

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BREAKING BARRIERS TO ENROLLING IN YDD

## WITH A FOCUS ON YOUNG WOMEN OF COLOR

### INTRO TO YDD & THE YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

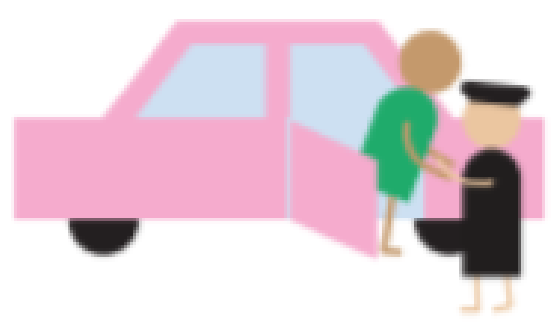
Los Angeles County’s Department of Health Services Office of Diversion and Reentry Division of Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) is a countywide initiative that focuses on building up and strengthening pathways for youth to connect with diversion service providers. The youth diversion model allows for young people to opt into whole-person rehabilitation programming that centers on mentorship, connection to community care services, and restorative justice practices. Time in these programs allows for young people to have their arrest records sealed and connect with professionals who are equipped to support concrete goals for diversion and their future.

YDD’s Youth Fellowship incorporates youth voice directly into the building and improvement of diversion pathways countywide. As a YDD Youth Fellow, Alexia Cina focused her work on using data combined with her lived experiences to guide strategic recommendations to improve diversion enrollment. She analyzed barriers to enrollment for youth who were eligible for diversion, with a focus on young women of color. Her recommendations prioritize clear and honest communication with young people, with an emphasis on how these programs can best serve them and their personal growth and development.

### *Diversion Model, with Recommended Strategies to Promote Enrollment*

#### 1 Youth receive a referral to YDD in lieu of arrest

YDD should develop referral communications tools and trainings to make sure that when making a referral, officers explain more about benefits of youth diversion and development to both youth and families.



#### 2 Community provider initiates contact with youth

YDD should identify concrete support to increase and improve provider outreach to young people and families or guardians, especially for young people who may live in group homes or other DCFS placements.

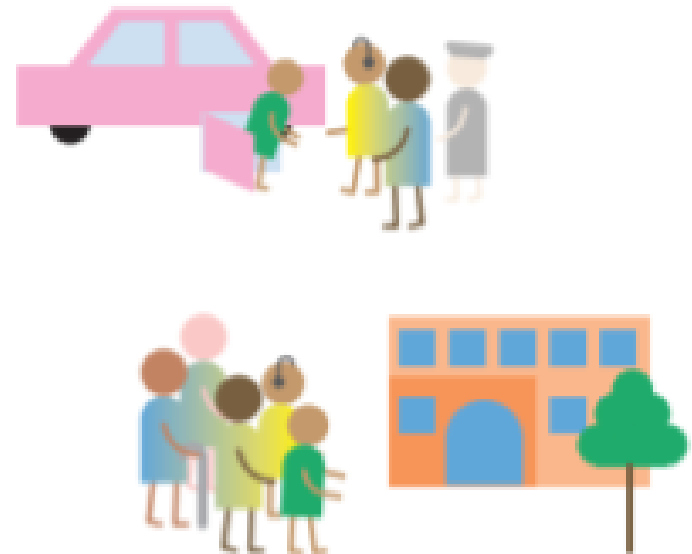


#### 3 Diversion goals are created

Once enrolled, they create diversion goals; if they complete those goals, youth won’t have an arrest record.

Providers should make sure a young person and guardian’s first impression of diversion is clear, thorough, compelling.

- Be mindful to reduce time burden associated with program.
- Emphasize benefits versus arrest.
- Explain what youth will be offered, helped with, grow and learn from.
- Especially for young women: share how they will be accepted and mentored by someone they can relate and open up to.



**MAIN BARRIER**

**Youth and Guardians Chose Traditional Legal Process**

Benefits of Diversion Unclear to Families

**Emphasize Tangible Benefits**

- Record Sealing
- Connections to Services

**Emphasize Intangible Benefits**

- Acceptance
- Mentors to relate to
- Fulfilling personal goals

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME