

## DRAFT

### CREDIBLE MESSENGER MENTORING, PROGRAMMING AND REENTRY Pilot in Campus Kilpatrick and Communities

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#### BACKGROUND

On July 27, 2021, a substitute motion authored by Supervisors Kathryn Barger and Hilda Solis was passed regarding recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) Subcommittee, formed under the mandate of SB 823 to develop a plan that included but was not limited to a description of the local facilities, programs, services and supervision appropriate to both rehabilitate and supervise youth instead of committing them to the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). That plan is due to the newly created Office of Youth and Community Restoration on January 1, 2022. The JJRBG is chaired by the Probation Department, and includes representatives from the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Mental Health, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the Court, and five board-appointed community members.

In the meantime per SB 823, intake to DJJ has ended on July 1, 2021 (except in cases where a transfer motion has been filed). Subsequent legislation passed earlier this year in May 2021 clarified that DJJ would ultimately close on June 30, 2023. It also provided additional guidance on local implementation, including the use of the least restrictive dispositions for youth wherever possible, and the creation or designation of the most restrictive option, a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) to house and care for youth who may have otherwise been committed to DJJ. Given the need to have clear local alternatives available to serve youth who can no longer be committed to DJJ, the JJRBG submitted initial recommendations ahead of the intake closing on July 1, 2021, including designating SYTFs for boys and girls.

Among other directives, the motion passed on July 27, 2021 instructs “the JJRBG Subcommittee to devise a plan, with input from the Youth Justice Transition Advisory Group, community service providers, and Probation Department labor partners that includes supportive programming (including, among other needs, community-based programming inside facilities to link youth to re-entry services), a transformative staffing model (e.g. co-staffing model and employment of credible messengers from outside of the Probation Department) that facilitates a safer more therapeutic environment at all SYTFs, as well as a plan to ensure that a continuum of less restrictive options, including diversion, will be available.” The directive asks for a report-back “in writing in 45 days with an update on progress, and report to the Board every 60 days thereafter to keep the Board informed.” This report-back is a first 45-day update since the passage of the motion.

The July 27<sup>th</sup> motion also designated Campus Kilpatrick as the temporary SYTF for boys. In light of that designation and intake ending to DJJ, the recommendations here focus specifically on staffing and programming implementation at Kilpatrick, with the intention that these measures would move or extend to the more permanent SYTF once it is designated.

## **PROCESS**

Per the motion, the JIRBG has worked closely with the Youth Justice Transition Advisory Group (YJAG) to develop an initial plan for transformative staffing and programming. It will continue to collaborate on developing further proposals to ensure a continuum of less restrictive options, including diversion, will be available to serve youth as an alternative to DJJ. The YJAG is a body launched in July 2021 to further the vision of “Youth Justice Reimagined” (YJR) – the culminating proposed model developed over the course of 2020 by over 120 stakeholders and adopted in November 2021 by the Board of Supervisors to transform youth justice and shift functions of the probation department into a care-first oriented, new Department of Youth Development. The YJAG again involves over 120 representatives of various county and community agencies, working through seven workgroups to further develop and implement YJR. The JIRBG will consult with labor partners to further solicit and incorporate input on the plans proposed below.

Over several months, the JIRBG heard presentations from various county agencies about the supports and services they already provide to youth in juvenile camps and halls and that can benefit youth in a SYTF setting –including from the Department of Mental Health, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Workforce Development, Juvenile Court Health Services and others. The JIRBG also heard from Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC), a community-based, reentry organization led by formerly incarcerated members who serve youth charged with the most serious offenses once a week at Sylmar Juvenile Hall. Recently, the YJAG and JIRBG received presentations on “credible messengers” from Clinton Lacey, a founder of the Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement and formerly Director of the District of Columbia Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services and Deputy Commissioner for adult operations at the New York City Department of Probation. In both Washington DC and New York, the probation departments or equivalents have employed credible messenger mentoring in different ways, including as programming in the community and facilities and as fully integrated staffing within facilities.

The proposals rely on the expertise of Mr. Lacey and organizations already employing community leaders with system experience and community background that render them uniquely credible and effective with justice-involved youth. The proposals further integrate feedback from the broad stakeholder group that comprise the YJAG.

