

Memo

To: Los Angeles County Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) Committee
From: Youth Justice Advisory Group (YJAG) Secure County Facilities Workgroup (#5)
Consultants: Laura Ridolfi, Patricia Soung; Clinton Lacey; Kent Mendoza
Date: October 5, 2021
Re: **Workgroup Recommendations on Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP)**

I. BACKGROUND

On October 4, 2021, Youth Justice Advisory Group (YJAG) Secure County Facilities Workgroup (#5) met to discuss input on the process and Template for Individual Rehabilitation Plans developed by the Los Angeles County Probation Department. Members of two other YJAG Workgroups on Reentry and Programming (#7) and Youth Empowerment Support Teams (Workgroup #6) also joined the same discussion and brainstorm.

I. OVERVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL REHABILITATION PLAN (IRP)

According to Welfare and Institutions Code 875(d), within 30 days of making an order to commit a youth to a secure youth treatment facility (SYTF), the court shall receive, review, and approve an individual rehabilitation plan (IRP) that meets the certain requirements. The IRP must be submitted to the court by the probation department and any other agencies or individuals the court deems necessary for the development of the plan. The plan may be developed in consultation with a multidisciplinary team of youth service, mental and behavioral health, education, and other treatment providers who are convened to advise the court for this purpose. The prosecutor and the counsel for the ward may provide input in the development of the rehabilitation plan prior to the court's approval of the plan. The plan may be modified by the court based on all of the information provided. According to statute, the IRP shall:

- A. Identify the youth's needs in relation to treatment, education, and development, including any special needs the ward may have in relation to health, mental or emotional health, disabilities, or gender-related or other special needs.
- B. Describe the programming, treatment, and education to be provided to the ward in relation to the identified needs during the commitment period.
- C. Reflect, and be consistent with, the principles of trauma-informed, evidence-based, and culturally responsive care.
- D. The youth and their family shall be given the opportunity to provide input regarding the needs of the ward during the identification process stated in subparagraph (A), and the opinions of the youth and their family shall be included in the IRP report to the court.

II. DISCUSSION OF IRP AT YJAG WORKGROUP MEETING

The YJAG workgroups discussed how the law around IRPs is the floor, not the ceiling. Workgroup members discussed how to ensure that LA County will ensure it meets the statutory requirements and builds on these requirements to incorporate concepts of Youth Justice Reimagined that promote a healing-based and youth development focused approach.

After a briefing on the law from consultants and a presentation regarding the current IRP process from LA County Probation representative Marybeth Walker, the workgroup was asked to consider a number of questions regarding the IRP:

- What are the most **important questions to guide** the IRP?
- In addition to individuals considered in statute, **who should be included** in the IRP?
- In addition to what is statutorily required, **what other factors should be included** in the IRP?
- **How** do we ensure all factors are adequately considered?
- **How do we ensure that plan are followed with fidelity?**

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations regarding the IRP are summarized based on input at the October 4, 2021 Workgroup meeting:

- (1) **Restoration instead of Rehabilitation** – The County of Los Angeles should consider renaming the “R” in IRP, from “Rehabilitation” to “Restorative Services.” Youth and their families are not broken. Instead of treating youth as needing a “fix” by the system, the frame of the IRP should be about providing resources for healing, growth and development.
- (2) **Guiding Questions** – The IRP should be guided by the following questions:
 - a. What do we need to put in place to help this youth grow up to be their best self?
 - b. How do we help bring this youth home?
 - c. What does this young person say they need to heal and grow?
 - d. What are the youth’s own identified strengths (youth led)? Let the plan flow from the youth’s strengths.
- (3) In addition to the factors considered in the IRP that are enumerated by statute, the IRP should include:
 - a. **A strength-based youth development approach** that is truly individualized and youth-centered – centered on the core competencies all persons need to thrive.
 - b. **Consideration of workforce opportunities** that should be afforded the youth. The IRP should ask: ‘What are we doing to make the youth job ready? What’s the plan to get the youth a good job when they are discharged?’ These services need to be outlined.
 - c. **Consideration of the baseline confinement time**, understanding that youth who are committed with a longer time may have a restorative plan that both considers the baseline time and focuses on how the youth may best “step down” to a less restrictive program as soon as possible.

- d. **Consideration of youth’s cultural identity** – Culturally rooted programs provide Black, Indigenous, Latinx and youth of color a positive frame free of racism, where their identities, language, art, foods, and traditional practices are reflected and affirmed through the contributions, power, and resiliency of their peoples.

(4) **Programming** – The IRP is only as meaningful as the programming and supports ultimately developed, offered to and accessed by youth. Without resorting to a cookie-cutter approach, an IRP could include a robust “menu” of available supports that youth and their YES team discuss, select and tailor to their specific needs.

Youths’ goals in the IRP should be shared with all relevant service providers at the SYTF to ensure they get needs and goals met.

(5) **YES Team** – In addition to those agencies and advocates enumerated by statute to be part of a multi-disciplinary team, Los Angeles County should incorporate input from an appropriate Youth and Empowerment Support (YES) Team as described in Youth Justice Reimagined (YJR). As described in YJR, YES Teams draw on natural supports and existing and positive relationships for youth.

