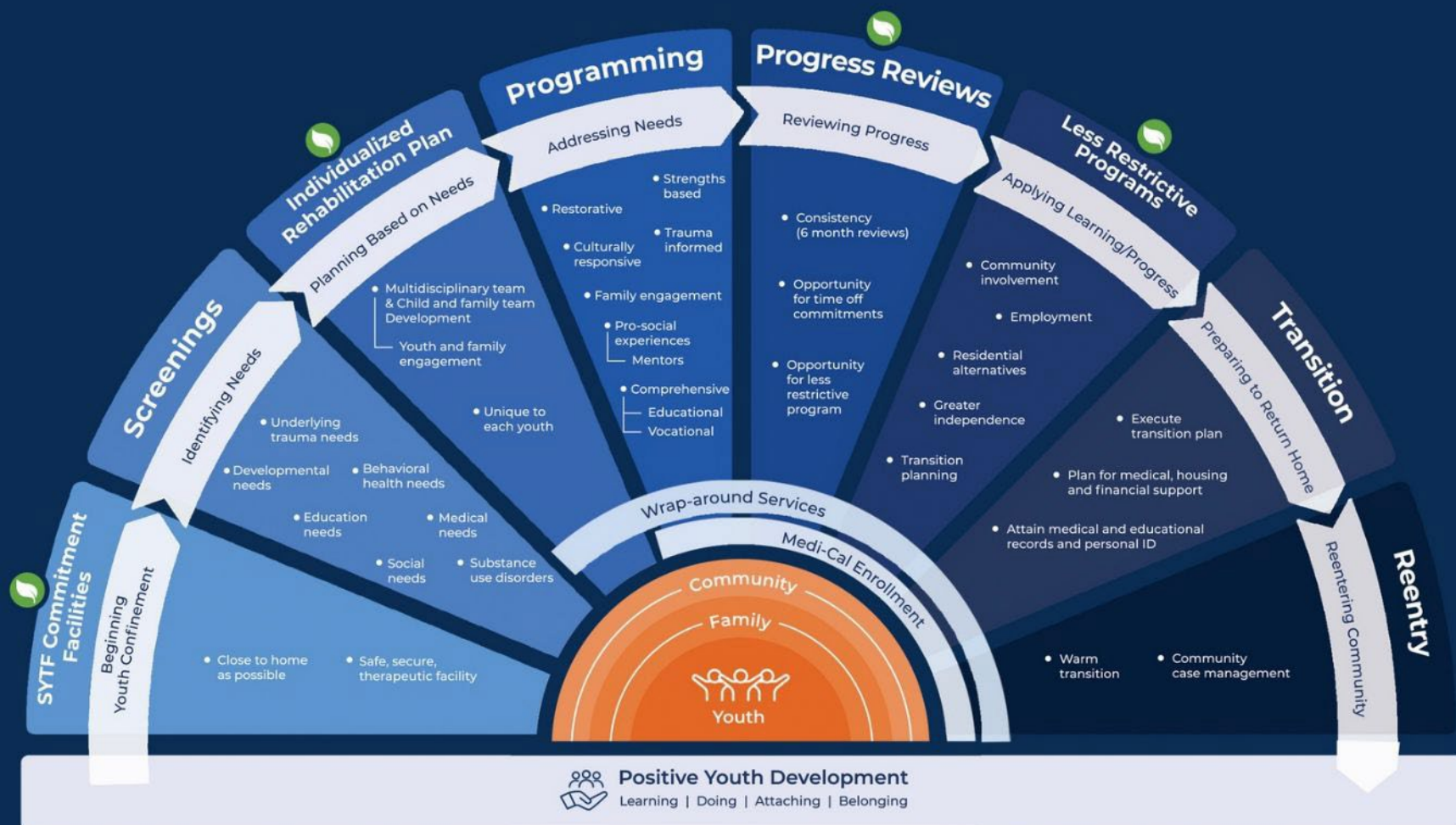


Surveys/Interviews of 37  
Youth with SYTF Experience



## Steps Along the SYTF Continuum

The framework used to organize the contents of our findings is grounded in the developmental theory of Positive Youth Development and informed by the Stepping Home Model.



INDICATES NEW PRACTICES FOR SYTF CONTINUUM

**Positive Youth Development**  
Learning | Doing | Attaching | Belonging



## Early Key Milestones Achieved



Development of the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), offering practice and policy technical assistance for the realigned youth justice system



Local planning through Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council's (JJCCs), collaborative court committees, and community-led forums



Investments to develop and adapt programming to meet the complex needs of youth over longer periods of commitment and a broader age range

## Reform Benefits

- Enables youth greater proximity to home, maintaining or further developing connections with family and support networks
- Offers a safer, more rehabilitative option through county-based care
- Establishes a structure grounded in a strength-based approach to positive youth development
- Enhances continuity of care through stable, trusting relationships

# SB 823 Vision



Youth closer to families and communities



Public health approaches used to support positive youth development



Evidence-based and promising practices used to improve youth outcomes and public safety



Least restrictive appropriate environments used in dispositions



Community-based responses and interventions to reduce confinement



Racial and ethnic disparities reduced and then eliminated

## PROBATION

Does housing youth in local SYTF programs positively impact their capacity for reentry?



**79%**  
**AGREE**

27/34  
RESPONDING  
COUNTIES

## YOUTH IN SYTF\*

Does staying close to your community make you feel supported by community members?



**82%**  
**AGREE**

13/16  
YOUTH  
RESPONDENTS

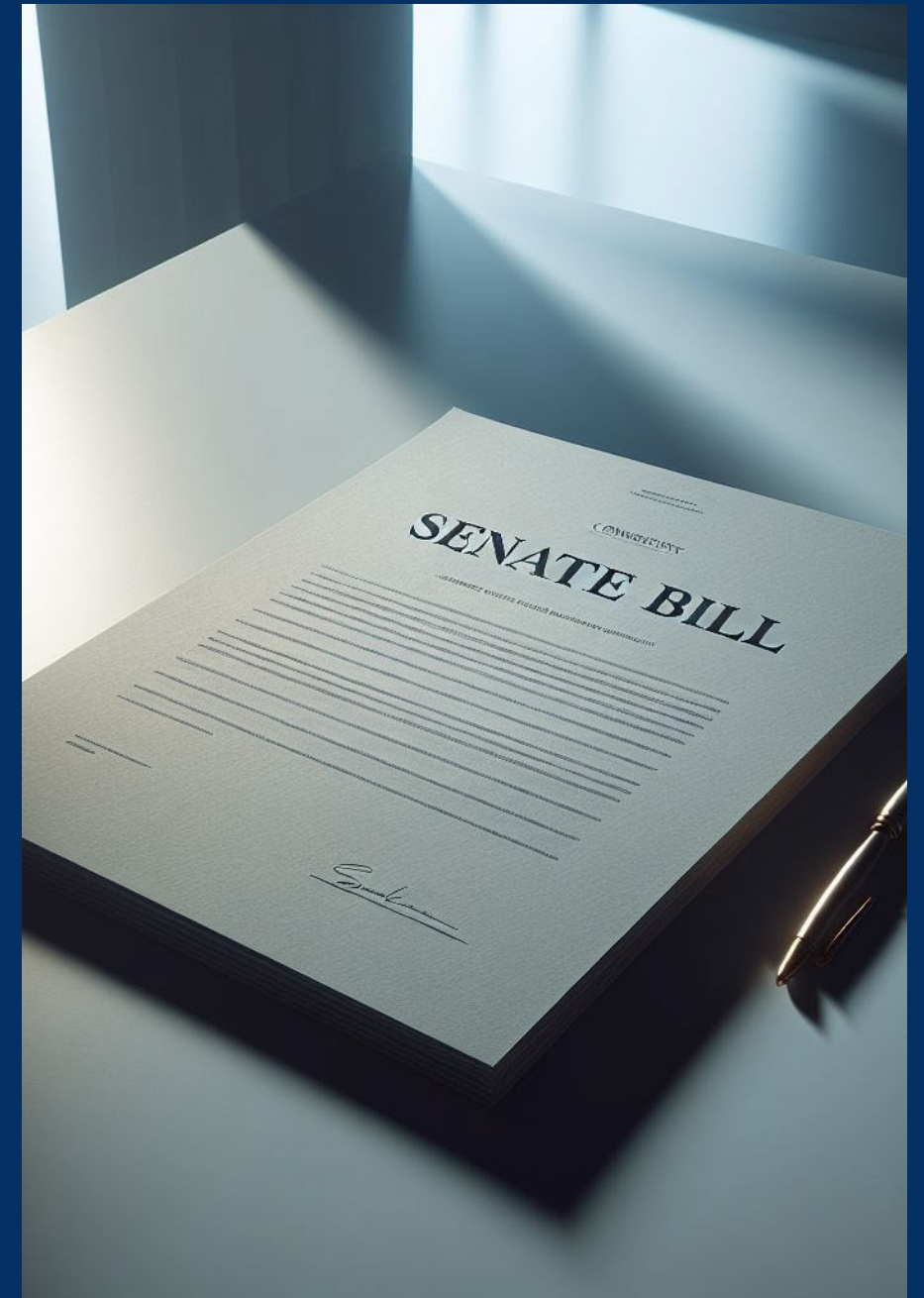
\* SECURE YOUTH TREATMENT FACILITY



## Reform Challenges

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- Short timeline
- Limited guidance and pre-planning stages
- COVID-19
- Inability to replicate services offered through DJJ in every county
- Inconsistent implementation





"The challenge is a culture shift...we're talking about decades."