### **CREDIBLE MESSENGERS: TRANSFORMATIVE STAFFING, PROGRAMMING AND REENTRY**

The JIRBG proposes credible messengers mentoring as a transformative staffing, programming and reentry model to overlay existing staffing and programs at Campus Kilpatrick. Below is a plan for an initial launch of credible messengers, focused on implementation at Kilpatrick and in the community to build community capacity to support youth across secure and community settings.

This proposal describes a credible messenger model to serve all youth at Campus Kilpatrick through a system-wide, integrated staffing and programming approach grounded in the lived experiences and leadership of the most system-impacted communities. Kilpatrick is a critical and urgent first site for a systematic credible messenger project because: 1) it has been designated by the County to serve as the temporary “Secure Youth Treatment Facility” to serve male youth locally as the Division of Juvenile Justice has ended intake and closes in 2023; and 2) it is a site where the “LA Model” was implemented but has yet to be fully realized.

Credible messengers as a transformative staffing and programming model has the potential to achieve the following objectives at Kilpatrick:

- 1) **Promote youth’s development and healing** through community leaders who accompany youth, build healthy and trusting relationships with them, provide mentoring and programming and are integrated and embedded in all relevant staffing meetings and decisions;
- 2) **Support and transform all facility staff** through co-training and collaboration to ensure safety and security within a facility and transform and increase the efficacy of overall practices and programming;
- 3) **Expand, strengthen and connect the existing work of various community-based organizations doing credible messenger and other work** by integrating and embedding them full-time in the overall facility staffing and supporting and facilitating collaboration and training them through dedicated infrastructure.

### **Theory of Change and Definition of Credible Messengers**

In order to help break current cycles of violence, justice system involvement, and marginalization; and to address the long-term impacts on young people of color, sustained investment in the most impacted communities is required.

Such an investment should focus on the recruitment, development, and empowerment of Credible Messengers – indigenous natural leaders who have successfully navigated their own prior involvement in the justice system, share similar life experiences with current justice-involved young people, and are poised to have a transformative impact on an individual, family, community and systemic level.

### **Credible Messenger Mentoring in Secure Settings, Reentry and the Community**

Credible Messenger Mentoring brings highly trained community members into secure facilities to provide “transformative mentoring” to the residents via a series of programs and activities. While not traditional agency employees, Credible Messengers work in conjunction with facility programmatic, clinical treatment staff to provide a holistic set of supports to the youth.

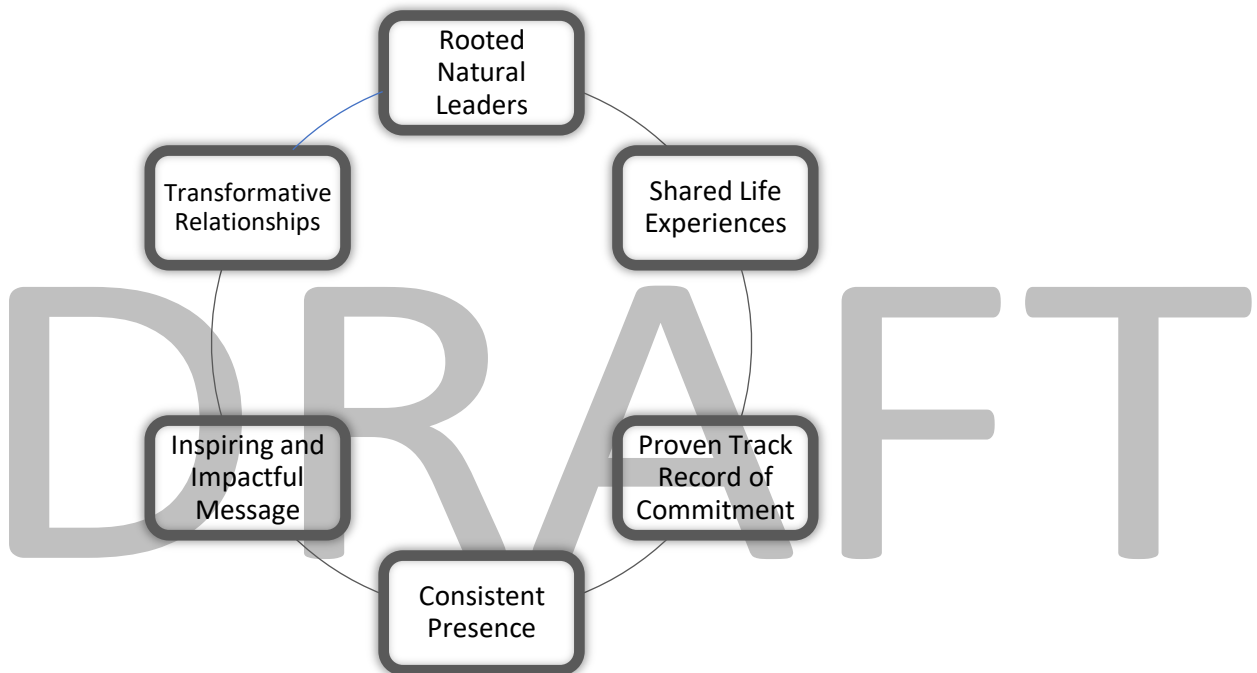
In addition, Credible Messengers provide support and mentorship for youth “re-entering” from the secure facility. Youth transitioning from Campus Kilpatrick will be enrolled and engaged by Credible Messengers in the community to ensure the continuity and continuation of supportive relationships, supports and programming. Importantly, this mentorship support can serve a

