

Updated Youth Diversion and Development Quarterly Data Dashboard: Youth Referred to YDD Programs by July 1, 2021

Section 1: Overview of all Referrals Received by YDD Providers To-Date

The Los Angeles County Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) initiative began receiving referrals for our first program cohort in April 2019. This first cohort included 8 program locations with the goal of expanding by 5-10 locations each year to reach full, countywide implementation by 2024. As of July 1, 2021, the organizations in the first YDD cohort received 837 total youth referrals from Culver City Police Department, El Monte Police Department, Pasadena Police Department, Huntington Park Police Department, Long Beach Police Department, Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, and most recently the District Attorney’s Office (see Figure 1).

Implementation has been staggered since the launch of the program with referral partners coming on board at different times. In 2021, the YDD network is prioritizing increasing the number of youth served by both bringing on additional program locations and substantially increasing the proportion of eligible youth referred per month with the goal of receiving referrals for ~ 80% of youth arrests in each partnering law enforcement jurisdiction. YDD has not reached an initial benchmark of receiving an average of approximately 100 referrals per month by July 2021 as hoped. YDD is committed to continuing to strive for an increase in youth diversion across partnerships and across LA County. The launch of Cohort 2 sites will increase YDD’s ability to connect youth with services.

Of total referrals received to-date, 73% are pre-booking referrals, 10% are post-booking referrals, and 17% are pre-filing diversion referrals from the DA’s Office; approximately 10% are informal youth development referrals that will not require status reports to referring agencies due to age or nature of incident that led to referral. As a result of the DA’s Dec. 2020 policy for presumptive youth diversion for misdemeanor and non-707(b) felony offenses, YDD saw a substantial increase in new referrals with DA referrals representing 53% of all new referrals in the first half of 2021.

Figure 1. Youth Referred to YDD Programs by Month, July 2021 (n=837)



Fig. 2. Total YDD Referrals by Completion Status, July 2021 (n=837)

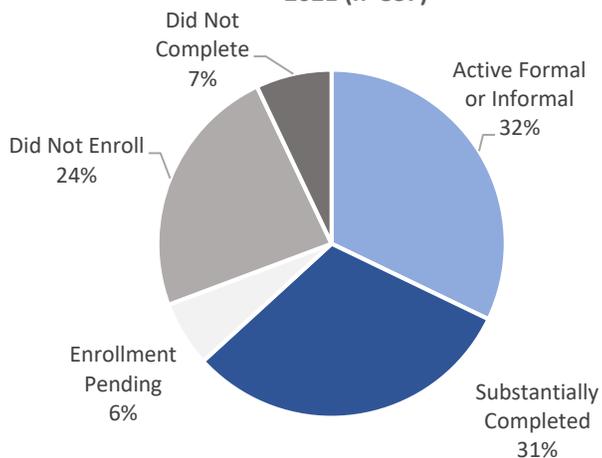


Fig. 3. Most Common Types of Youth Goals, July 2021

The top 5 most common youth goals for youth participating in YDD programs are:

1. School-Related Goals (24%)
2. Civic Engagement or Social Justice Goals (14%)
3. Behavioral Health Goals (13%)
4. Recreational or Creative Goals (11%)
5. Work-Related Goals (10%)

Remaining categories of youth goals in order of frequency include: conflict resolution and restorative goals, mental health goals, family-related goals, cultural or spiritual goals, physical health goals, and other.

Section 2: Demographic Information for Youth Formally Referred to Diversion

Nationwide trends show that Black youth are consistently more likely than their peers to be arrested and less likely to be referred to diversion programs. Black youth are disproportionately arrested in Los Angeles County—youth arrests reported in recent years are consistently about 62% Hispanic/Latinx, 24% Black/African American, 10% White, and 4% Asian/Pacific Islander or “Other.” YDD works to reduce the disproportionate arrest of Black youth and advance equitable access to community alternatives to justice system involvement by ensuring that youth are not disproportionately excluded from diversion referral, enrollment, or completion by race, age, or gender (Figures 4-6).