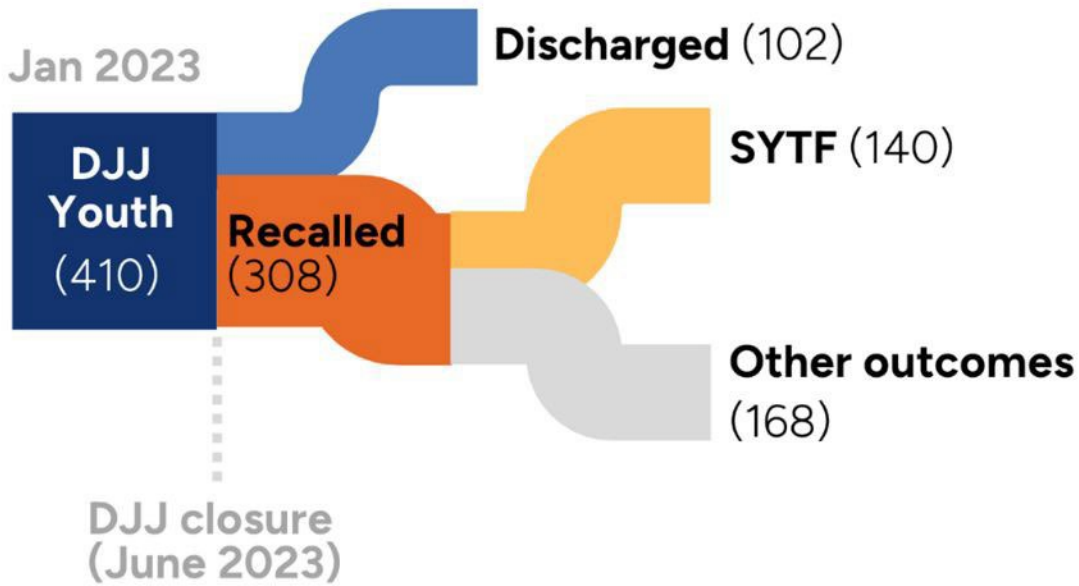
CBO Stakeholder Respondent, 2024

We still operate under a retributive mindset of "harm-for-harm, and that's really complicated to undo."

CBO Stakeholder Respondent, 2024



# Youth Placements Following DJJ Closure in 2023



Source: County Probation Consortium Partnering for Youth Realignment DJJ Transition Planning Summary of Youth Information

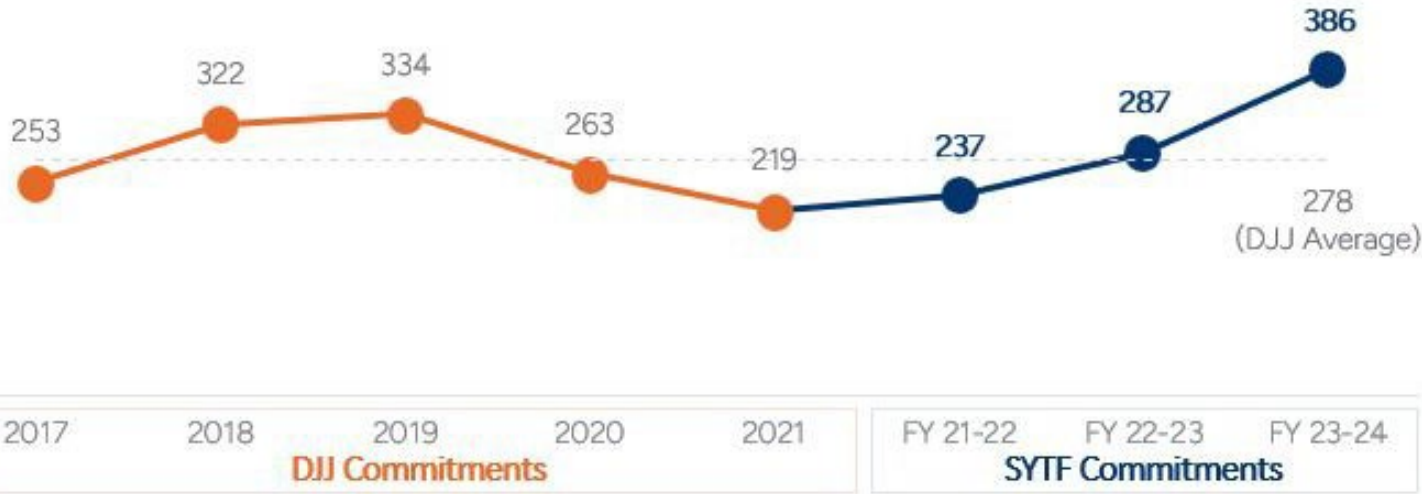
“

Proximity has taught me some basic and humbling truths, including this vital lesson: Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done. My work with the poor and the incarcerated has persuaded me that the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice. Finally, I've come to believe that the true measure of our commitment to justice, the character of our society, our commitment to the rule of law, fairness, and equality cannot be measured by how we treat the rich, the powerful, the privileged, and the respected among us. The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned.

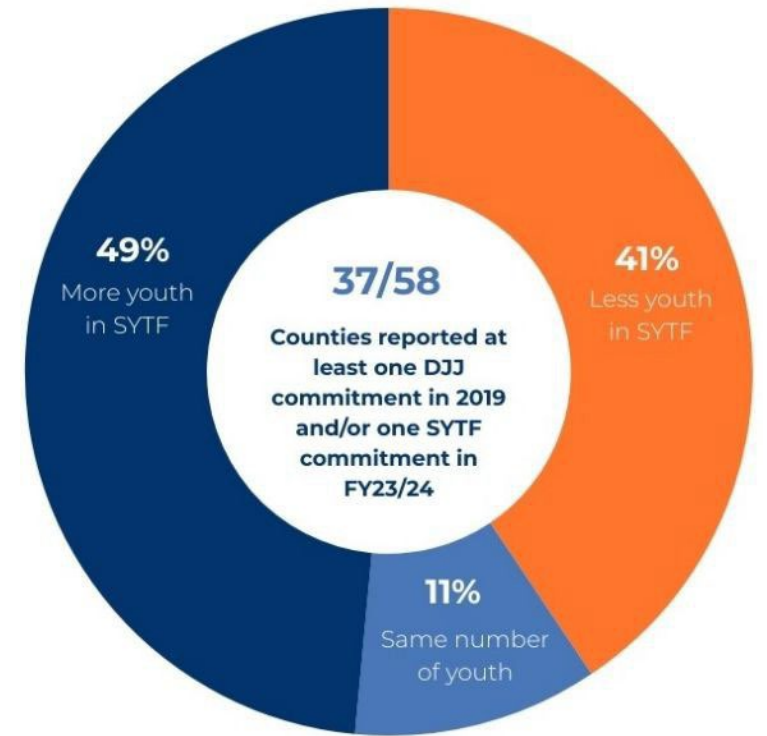
Bryan Stevenson  
*Just Mercy, 2014*

”

# Youth DJJ and SYTF Commitments



Source: DJJ Commitment Reports (Total DJJ Commitments) and AB 102 data by county (A).



Source: DJJ Commitment Reports (Total DJJ Commitments) and AB 102 data by county (A)

## Stakeholder Perceptions

SYTFs may be perceived as less harsh than DJJ

Being closer to home may make SYTFs seem more acceptable

Increased court confidence in SYTFs



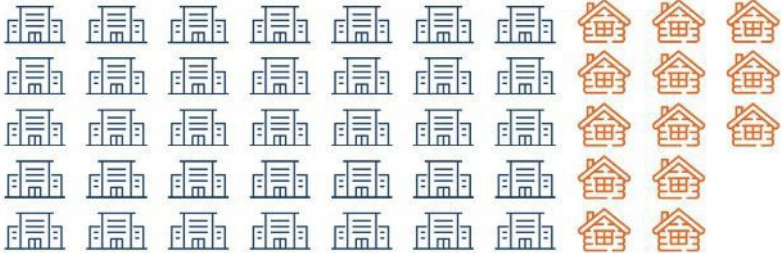
# SYTF Commitment Facilities



## Progress Across the State

Counties developed secure youth treatment facilities (SYTFs) as either stand-alone facilities or units within existing county facilities. As of January 2025, 37 counties in California operate 48 SYTFs.

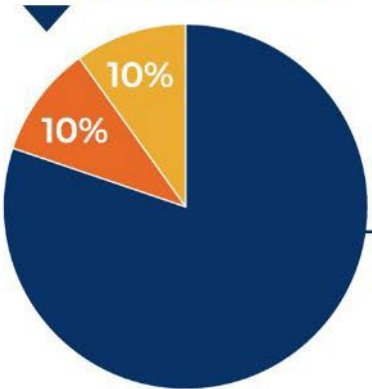
### CA SECURE YOUTH TREATMENT FACILITIES BY LOCATION



Juvenile Halls: 73% | Camps: 27%

### MODIFICATIONS TO FACILITIES

#### MODIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO SYTF FACILITIES



- AGREE
- NEUTRAL
- DISAGREE



**81%**

OF RESPONDING COUNTIES MADE MODIFICATIONS FOR SYTFs (n=31/38)

#### Updates Included:

- **Homelike features** (e.g., paint, carpet)
- **Security upgrades** (e.g., perimeter fencing, cameras)
- **Personalized touches** (e.g., video games, new mattresses)
- **Transportation** (e.g., vans for youth and family transport)

Despite these updates, many stakeholders emphasized that juvenile halls remain carceral settings. With the accelerated timeline, variation in resources, and lack of alternative options locally, alternative options were limited. Various facility infrastructure and limitations exist, with staffing shortages further straining program expansion and separation of youth by age or severity of offense across units, especially for small-sized counties.

“

They should not be housed in a maximum-security county jail detention facility... it is not developmentally appropriate. It's not conducive to health and healing... they need more space to move about.

- Court Stakeholder Respondent  
2024

”

## Challenges with Facilities



Architectural and Design Constraints Limit Capacity for Redesign



Challenge with Separating Youth by Need



Space Limitations Restrict Flexibility and Programming

Most probation stakeholders emphasized that juvenile halls were never intended for long-term stays, making it difficult to provide a rehabilitative environment.



# SYTF Commitment Facilities: Practices



## Positive Practices

Stakeholders provided insight into strategies and/or practices that youth valued or found effective.



**Music studios**



**Higher ed rooms with separate cubicles**



**Sensory/De-escalation Rooms**

**This is the legislation working right. We would never have had this opportunity, and this kid would have never had this before.**

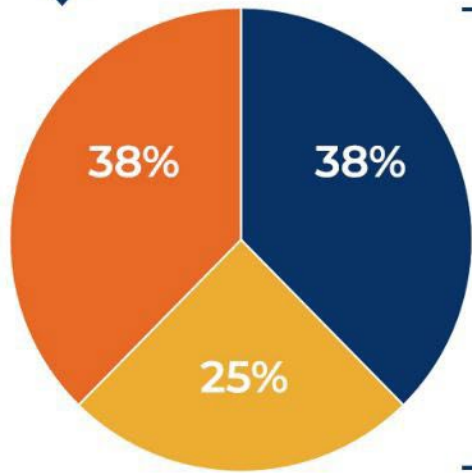
Probation Respondent, 2024  
(reflecting on watching a youth in a music studio)

# SYTF Commitment Facilities: Insight



## YOUTH INSIGHTS

### SYTF FACILITY FELT SAFE AND HOMELIKE



AGREE  
NEUTRAL  
DISAGREE



YOUTH SHARED MIXED OPINIONS ON THE COMFORT AND SAFETY OF SYTFs (n=16)

Welf. & Inst. Code § 851 states that a juvenile hall "shall be a safe and supportive homelike environment." Youth responses highlighted a range of youth experiences, including variations due to timing of commitment and location of the facility.

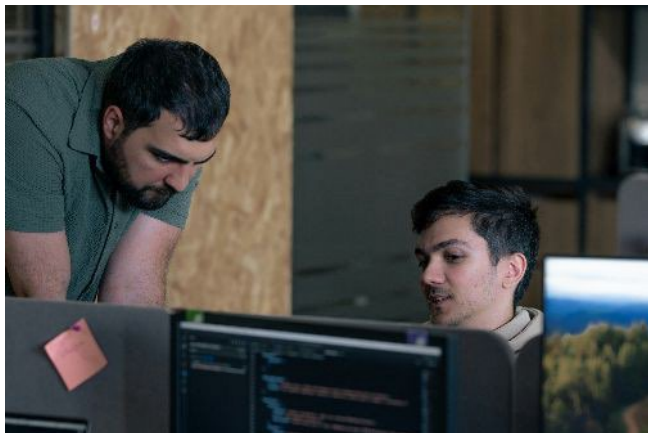
**“ I would do eating, workout, sleep, school all in one space. That was not normal... It's challenging because it is a jail. Youth Focus Group Respondent, 2025 ”**

**“ I was in a situation where I was told I could change. I was in an environment where people would ask, How are you this week? Is there anything you wanna talk about? Youth Focus Group Respondent, 2025 ”**



## Shift in Workforce Mentality

- ◆ Desire to work with youth with complex needs
- ◆ Believe in rehabilitation
- ◆ Understand adolescent development
- ◆ Provide trauma-informed care through culturally responsive practices



"[My PO] believed in me, even though I was in juvenile hall. There should be more people that believe in kids."

Youth Respondent, 2024

"I wish they had more staff, more program providers....they were already stretched thin."

Youth Respondent, 2024

"When you go into the system, you are talked to a certain way, treated a certain way, and there's nothing you can do or say because you're in their territory."

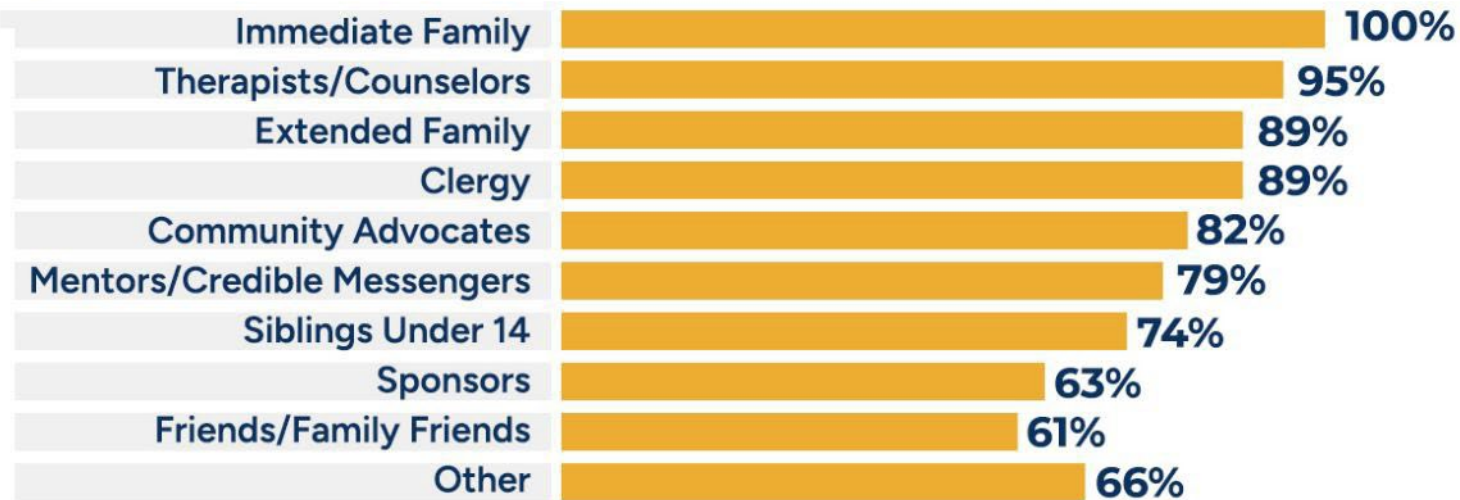
Youth Respondent, 2024

# Support for Maintaining Local Connections

## VISITATION POLICIES

### VISITORS PERMITTED BY TYPE IN SYTFs

(% OF 38 RESPONDING COUNTIES ALLOWING ACCESS)



Some counties expanded visitation options and policies, including hours, days, events, and visitors permitted.



[The legislation] has pushed us to do things we've never done before. For example, lived experience mentors. It was unheard of to have people with felonies come into our facilities.

Well, that's not the case anymore. And we've really seen the positive impact that these mentors can have on the lives of these youth in custody.

Probation Stakeholder Respondent,  
2024

# Local SYTF Programs



## Progress Across the State

### THREE MAJOR FACTORS HAVE REQUIRED SHIFTS IN SYTF PROGRAMMING:

Older populations (now up to 25) + Longer length of stay (can be up to 7 years) + Local responsibility for treatment

impacts the need for expanded educational and vocational opportunities

impacts the need for additional program options and programs of greater duration

impacts the need for substance use, sexual behavior, gang intervention, and serious mental health treatment programs

**95%** of counties increased capacity for one or more services (36/38)

**66%** counties added at least one new service for SYTF youth (25/38)

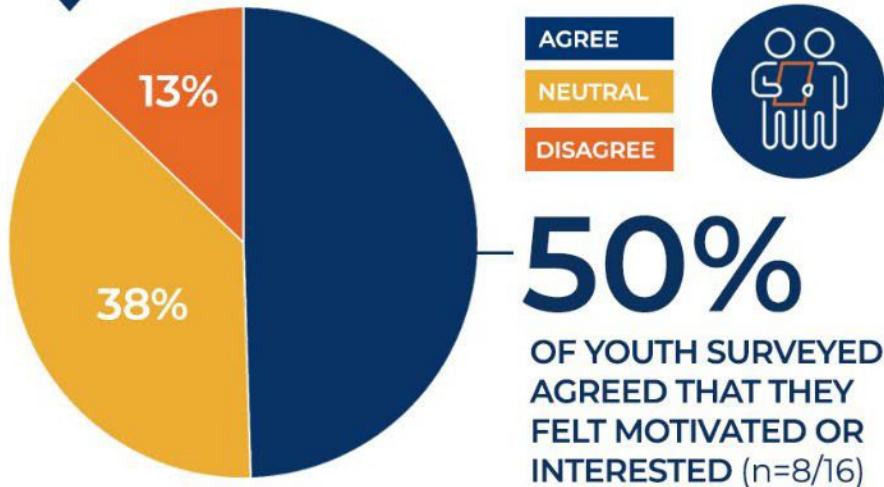
Programming Domain	Example of Advancement	State Support
Education	44 college programs across the state offer Rising Scholars (87% of counties (n=34/39) offer this opportunity	\$15M allocated in the 2022-23 state budget specifically for juvenile-justice-impacted youth
Employment and Vocational	9 counties contract with the Department of Rehabilitation. As of May 2025, nearly 77 youth have received services.	Department of Rehabilitation Partnership

# Local SYTF Programs: Insight



## YOUTH INSIGHTS

### YOUTH MOTIVATION & INTEREST IN SYTF PROGRAMMING



Youth shared that academic and vocational training, such as college preparation, apprenticeship programs, and Rising Scholars were the most beneficial programs. Others highlighted programs that provide real-life context, emotional support, and community engagement.