critical function as a “step down” to a less restrictive program to serve the baseline confinement time as required by SB 823.

**Components of Credible Messengers Transformative Mentoring Practice:**

- Designed to promote Healing, Development and Restoration
- Intentional, Structured, Systemic
- Long-Term Commitment
- Focused on Transforming Thinking and Behavior
- Built upon a Healthy, Trusting Relationship

**Who are Credible Messengers?**



Note that while other staffing at Kilpatrick (probation officers, mental health practitioners, and others) may have similar backgrounds and lived experiences with youth, credible messengers play a distinct role as staff outside of the system. Credible Messengers do not hold positions of authority that can deprive youth of their freedom as do probation officers.

**Youth Engaged in Credible Messenger Mentoring Process** – In addition to individualized treatment, programming and education, youth engaged with Credible Messengers will participate in:

- Restorative group work
- Individual transformative mentoring
- Crisis intervention

- Development of individualized lifepath plan<sup>1</sup>
- Proactive support and co-navigation
- Connection to services, resources, and opportunities via government and community-based organizations

Among the anticipated outcomes are healing, restoration, development of pro-social life skills, attainment of educational/vocational goals that lead to viable career pathways and recidivism reduction.

**Training for Credible Messenger Mentoring** – The following are key areas that Credible Messengers are trained in:

- Positive Youth Justice Framework
- Adolescent Brain Development & the Impact of Trauma
- Healing Centered Engagement
- The Art and Science of Hope
- Restorative Justice Practices
- Individual Transformative Mentoring
- Crisis Intervention & Conflict Resolution
- Life Path Planning & Fundamentals of Care Coordination
- Co-navigating Services, Resources, and Opportunities via Government and Community-based Organizations

**Key Credible Messenger Roles & Responsibilities** – The full-time credible messenger team will collaborate with probation and other staff in planning, administering, and facilitating its youth engagement functions, and will participate in relevant staff meetings to support the overall goals of youth healing, restoration, development and reintegration into the community.

Specifically, credible messengers will:

- Form trusting relationships and lines of communication with youth
- Provide individual transformative mentoring sessions
- Facilitate restorative focused group activities (independently and in conjunction with designated staff)
- Accompany youth as they matriculate through their day/evening
- Credible Messenger Program Implementation
- Document interactions with youth in designated database
- Participate in relevant staff meetings

**Key Probation and Camp Staff Roles & Responsibilities** – Credible messengers should collaborate with and be integrated into existing probation, education, behavioral health and other staff, whose key roles in relation to credible messengers would include:

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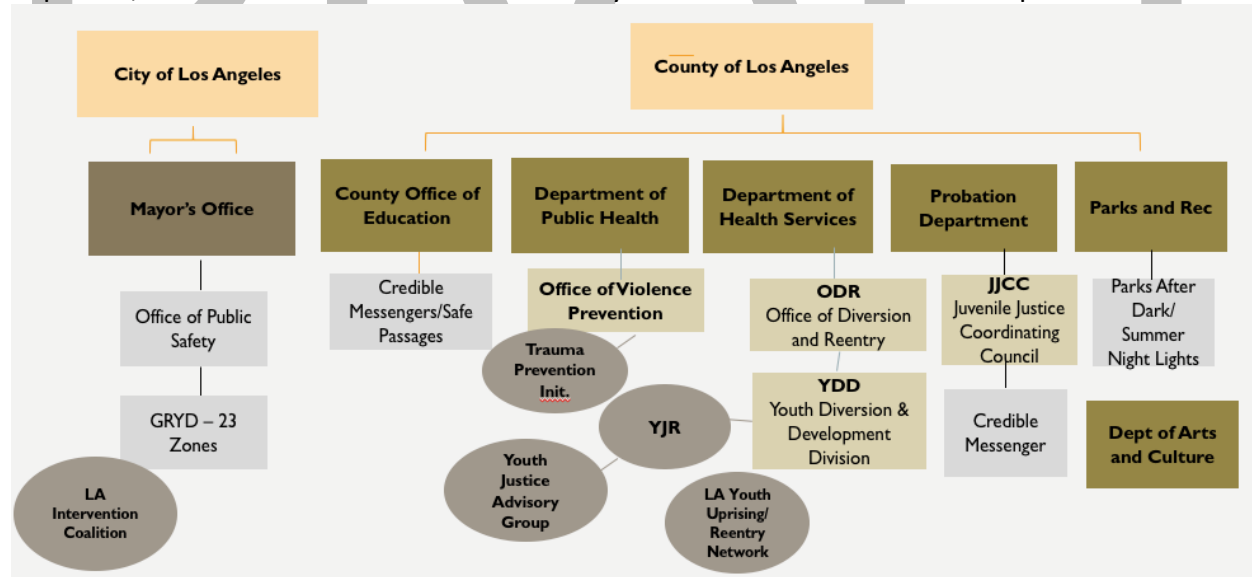
<sup>1</sup> Importantly, these Individual Lifepath Plans will build on and compliment the Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP) required for youth committed to Campus Kilpatrick as a Secure Youth Treatment Facility. The Credible Messenger will participate in the development of the youth’s Individual Rehabilitation Plan.

- **Agency/Facility Leadership:** Set vision & tone for infusing credible messengers into the culture and framework of the facility. Ensure appropriate staffing levels, space and resources are available.
- **Safety, Security and Operations Staff:** Support credible messenger work by facilitating access, movement and coverage of relevant facility spaces.
- **Behavioral Health Staff:** Facilitate an overall youth engagement (programmatic and treatment) framework for youth; assist with incorporating credible messengers into the framework and co-facilitate various interactions with youth.
- **Restorative Justice Staff:** Co-facilitate development of youth engagement framework and co-facilitate various interactions with youth.

## Local Landscape

The concept, principles and work underlying what is called “Credible Messengers” here is certainly not new – community-rooted leaders with relevant lived experience have always been working to support and transform youth, their communities and systems. This proposal imagines Credible Messengers as building on work already happening to become a broader, integrated and transformative systems approach. It would expand, strengthen and connect the existing work of various community-based organizations doing such work by integrating and embedding them full-time in the justice system – both inside facilities and in the community – and facilitating collaboration and training them through dedicated infrastructure.

Below are some existing structures and initiative that planning for Credible Messengers at Kilpatrick, other facilities and in the community should connect to and build upon:



## Scope of Work in Kilpatrick and Reentry/Community Settings

To serve up to 60 youth at Kilpatrick, the proposed project would include:

- **Building a team of 10 full-time, integrated Credible Messengers at the Kilpatrick facility** in a Transformative Mentoring process that focuses on the core domains of

positive youth development, restorative justice practices, behavioral health and wellness, lifepath planning, and various other support services. This should include identifying and connecting with existing groups already working in this capacity at Kilpatrick and other probation facilities, who should be integrated full-time as part of the 10 Credible Messengers cohort.