Fig. 4. Formal YDD Referrals by Race and Ethnic Identity, July 2021 (n=779)

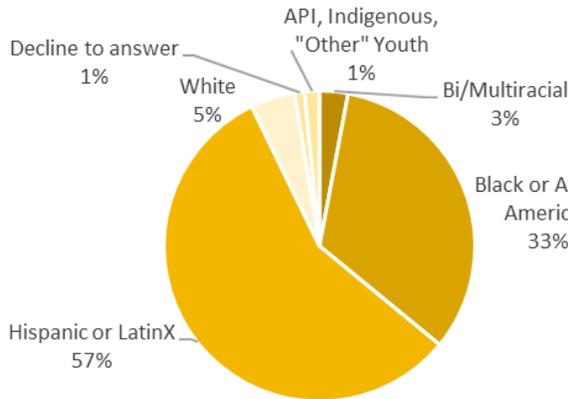


Fig. 5. Formal YDD Referrals by Age, July 2021 (n=751)

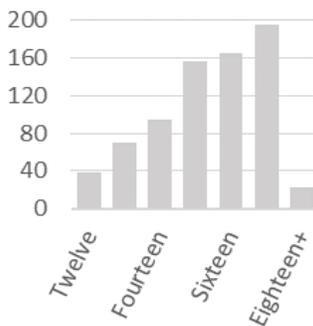
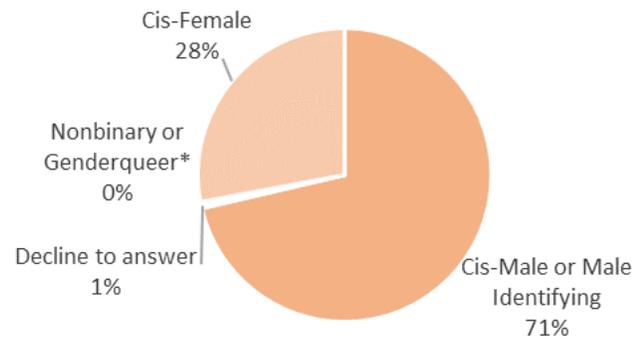


Fig. 6. Formal YDD Referrals by Gender Identity, July 2021 (n=705)



* Two young people identified as nonbinary or genderqueer

Section 3: Incident Data for Youth Formally Referred to Diversion

The majority of referrals to YDD programs are the result of law enforcement stops at school or in the community (Figure 7). Although some providers have established relationships with local schools, the YDD network will be supported by the Youth Justice Reimagined initiative to develop a concrete plan in 2021 to better collaborate with schools to reduce school-based arrests. We also hope to finalize an assessment of current capacity and needs related to reducing arrests and increasing referrals to supportive alternatives for youth living in group homes.

Fig. 7. Formal YDD Referrals by Location of Law Enforcement Stop, July 2021 (n=467)

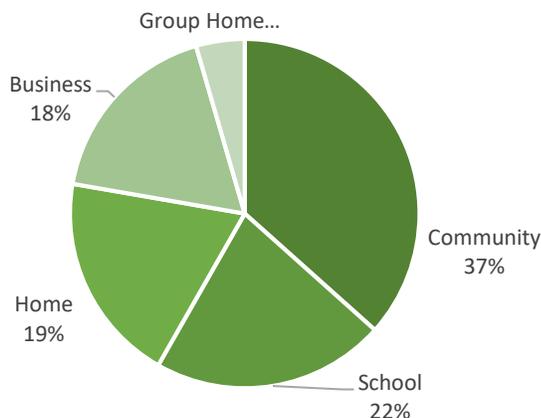
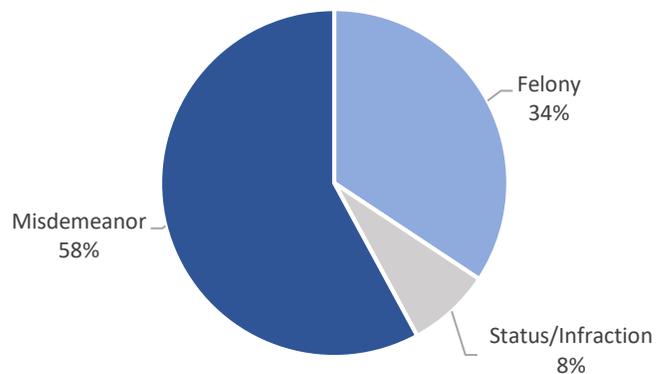