However, some youth felt programs were not truly rehabilitative and felt more like a formality than an opportunity for growth.

“  
These programs have really boosted my confidence and made me feel more capable... Most importantly, they’ve made me realize that there are opportunities out there for me, and I’m more prepared for my future. I now feel like I have the tools to build a better life and make the most of what’s ahead.  
”

Youth Respondent, 2024

# Local SYTF Programs: Practices



## Positive Practices

Stakeholders provided insight into strategies and/or practices that youth valued or found effective.



**Community-Based Facilitators**



**Resource Navigators**



**Community Listening Sessions**



**Youth Input**

“  
...it's asking [the youth] for their feedback. 'What is it they'd like to do? What would benefit them?'  
Probation Stakeholder Respondent, 2024  
”

# Less Restrictive Programs (LRPs)



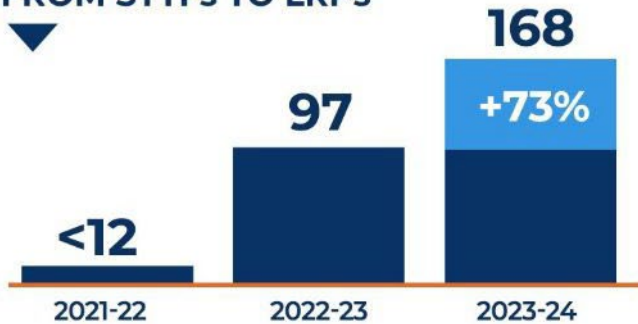
## Progress Across the State

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)

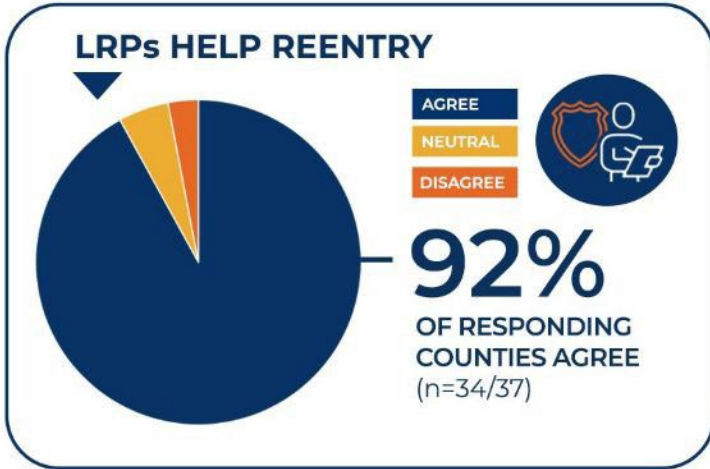
**34 counties now operate LRPs** (up from 16) and youth transfers from SYTFs to LRPs are **up by 73% in one year.**

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

 <b>RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS</b>	These can be community or county based and offer a structured, supervised living environment outside of a secure facility.
 <b>ELECTRONIC MONITORING</b>	Youth live at home independently while being monitored through electronic devices with wraparound teams for high touch support.
 <b>FIRE CAMPS</b>	Youth may be placed in state-run camps such as Pine Grove where they receive firefighter training, or local-run fire camps.
 <b>ENVIRONMENTAL/ VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS</b>	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).

# Less Restrictive Programs



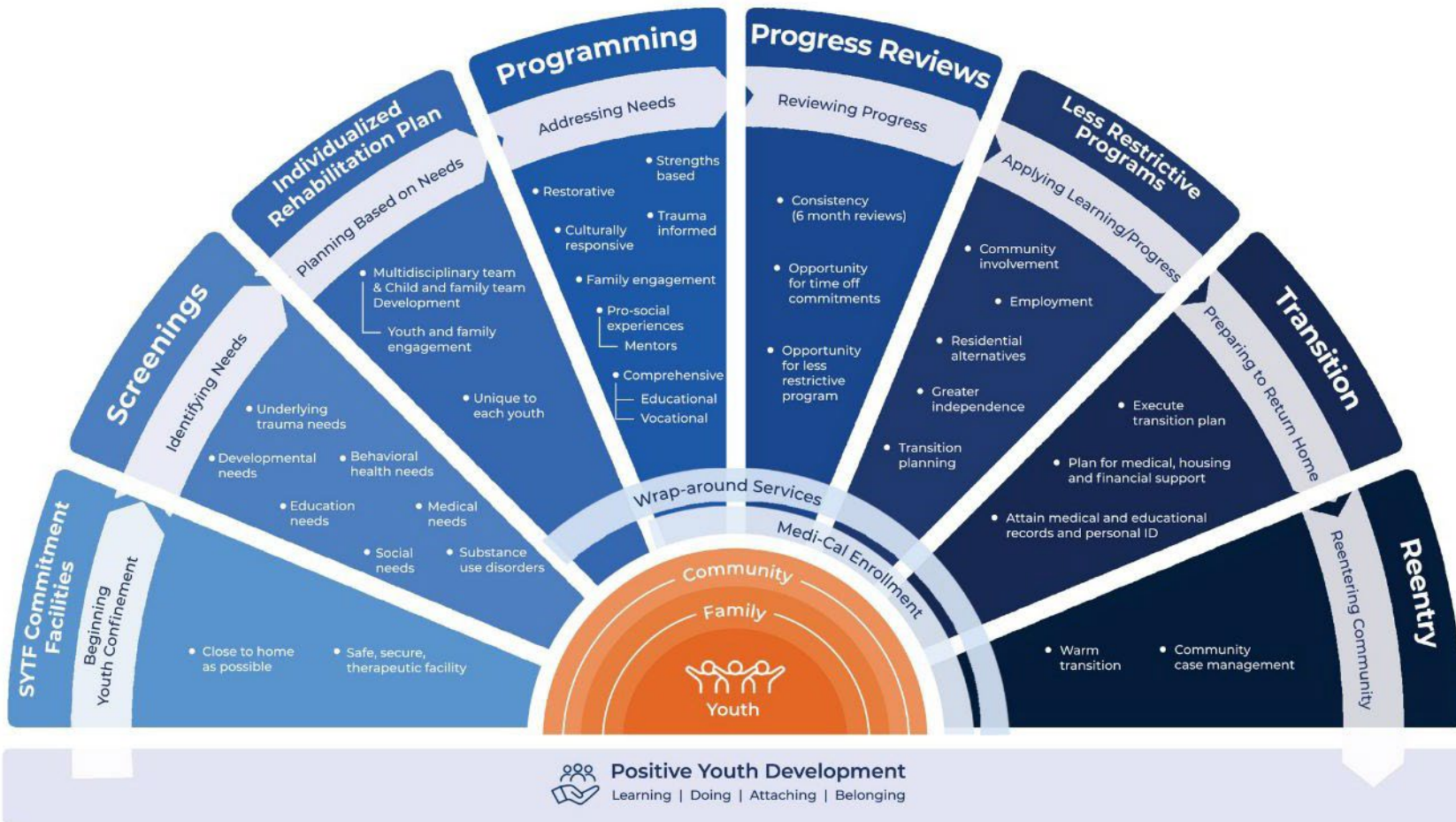
**21/44 counties shared benefits to youth in LRPs**

Area	Purpose and Value
<b>Education, Vocational Training and Employment Support</b> (n=14)	Opportunities to build life skills, pursue higher education, and gain real-world experience, helping youth develop employable skills and strong work habits.
<b>Housing and Independent Living Skills</b> (n=10)	Transitional housing and programs that allow for independent living, learning practical skills, or preventing return to unfit environments.  <i>One county noted that "... LRP programs with housing are extremely beneficial, as youth prefer not to return to the same home environment from which they came."</i>
<b>Step-down Models and Community Integration Programs</b>	Programs that gradually transition youth from custody using monitoring and structured strategies.

“  
**There are different levels of step downs and there’s different levels of support at step downs. When youth are hooked up with particular community-based organizations, it just makes a huge difference.**  
 ”

Court Stakeholder Respondent, 2024

# Key Lesson Learned...



**Incorporate  
and Prioritize  
Youth Voice**

“

There are few things that give me hope for California's youth justice transformation. One, youths who are systems-involved today are guiding the change.

Formerly Justice-Involved Youth, Voices of Youth Justice: I am Not an Outlier

”

## OYCR's Youth Advisory Board

- 25 young people with lived experience meet weekly to shape youth justice policy and practice

## Local Efforts to Prioritize Youth Voice



*Youth Advisory Committees*



*Youth Leadership Initiatives*





## **Entrepreneur**

After participating in an entrepreneurship program where a youth learned skills to develop a business model, do taxes, and adhere to labor laws, he launched a successful window washing business and is now employing others in the community.