- **Building an additional team of 30 community based Credible Messengers** will serve as both a connecting “safety net” for youth transitioning from Camp Kilpatrick, and an ongoing structured support network for youth in the community – embedded in schools and/or community-based organizations.
- **Identifying and engaging an intermediary to facilitate processes and infrastructure, towards creating sustainable capacity and infrastructure within the Youth Diversion and Development Office and eventual Department of Youth Development, to support and facilitate collaboration among various credible messenger provider organizations,** which will employ and contract, train, manage and support the 10 credible messenger mentors who will each directly engage and serve up to 60 justice-involved youth.
- **Designing an intermediary to facilitate ongoing implementation and further planning with a core, community-led planning team** for project implementation, including co-designing training and other capacity-building efforts that leverages what community-based organizations and city and county agencies are already doing. This should explore connections to existing training and capacity-building led by the Office of Violence Prevention, Urban Peace Institute, Youth Diversion and Development, Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD) and others.
- **Conducting training and capacity-building with all probation, behavioral health, education and other staff** at Kilpatrick as well as any other sites that could benefit.

The next steps to pilot Credible Messengers include:

- 1) Stakeholder Consensus and Refinement of Program Model
- 2) Define Scope of Service and Implementation Timeline
- 3) Identify funding for Project
- 4) Procurement of Credible Messenger Services
- 5) Credible Messenger Trainings and Orientations
- 6) Begin Program Operation
- 7) Credible Messenger Program Operation
- 8) Track & Evaluate Impacts and Outcomes

## Program Budget

### Personnel Services:

- 32 Credible Messengers \$ 2M (\$50K each + .25% fringe)
- 8 Lead Credible Messengers \$ 700K (\$70K each + 25% fringe)

- Intermediary Organization(s) \$ 500K (fiscal, program, management, etc.)
- Admin. Support \$ 100K
- Provider Planning Team. \$ 100K

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\$ 3.4 M

- Transportation \$ 50K
- Supplies. \$ 50K
- Activities \$ 100K
- Admin Fees \$ 150K

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\$ 350K

Total Operational Budget \$ 3.75 M

**Training & Technical Assistance:**

- 40-hour Intensive Training \$ 35K
- 80 hours per month for 12 months \$ 190

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\$ 225K

Total Program Budget \$ 3.975 M

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RE-ENTRY

The recommendations below build on those in the Youth Justice Reimagined Report to:

- **Provide flexible funding and support to a network of community-based re-entry providers**, who represent the geographic and demographic diversity of Los Angeles, build long-term relationships with young people while they are in detention facilities and long after their release so they can support youth throughout their re-entry journey. Resources should be able to support needs such as housing, technology, clothing, transportation, etc. Mechanisms such as a public-private partnership and the County’s Master Services Agreement/Solicitation process should be explored to determine the best options to expedite funding to CBOs; funding options should also create for capacity-building and a community of learning for the re-entry team, as mentioned above.
- **Pair community-based reentry providers** with youth, family/caregivers, credible messenger and the secondary Deputy Probation Officer early in their commitments to camps or SYTF and engage those providers in their Multi-Disciplinary Team planning to support their progress and transition back home.



- **Largely staff and fund reentry work in facilities and the community by credible messengers and youth development/health workers**, as described above. The credible messenger contractors shall include space for systems involved youth who have personal experience of transitioning from incarceration and/or child welfare themselves and can serve as re-entry systems navigators and/or youth development/community health workers.
- **Promote workforce development** as part of reentry through 1) building partnerships with employers in growing sectors with living-wage jobs such as tech, entertainment and other trades to help train and place reentering youth in good jobs; and 2) investing in the development (via scholarships, training, job placement, etc.), contracting with community-based agencies experienced in providing **employment services** to this population.
- Contract with Community College to hire Professional Career Counselors/vocational navigators to provide and ensure a continuum of academic advisement and to assist with (post release) enrollment, financial aid options, and enrollment in advanced study and certified programming upon release..