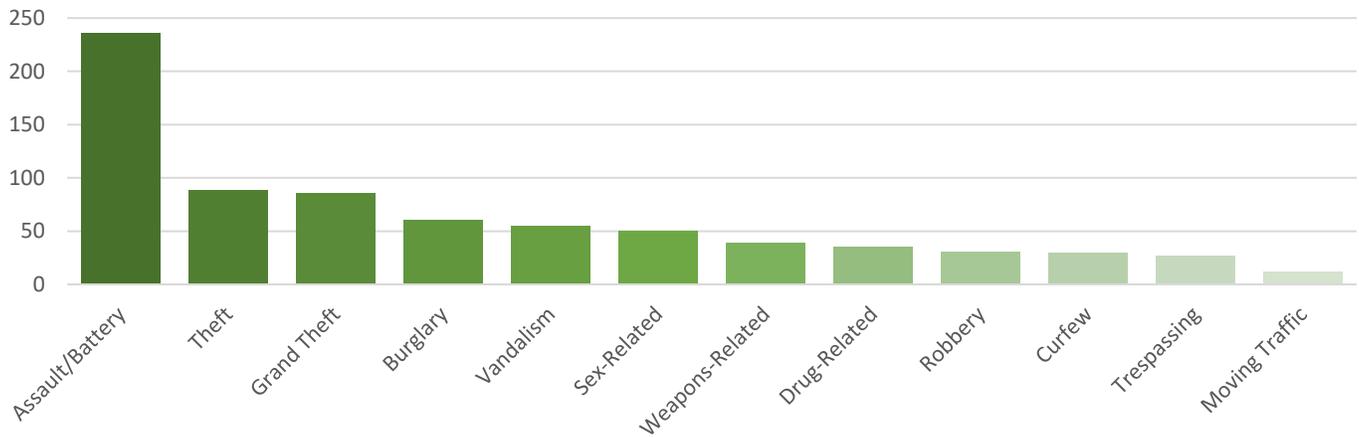
Fig. 8. Formal YDD Referrals by Level of Alleged Offense, July 2021 (n=708)



Of youth formally referred to diversion so far, 34% have been referred for alleged felonies and 58% have been referred for alleged misdemeanors (Figure 8). Although the percentage of referrals for alleged felonies is promising, referrals for low-level misdemeanor and status offenses or infractions are not currently aligned with YDD policy

guidelines. YDD staff is working with program leadership and law enforcement leadership to transition referrals for alleged status offenses and misdemeanor petty theft offenses to the informal rather than formal participation status in alignment with the YDD model’s implementation and data sharing guidelines (Figure 9).

Fig. 9. Formal YDD Referrals by Type of Alleged Offense with >10 Referrals, July 2021 (n=746)