## **Community Leader**

A youth was selected to serve as a youth advocate for a countywide training course through the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Washington DC, where she contributed great insight and was a valuable member of the process.

## **Changed Person**

A father described how his daughter was a "completely different person." than when she entered an SYTF. He shared how she made positive changes, especially after participating in therapy and learning to take accountability.

“

I have those moments where... youth that were committed to this program early on really didn't come close to reaping the benefits they should have and the intent behind it ... **it breaks my heart, and it always makes me want to move faster so that the youth that are in our care currently get absolutely each and every benefit that they should have.**

- Probation Stakeholder  
Respondent, 2024

”

**Sustained investment across systems is essential to ensure that this shift in youth justice is sustainable, equitable, and centered on youth healing and accountability.**

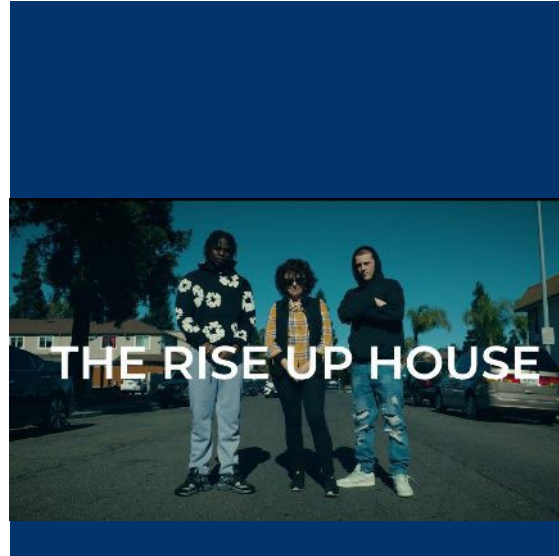
# Focused Investments and Resources

OYCR will prioritize aspects, including:



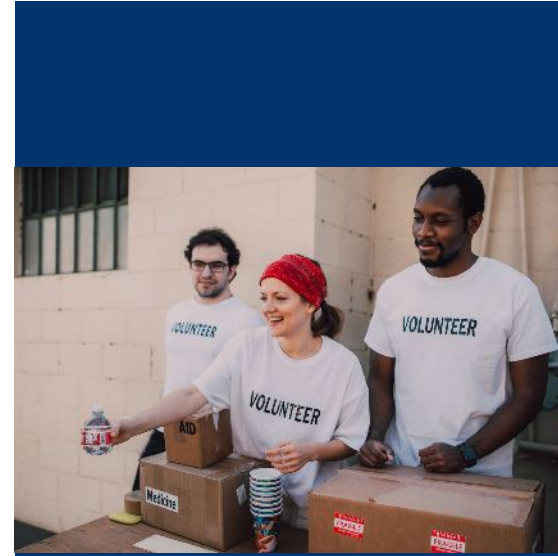
Source: Maas Design. Webinar. Sacramento County, Multi-sensory De-escalation Room.

Facility Climate Improvement



Source: Solano County LRP.

LRP for Places to Transition



Build Capacities for CBOs

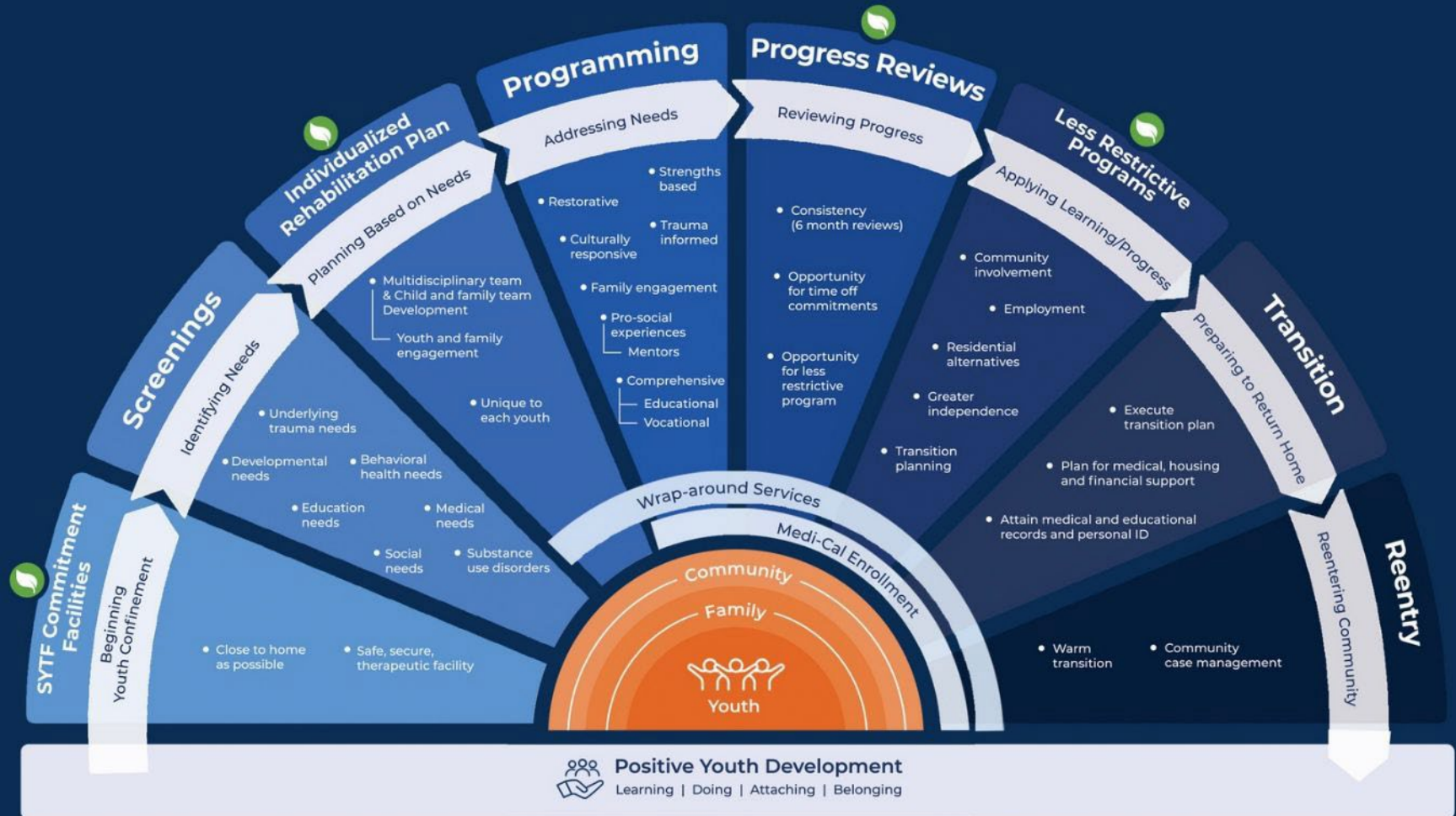


Mental Shift/Cultural Shift



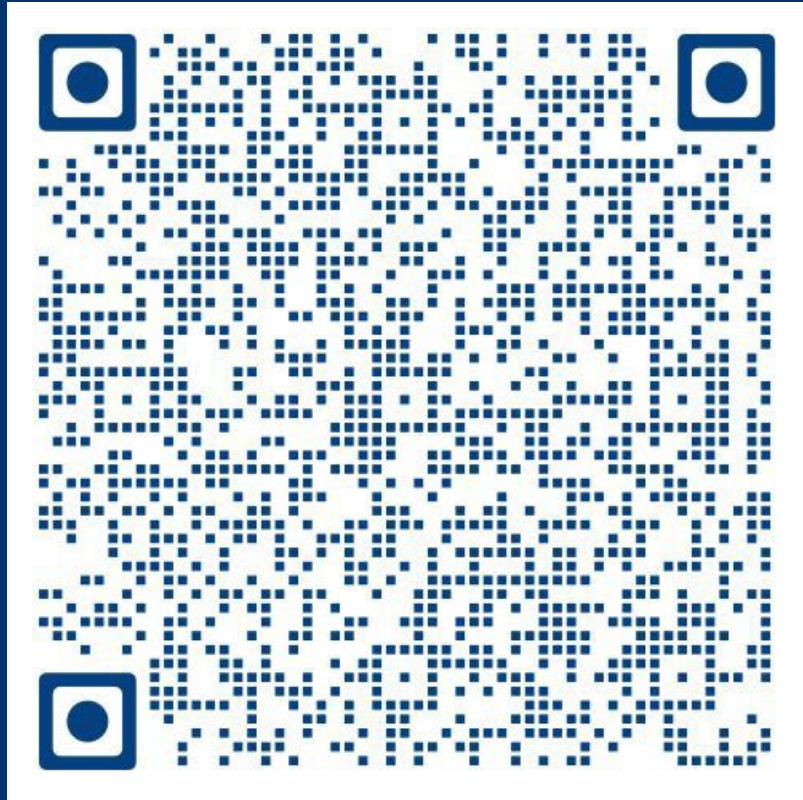
## Healing & Accountability

Together, we must move forward ensure that this shift in youth justice is **sustainable, equitable,** and centered on youth **healing and accountability.**

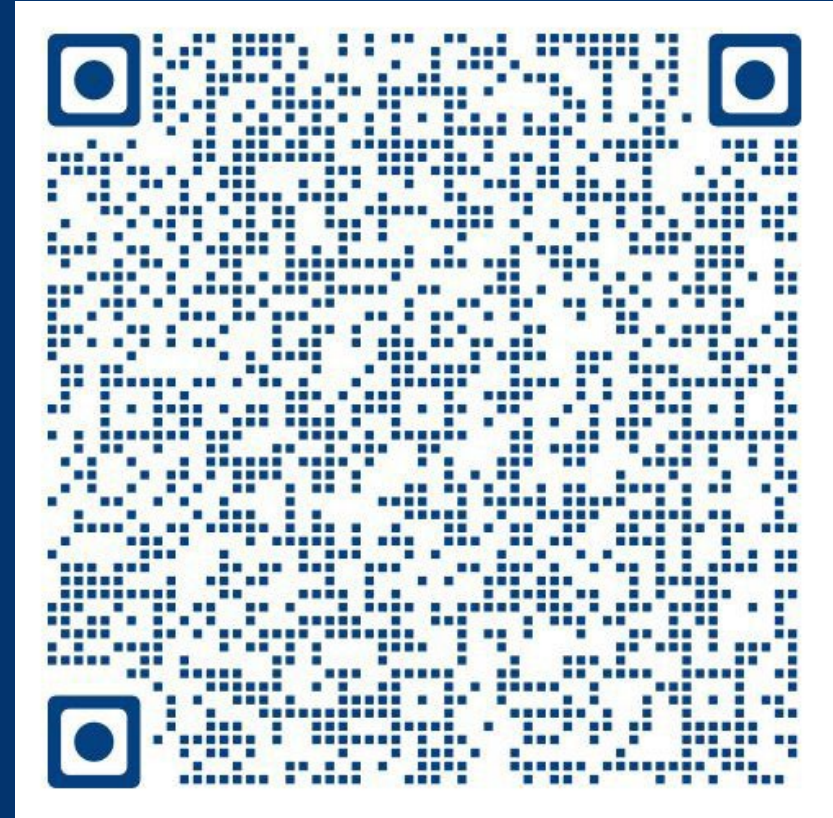


INDICATES NEW PRACTICES FOR SYTF CONTINUUM

# Resources: URL's



[SB 823: 2025 DJJ Realignment Report](#)



[2025 DJJ Realignment Report Executive Summary](#)

# INFORMATION ITEM:

## RECENT STUDY ON EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

Daniel Webster, Dr. Mark Courtney



**TAY-Hub**

Transition-Age Youth  
Research & Evaluation Hub

# Foster Care Policy And Homelessness Among Youth Transitioning To Adulthood From Foster Care

**Mark E. Courtney, PhD, UC Berkeley and University  
of Chicago**

**Suggeun (Ethan) Park, PhD, University of Michigan**

**Justin S. Harty, PhD, Arizona State University**



**TAY-Hub**

Transition-Age Youth  
Research & Evaluation Hub

**The TAY-Hub is a research collaborative committed to using data, applied research, and evaluation to inform policies and practices supporting young adults with foster care experience.**

- Collaborate with the child welfare services community to identify topics for research and evaluation activities
- Conduct research and evaluation activities, and sponsor activities of third-party partners
- Engage young people and key players providing services to TAY in interpreting the meaning and implications for policy and practice of findings
- Engage the child welfare services community in dissemination of findings and the implications for policy and practice



**CCWIP**

California Child Welfare  
Indicators Project



**TAY-Hub**  
Transition-Age Youth  
Research & Evaluation Hub



California Child Welfare  
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[TAY Data](#)

[Subawards](#)

[CalYOUTH](#)

[News](#)

# Transition-Age Youth Research and Evaluation Hub

UC Berkeley, School of Social Welfare

The **TAY-Hub** is a research collaborative committed to using data, applied research, and evaluation to inform policies and practices supporting young adults with foster care experience.

[tayhub.berkeley.edu](http://tayhub.berkeley.edu)



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## Child Abuse & Neglect

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/chiabuneg](https://www.elsevier.com/locate/chiabuneg)



### Foster care policy and homelessness among youth transitioning to adulthood from foster care

Mark E. Courtney<sup>a,\*</sup>, Sunggeun Park ((Ethan))<sup>b</sup>, Justin S. Harty<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley, Haviland Hall, Berkeley, CA 94709, United States of America

<sup>b</sup> University of Michigan, School of Social Work, 1080 South University Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1106, United States of America

<sup>c</sup> School of Social Work, Arizona State University, University Center, 411 N Central Ave #800, Phoenix, AZ 85004, United States of America

#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Keywords:

Homelessness  
Transition-age foster youth  
Extended foster care  
Transitional housing placement  
Independent living placement

#### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Youth aging out of foster care experience troubling rates of homelessness.  
**Objective:** This study examines whether policies directed towards youth transitioning to adulthood from foster care, Extended Foster Care (EFC) and Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs), reduce the risk of homelessness.  
**Participants and setting:** Participants were 595 youths aging out of foster care in California.  
**Methods:** Data from interviews conducted with the youths, and state child welfare administrative data on their involvement with the child welfare system, were used to examine predictors of homelessness between ages 17 and 19. Cox proportional hazard regression models, controlling for the characteristics of the youths, were used to identify associations between time in EFC, and in SILPs, and the hazard of homelessness.  
**Results:** Approximately 18 % of the youth experienced homelessness during this period. Controlling for youth characteristics, youths who left care were at much higher risk of homelessness during the study period than were those who remained in care past their 19th birthday (Hazard ratio [HR] = 3;  $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, youths living in transitional supportive housing (HR = 0.20;  $p < 0.01$ ) and therapeutic foster care settings (HR = 0.19;  $p < 0.05$ ) exhibited a lower hazard of homelessness than those who had left care.  
**Conclusions:** Our findings suggest that EFC, and particularly the living arrangements offering extensive support in EFC, reduce the risk of homelessness for youth aging out of foster care.



### FOSTER CARE POLICY AND HOMELESSNESS AMONG YOUTH TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD FROM FOSTER CARE



SEPTEMBER 2025

MARK E. COURTNEY, PhD  
SUNGGEUN (ETHAN) PARK, PhD  
JUSTIN S. HARTY, PhD



**TAY-Hub**  
Transition-Age Youth  
Research & Evaluation Hub

# Berkeley Social Welfare



**CCWIP**  
California Child Welfare  
Indicators Project

# Background

- Transition-age youth (TAY) who age out of foster care face disproportionately high rates of homelessness.
  - reflecting systemic challenges (e.g., limited affordable housing, insufficient mental health services, and economic inequality)
- Little is known about how foster care policies influence young people's likelihood of experiencing homelessness.



# Policy

- The Fostering Connections Act of 2008 gave states the option to extend foster care to age 21 and introduced Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs).
  - supported transitional housing programs with on-site services to more independent settings
- Most states now extend foster care, yet many youth still experience homelessness.
- This study examines how these EFC and SILP policies shape the risk of homelessness.



# Questions

- Does remaining in EFC reduce the likelihood of homelessness between ages 17 and 19?
- Does the risk of experiencing homelessness at any point in time vary between different living arrangements within EFC?



# Data

## Sources:

CalYOUTH Survey

CA child welfare administrative data (CWS/CMS)

## CalYOUTH Survey sample

*Eligible youth:* ages 16.75–17.75 at sample draw (Dec 2012), in care for  $\geq 6$  months

*Initial sample:* 880 youth (763 eligible)

*Baseline:* 727 respondents ( $\approx 95\%$  response rate)

*Follow-up (age 19):* 611 respondents (84% follow-up)



# Sample

**N = 595 youth (82% of baseline)**

- Completed both survey waves
- Consented to admin data use
- Complete records through age 19 or exit

**Focus:**

Youth interviewed at age 19

One-third exited care between baseline & follow-up

Homelessness data collected at age 19



# Measures

## CalYOUTH survey:

Demographics, foster care experience, homelessness, economic hardships, health, and social support.

## Administrative data:

Foster care history through age 21 (e.g., placement types, entry age, maltreatment records, participation in extended foster care).

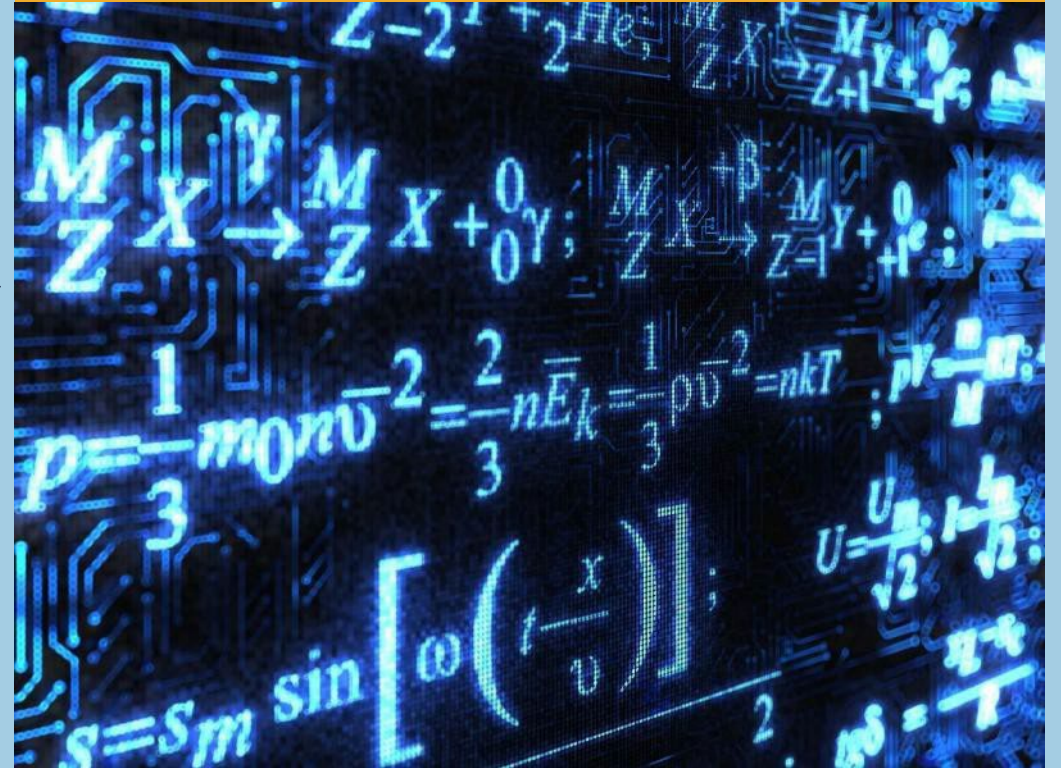


**Outcome:  
Homelessness  
between ages 17–19**

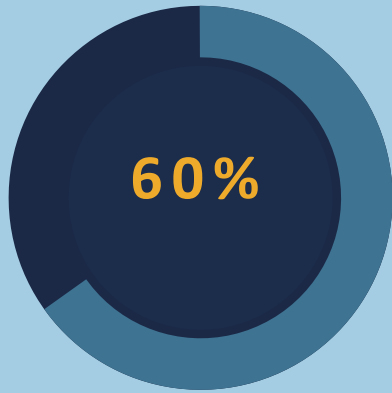
***“Since we last talked,  
have you ever been  
homeless for one night or  
longer...?”***

# Analysis

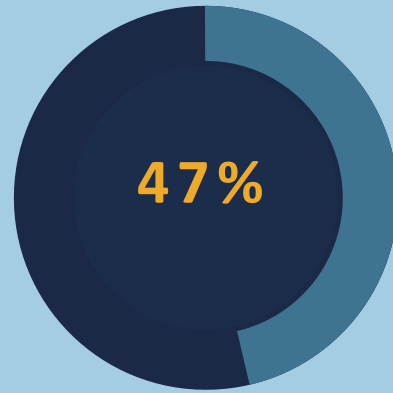
- Descriptive statistics were calculated using the youth survey weight.
- Cox proportional hazard regression models, controlling for the characteristics of the youths, were used to identify associations between time in EFC, and in specific placement types, and the hazard of homelessness.



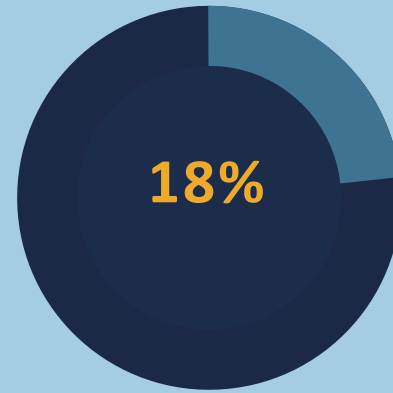
# Sample Characteristics



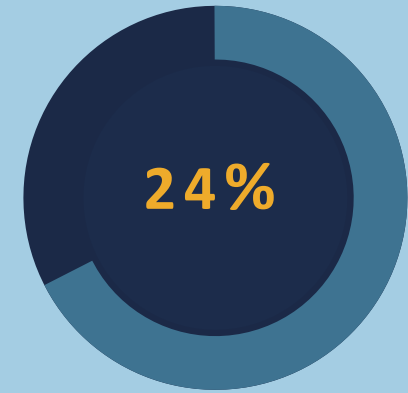
were  
assigned  
female at  
birth



identified  
as Latine



identified as  
Black



identified as  
sexual  
minority at  
age 17

# Table 1: Descriptive statistics of study variables (N =595 youths).

Outcome variables	Unweighted N	Weighted mean (S.D.)/%
Experienced homelessness between surveys	109	18.3%
Number of months between the baseline survey and the first experience of homelessness or the follow-up survey		23.1 (5.1)

**Table 3.** Hazard Analyses Results  
(Significant findings from Models 2 and 3)

Variable	Hazard ratio	95% CI
White (ref.=Hispanic)	2.24**	1.24–4.07
Not 100% heterosexual	1.75*	1.04–2.95
Physically assaulted prior to baseline (14.1%)	2.07*	1.18–3.62
<b>In care at 18 and left before follow-up (18.4%)</b>	<b>3.00***</b>	<b>1.83–4.90</b>
<b>In care at 18, left and re-entered by follow-up (7.2%)</b>	<b>3.00**</b>	<b>1.58–5.67</b>
<b>FFA home (7.3% of youth at age 19; ref.=Not in care)</b>	<b>0.19*</b>	<b>0.04–0.93</b>
<b>THP (14.2% of youth at age 19; ref.=Not in care)</b>	<b>0.20**</b>	<b>0.06–0.66</b>

# Findings:

## 1. Homelessness is Common During the Transition to Adulthood

- Nearly one in five youth (18%) experienced homelessness between ages 17 and 19, a much higher rate than that of their peers in the general population.



# Findings (a):

## 2. Extended Foster Care Protects Against Homelessness

- TAY who exited foster care before age 19 were three times more likely to experience homelessness than those who remained in care after controlling for individual characteristics—even if they later re-entered care. While the specific role of EFC in reducing risk is not fully understood, it provides direct financial support for housing and connects youth with services that can reduce the risk of homelessness.



# Findings (b):

## 3. Supportive Housing Makes a Difference

- Placement in treatment-oriented living arrangements, such as transitional supportive housing (Hazard Ratio = 0.20;  $p < 0.01$ ) and Foster Family Agency (FFA) homes (Hazard Ratio = 0.19;  $p < 0.05$ ), was strongly protective against homelessness in comparison to having left care. Importantly, these placements explained much of the overall reduction in homelessness associated with extended foster care.



# Findings (c):

## 4. Certain Youth Face Higher Risks

- Youth who identified as sexual minorities or had a history of physical assault faced significantly higher risks of homelessness.





# Study Significance

- First study to examine *how* EFC prevents homelessness among TAY.
- Confirms that EFC serves as both a housing safety net and a service delivery system during the transition to adulthood.
- By age 19, two-thirds of youth remained in EFC, showing that programs can be designed to retain most young people in care.
  - 79% lived in SILPs or THPs, indicating a steady shift toward more independent settings.

# Implications:

- *THPs and FFAs emerged as particularly effective in reducing homelessness.*
- The finding that FFA placement is associated with reduced risk of homelessness is encouraging, however relatively few young people in EFC are residing in those settings.
- Although THPs are more costly than foster homes, their broader availability and impact suggest they remain a critical resource, especially given the low utilization of therapeutic foster homes in California.
  - Fewer than one in five young adults in care live in kinship, nonrelative, or therapeutic foster homes.
- Can services to address the complex needs of youth in EFC, in the process reducing the risk of homelessness, be brought to other placements?

# Implications

- California's rate reform structure provides a unique opportunity to align funding with needs-based supports.
- Findings highlight the need to layer services onto living arrangements.
- Findings point to the importance of strengthening EFC as a housing safety net and mechanism for delivering therapeutic and practical supports.



**RATE  
REFORM**

# Conclusion:

- The relatively high rate of homelessness among TAY underscores the urgency of strengthening EFC participation and post-exit housing supports.
- Public and private child welfare agencies should connect youth exiting care to alternative housing options, including public housing resources.



# Conclusion

- Overall, EFC- especially when paired with supportive housing and integrated services -remains one of the most powerful tools to prevent early homelessness among young people aging out of foster care.
- Continued federal, state, and local investment in EFC is essential to sustain progress and reduce youth homelessness nationwide.



# Thank you!



**TAY-Hub**

Transition-Age Youth  
Research & Evaluation Hub

**READ THE FULL STUDY:**

Courtney, M. E., Park, S., & Harty, J. S. (2025).  
Foster care policy and homelessness among  
youth transitioning to adulthood from foster  
care. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 169, 107638.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2025.107638>

# **- INFORMATION ITEM -**

## **MANDATED REPORTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **(MRAC) UPDATE**

Director Jennifer Troia, CDSS

Kathryn Icenhower, Dana Blackwell,  
PEI Co-Chairs and MRAC Tri-Chairs



**Mandated Reporting to  
Community Supporting**

*Communities Keeping Children Safe  
and Families Together*

# **UPDATE: Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee**

## **Child Welfare Council Meeting**

March 11, 2026



In December, the CWC gave the greenlight to continue advancing the recommendations with the same process, partnership, and commitment demonstrated during the development of the MRAC implementation plan

The MRAC is not simply a committee tasked with carrying out recommendations. It is a statutorily mandated body with a clear charge: ensure California's shift from mandated reporting to community supporting moves forward, and that it drives the measurable elimination of disparities in the child welfare system.