Ongoing work in the county with experienced re-entry providers and youth who have transitioned from incarceration underscore the importance of tailoring a re-entry plan to meet each young person's unique needs to set them up for success. Some important elements of re-entry services include:

- Permanent and transitional supportive housing
- Meaningful connections to job opportunities and professional development, including training and linkage to living wage jobs
- Academic support and assistance with enrolling in college and applying for scholarships and financial aid
- Providing a setting that helps young people expand their networks and facilitates fellowship and a sense of community, with new friendships and positive role models
- Support in advocacy, such as building relationships with Probation Officers, and someone who can speak to the courts and systems-actors about the young person's positive changes and aspirations
- Support and engagement of the family to help them prepare for the young person's re-entry, understand the process, and provide linkage to needed supports
- Culturally relevant counseling for the youth and family members which allows them to open up about their fears and experiences, address trauma, and build trusting relationships to help with the transition.
- Provide access to technology (phones, laptops, etc) and training to use technology, such as using email, word processing, and/or apps.
- Substance use and addiction support.
- Provide needed resources and assistance in accessing/enrolling in them such as clothes, technology, ID's, Driver's licenses, bus passes, EBT, and MediCal.
- Connection to political education and organizing opportunities for youth empowerment

For initial implementation at Kilpatrick, Dorothy Kirby Center (DKC) and in the community, the next steps include:

- 1) Securing information on the current agreements with providers that can provide identified services via the current contract and/or the options that can be sought to expand agreements to serve SYTF youth.
- 2) Identifying any geographic or other gaps in services for SYTF youth and other facility youth and explore options to address needs/treatment plans. .
- 3) Developing a budget and private-public funding mechanism for a network of community-based providers to provide reentry at the designated facility and in the community.
- 4) Develop a strategy that ensures that SYTF youth receive comprehensive integrated treatment plans with services prioritized and sequenced to a meet the needs of each youth. Pair and engage those providers with each youth and their MDTs

## **PROGRAMMING GENERALLY**

In its June report to the Board, the JIRBG described the goals of supports and services:

*Youth will be provided with intentional and targeted interventions using a positive youth development approach and evidence-based practices which will result in the following objectives:*

- 1) *Improve the psycho-social functioning of youth by using evidence-based mental health;*
- 2) *Increase the developmental assets of youth by providing healing and trauma informed services;*
- 3) *Improve educational outcomes of youth by providing individualized educational and counseling services;*
- 4) *Improve family functioning through Family Assessment and Support Team co-case management services;*
- 5) *Improve self-sufficiency through jobs and post-secondary education linkages and supports.*

To tailor programming and supports for any youth, the JIRBG recommended a comprehensive assessment of the youth be conducted post-adjudication. To determine whether specialized treatment is needed for youth who have sexually offended, well researched risk assessment techniques should explore which factors contribute to sexual and nonsexual recidivism, given the nature of behaviors underlying sex offense adjudications range dramatically – from developmentally normal, to inappropriate to abusive, aggressive and violent behaviors. The assessment additionally should also include appraisal of comorbid psychiatric, neuropsychological, trauma related, and substance abuse factors. Treatment planning should be individually tailored accordingly. There is no convincing evidence that specialized treatment programs for those committing sex offenses produce better outcomes than best practice treatment for justice-involved youth generally.

Accordingly, next steps include for overall programming should include:

- Receiving updates from the Probation Department about the development of a comprehensive assessment and plan for SYTF youth, and information and copies of any assessments and case planning used for camp youth generally
- JIRBG working to identify gaps and resources needed in the development of comprehensive assessment and case plan for SYTF youth.

## **CONTINUUM OF LESS RESTRICTIVE OPTIONS, INCLUDING DIVERSION**

The JIRBG has already underscored in its initial report to the Board of Supervisors in June 2021 that “developing and implementing local alternatives to the Division of Juvenile Justice includes strengthening and better utilizing a continuum of care, from community-based supports to out-of-home settings (both non-secure and secure), and reserving secure confinement for youth as a last resort for the shortest duration possible.”

Among the information and initiatives that the JIRBG should and may consider in strengthening the continuum of care for youth who may otherwise have been committed to DJJ are:

- Updates on the status of recommendations and their implementation regarding maintaining the decreased population of incarcerated youth in Los Angeles County – on June 9, 2020, the Board of Supervisors adopted a motion directing Probation and the Youth Diversion and Development Office (YDD) to work with other partners to develop a plan for maintaining reduced numbers of youth in juvenile halls and camps.
- Progress of YDD generally in expanding diversion countywide, including new partnerships with the District Attorney Office and others
- Consultation with Department of Children and Family Services and Office of Child Protection on relevant supports and services in the dependency system in a continuum of care for the target youth population here.