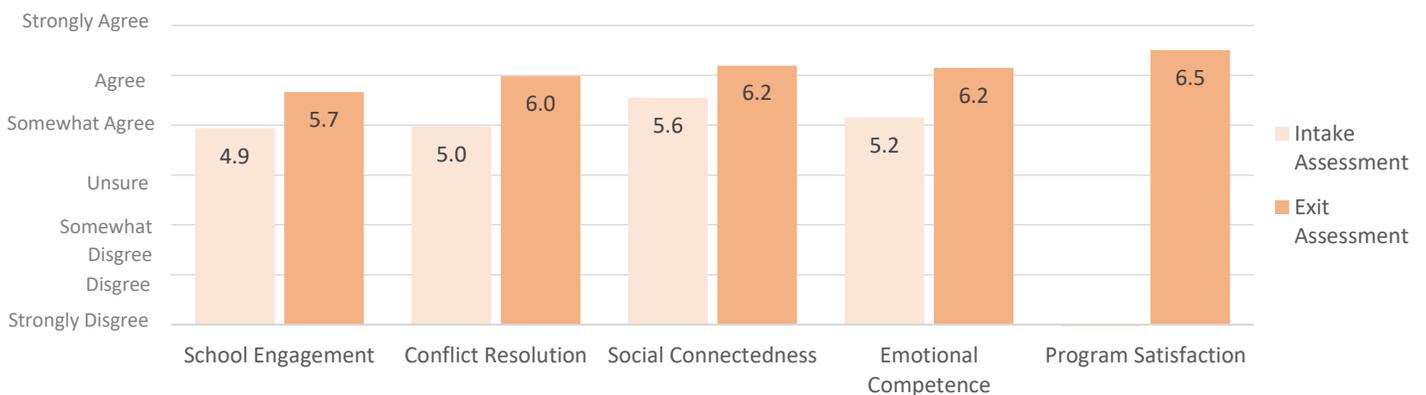
YDD has been working to include comparison data for young people who are not referred to diversion across program locations. YDD initially planned to have complete comparison data by this quarter’s dashboard, however we still do not have full comparison data for young people who are not referred to diversion across program locations. YDD is committed to providing complete comparison data to better contextualize the youth diversion landscape across Los Angeles County and is building data sharing agreements with law enforcement partners.

Section 4: Connections to Activities and Services and Progress Over Time

The most common categories of activities and services included in individualized YDD programs based on youth needs and goals so far have been: 1) school-related support (including tutoring and educational rights advocacy), 2) restorative and transformative practices (including conflict resolution and civic engagement / social justice), 3) recreational and arts activities (including dance classes and connections to local sports), and 4) work-related support (including employment and career development).

When asked about their level of satisfaction with the YDD program during their exit interview, 96% of youth have shared that they are satisfied with the program. On average, participants have shown increases in their protective factors across the board over the course of their participation, increasing the average score across the board from an average of 5 to an average of 6 where 1 is strong disagreement and 7 is strong agreement (Figure 10).

Fig. 10. Average Protective Factor Scores at Intake and Exit Assessment, July 2021



Section 5: Case Study Shared by a YDD Care Coordinator in 2021

Case Study #1

Each young person carries their own unique experiences, stories, struggles, and hopes with them through our doors. No two are the same in the load they bear. One youth comes to mind when I think through the battles our youth overcome each day and the layers of themselves that they show to us—Emma. One of Emma’s parents was incarcerated, and working with Emma felt like an opportunity to interrupt a cycle of trauma she found herself in. From the facts of her case alone, I knew she would need to dedicate a lot of herself to a process that would enable her to overcome her circumstances, and I was ready to support her through this journey.

Leading up to her diversion, Emma struggled with bullying in school and turned to pledge allegiance to a gang for a sense of acceptance. She struggled with addiction and prostitution, all the while, her family was facing eviction concerns. When she was referred to us, she was overwhelmed by news of a pregnancy. I knew I needed to build up trust with her fast so she could begin to embrace the changes to come. Together, we laid out her personal needs and goals for the next few months and built out a service plan to help her achieve them.

For two months, she persevered consistently through addiction counseling, therapy, and parenting classes, all while remaining a part-time student in school. We also worked to make the conditions around her more favorable for her personal growth and success. She restored her relationships with family and enrolled in a different school to have a fresh start and move past her known triggers. Her grades improved and she was proudly sober for the duration of her time in the program. After taking care of her needs and learning how to respect herself, she feels excited about her baby and the support system she has built around her family.

Her strength coupled with her extreme circumstances highlight the importance of providing opportunities for the youth who are enduring the most. For many, this is their first glance at a program that centers their wellbeing. I do not know what Emma’s journey would have looked like if she were incarcerated, but I am grateful that she found the stability and support she was needing sooner rather than later.