# UPDATES: BUILDING AWARENESS

- **Narrative Shift (Recommendation 14)**
  - **California:**
    - Mandated Reporting Reform Update hosted by CalTrin with 220 participants, January 2026
    - CWDA and Beyond the Bench Conference presentations, Fall 2025
  - **National:** BUILD Conference presentation - December
  - **External communications support** secured by Casey Family Programs



**Key Levers of Implementation:** The Recommendations are each connected to a key lever of change to focus the implementation strategy

**Shared Framework:** To organize development of the implementation plan, the MRAC established a shared framework that articulates the deliverables for each recommendation, guides the identification of key activities, and highlights productive intersections across Workgroups

- Data and Accountability
- Policy
- Training
- Connecting to a Community Pathway of Supports and Services
- Narrative Shift

# Leveraging the Natural Intersections

While advancing implementation of all recommendations

**WHAT:** AB2085: Seeing clear intersections across recommendations, the MRAC is pinpointing where an integrated approach will move the work forward faster and more effectively.

**WHY:** Almost three years following the implementation of AB 2085, awareness and adherence to the law are extremely low across the state.

**HOW:** The MRAC has developed an action plan that strategically applies the implementation levers of change to significantly build awareness, help strengthen practice consistency, and ensure the law achieves its intended impact of reducing unnecessary reporting and advancing equity statewide.



# NEW LEGISLATION SUPPORTS THE RECOMMENDATIONS



## AB 1566 – Aligns with Recommendation 6

Proposed with the intent to recast the definition of “severe neglect” as defined in the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA), to be inline with the definition of “severe neglect” in Structured Decision-Making tool used by child protective services.

## AB 2441: Undergirds all 14 Recommendations

Proposed with the intent to examine the effectiveness of community-based organizations, including Family Resource Centers, in serving as alternative support pathways for families who are navigating multiple stressors and/or significant barriers, but whose children are not at substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness.



**Mandated Reporting to  
Community Supporting**

*Communities Keeping Children Safe  
and Families Together*

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**What's Next:** The Semi-Annual Update will be presented at the June CWC meeting, with an accompanying written report

**Thanks & Questions?**

# **\* INFORMATION ITEM \***

## **CWS-CARES UPDATE**

Dianna Wagner

CDSS Assistant Deputy Director

Children and Family Services Division



# Child Welfare Council Update

Dianna Wagner, California Department of Social Services (CDSS)  
Assistant Deputy Director, Children and Family Services Division)

Tricia Gonzalez, CWDA Executive Liaison - CWS-CARES Project

MARCH 11, 2026

<https://cwds.ca.gov/>

# Today's system: CWS/CMS

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- CWS/CMS stands for Child Welfare Services/Case Management System
- It's used in all 58 California counties as the central system of record for every child and family in the welfare system, ensuring that workers have access to a child's health and education history as they manage the lifecycle of child welfare cases.
- Launched in the late 1990s, it operates on a mainframe-based system that requires a dedicated network.



# CWS-CARES at-a-Glance

CWS-CARES will **replace** the current Child Welfare Services / Case Management System (CWS/CMS) with a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) that meets the federal CCWIS compliance.

CWS-CARES stands for **Child Welfare Services- California Automated Responses and Engagement System**

## Over 23,000+ Users

130 Organizations  
58 Counties  
2 Title IV-E Tribes  
Almost 700 Probation Users



## Technology Platform

Salesforce, with Platform as a Service (PaaS) solution  
Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for data  
CARES Data Infrastructure (CDI) for storage  
Salesforce Enablement for Training



**Version 1 Go-Live: October 2026**

**Version 2 Go-Live: April 2028**

# Changes Coming for Children, Families, and Tribes

CWS-CARES is designed to *fundamentally change how families, foster youth, and tribal partners experience the child welfare process*. The shift moves California from a "case tracking" model (focused on compliance) to a "service delivery" model (focused on family outcomes).



**Faster Resource Family Payments**



**Support for the "Family First" Model**



**P-CIS (Person-Centered Information Sharing) Platform**



**Integrated Tribal Support**



# CWS-CARES Funding

CWS-CARES is funded through a partnership between the federal government and the State of California.



**Federal Funding (Title IV-E)** – The Advance Planning Document (APDU) is the main way CA is securing and maintaining federal match funds



**State General Fund** – Covers the remaining portion of the project



**County-Level Funding** – Counties implement and staff the work – they are reimbursed for their Subject Matter Experts who are helping design and test the system

# The CWS-CARES Version 1 Path to October 2026

Go-Live  
October  
2026

Statewide production  
simulation window

May to October 2026

Continue robust readiness  
preparation

Now to October 2026

3

4

1

022

System development and  
testing completion

Now to May 2026

# CWS-CARES: New Features & Benefits



## Connections across systems

Interfaces with other systems will streamline data sharing and workflows.

- CalSAWs
- California Department of Education
- Opeeka/P-CIS
- Evident Change (Structured Decisions Making/Safe Measures)
- Licensing System for Community Care Licensing
- State Fiscal System



## Secure cloud storage and operational resilience

Data will be hosted in a secure government cloud. Disaster recovery and system continuity are built into the platform.



## Smarter data handling and record editing

Information entered in one part of the system will populate automatically across other areas.



## County-level control

Counties will have more control over form design and data entry

## Examples of What's Changing with CWS-CARES



**Smarty Streets** validates addresses as they are entered



The **eSignature** function will initiate and store signatures, link to records, integrate into workflows, have an audit trail, and allow for multi-party signing.



**Document Cloud Storage** stores and saves documents in one place and allows workers to access files any time and link documents, photos and videos to a specific person, screening, or case record



**Everyone is a "Person"** for a more holistic view of an individual

**New functionality** to support **RFA** (Resource Family Approval), **FFPSA** (Family First Prevention Services Act, Tribes, and **AFCARS Compliance** (Adoption and Foster Care Accountability and Reporting System)



**System  
Testing &  
Validation**



**Technical &  
Data  
Readiness**



**Training &  
Go-Live  
Readiness**



**Governance  
Participation**

## **Activities to Prepare for CWS-CARES**

Activities are generally categorized into **Core Constituent activities** for those directly helping build/test the system and **Statewide Readiness activities** for every county in California.

# Production Simulation Overview

- **What it is:** An environment mirroring the CWS-CARES
- **Scope:** Open to all **58 Counties**, Tribes with Title IV-E Agreements, and State Partners
- **When:** Starting in **May 2026\***
- **Data:** Populated with converted data
- **Capabilities:** “Real-world” referral/case management.
- **All organizations will practice:**
  - Logging tickets via the new CWS-CARES Service Desk.
  - Tracking issue resolution and utilizing the Knowledge Base.
  - Familiarizing themselves with escalation paths before Go-Live.

*\* pending federal approval*

# CWS-CARES County Advisory Committees (CACs)



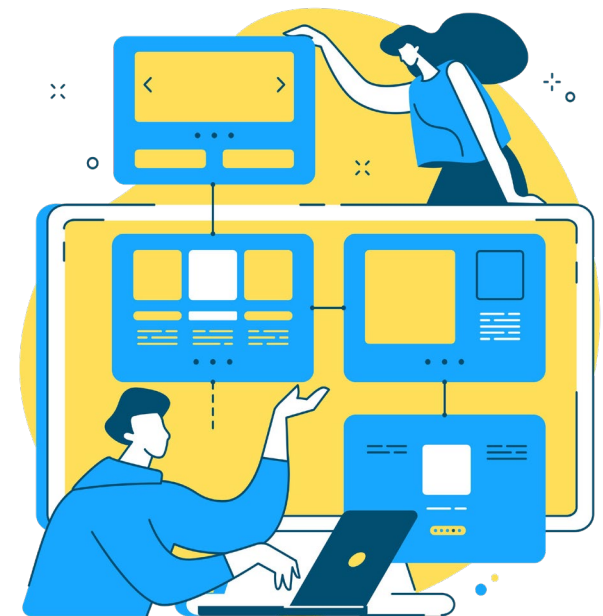
Specialized groups are formed for Production Simulation, Service Desk, and Training to prepare for CWS-CARES.

**Purpose:** Connecting the CWS-CARES Project Team directly with counties.

## Mission

- Direct feedback loop for operational support and mitigations
- Develop mitigations within defined scope/budget
- Enhance overall readiness
- Strong collaboration to ensure county readiness

**Target:** Successful CWS-CARES Version 1 Go-Live in October 2026.





CARES  
Child Welfare Services

**CWS-CARES will *fundamentally change how families, children in foster care, and tribal partners experience the child welfare system.***



# Learn More about CWS-CARES



## Follow our Progress

---

[Subscribe to the CWS-CARES Weekly Digest](#) to receive the latest communications every Monday

Non-urgent, informational project updates

[CARES Explorer Newsletters](#)

[CWS-CARES Progress & Engagement Summaries](#)

Stakeholder Briefing registration reminders

## Webpages & Portals

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[CWDS Bulletins](#) & [CWS-CARES User Resources](#) webpage

[Infographics, Flyers and Slogans](#) webpage

[CWS-CARES Public Library](#) & [FAQs](#)

**Account login required:**

[Product Demonstrations](#) webpage

[External Systems, Training, & Implementation Portals](#)

[FCED Hub](#)

## Meetings & Webinars

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View the [CWDS Meetings and Events Calendar](#) for the latest schedule of upcoming activities.

[CWS-CARES Stakeholder Briefings](#)

External Systems Monthly Meetings

Upcoming demonstrations

Have a question? Send it to Customer Relations at [CWS\\_CustRel@otsi.ca.gov](mailto:CWS_CustRel@otsi.ca.gov)

# CWS-CARE

Advancing child welfare,  
together.



**CARES**  
Child Welfare Services

# Thank you!

Have a question? Send it  
to Customer Relations at

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