While youth should be empowered to name their allies, participants should include:

- a. Credible Messenger;
- b. Peer Advocate;
- c. Relevant Community and Natural Supports who will maintain connection with the youth regardless of their connection to public systems;
- d. Teachers; Mentors and Coaches;
- e. People who love the young person;
- f. Life skills trainers;
- g. CLC Attorneys; and
- h. Employment/workforce development expert.

These MDT/YES Teams should meet monthly at a minimum. Probation representation indicates the teams would happen monthly. This should be formalized and attorneys should be noticed.

(6) **Quality control or accountability mechanisms** should be put in place to ensure (1) the IRP is compliant with the requirements of W.I.C. 875(d) and is reflective of additional considerations established by the JJRBG Plan; and (2) that the restorative plan that is developed is followed with fidelity. When the IRP is not being followed, partners charged with the plan should be held accountable.

(7) **Data and information** should be collected and tracked on the alignment between the goals identified by youth collectively, and the types of programs that are available (both in the facility and in step downs).

IV. ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

The YAG Workgroup further identified a question and concern about where youth will be when the IRP is being developed, and whether they would remain at the Compound at Barry J. Nidorf, or whether youth could be placed elsewhere.

A number of additional questions were posed to Probation representatives by workgroup members, including:

- 1) Q: Are there examples of some of the plans that have been put forward to get an idea of some of the services that youth will be able to access?
 - A: *Serves that have been ordered include:*
 - *DMH: individual and family counseling*
 - *Juvenile Health services*
 - *Two kids are enrolled with LACOE*
 - *TTP, which is a work program, that is part of vocational support services*
 - *ART provides art and mental services*
 - *ARC provides anti-gang, anger management, life skills and mentorship services*
 - *Anger management services*
 - *Family therapy services*
- 2) Q: How long does it take for the programs to be implemented once a young person reaches a secure youth facility?
 - A: *Services are implemented as soon as Probation receives the plan. DMH is present at the juvenile hall so those services would be implemented immediately. Some of the outside agencies will probably have to coordinate those services*
- 3) Q: If there is an identified need for grief therapy, for example, how is probation determining that the services that they are going to provide are actually compliant with the statute in terms of being evidence based and trauma informed?
 - A: *Probation is still working on that and MDT will provide some information on that as well*
- 4) Q: For the kids that have been committed so far, are they getting any services that are different from what they were receiving in the compound? Client has stated that they are not receiving any additional programming at all.
 - A: *Probation needs to follow-up. Unclear what services were received in the compound.*
- 5) Q: In regard to the rehabilitation services, is there anything that addresses the financial reality that youth will face once they leave, such as workforce development? Is that included in the message of healing and wellness?
 - A: *This will be included so that youth can work on their finances and so that their work hours can produce some funding.*
- 6) Q: Are there going to be any probation officers/case managers to evaluate what resources will be given to youth? It is important for youth to get a variety of resources within the 6 months to present to the board what they're learning, what resources they've been taking advantage of, etc.
 - A: *Anytime a youth is assigned SYTF, within two days probation assigns a DPO that will have weekly contact at minimum to review the IRP with the youth. The DPO,*

youth, and their family are attending the first MDT and will have a monthly MDT with all the partners to ensure the services are implemented and to work with the youth so that all their concerns are addressed before the 6 months.

- 7) Q: What workforce development plans does probation have in mind to connect to the youth that would appeal to the youth's interests?
- *A: Still working on which service providers will be included*
- 8) Q: How is probation identifying what jobs will be useful for a youth based on what specific community they are returning to?
- *A: Probation plans to identify jobs and programs in terms of where the youth is actually returning. Probation is able to identify where the youth is returning early on so they should be able to identify the resources that the youth would need to actually receive services and support (ie. transportation) once they return to the community.*
- 9) Q: Who is part of the multidisciplinary team that develops the IRP so far?
- *Youth and their families*
 - *LACOE and Education services which is part of probation*
 - *Health services*
 - *DMH*
 - *Juvenile court services*
 - *Any county agencies that would support the youth depending on the youth*
 - *DA and PD*
- 10) Q: Are these MDTs monthly?
- *A: Probation has scheduled meetings every Monday if they receive SYTF orders. For a particular young person, the case is assigned to an SYDPO and the youth would meet with that team on a monthly basis.*
- 11) Q: Some kids have been committed to SYTF for more than a month. Have they met with their team since the initial court IRP was presented?
- *A: There have been two kids that have had a progress report*
- 12) Q: 30 days after those kids met with their team, did the team meet for an additional MDT?
- *A: The MDT has just been implemented, so the teams will be meeting soon.*
- 13) Q: Will there be any report from these meetings generated for the court?
- *A: Will need to follow up.*
- 14) Q: Where are we with regard to creating a variety of jobs for youth test out like was offered at DJJ?
- *A: Working on it*
- 15) Q: What's the timeline for that (in reference to previous question)?
- *A: Need to check on that*
- 16) Q: There is legal representation provided to the youth, but is there also a person assigned to a young person to help them appear in front of a judge and articulate what they need to to secure the step down process?
- 17) Q: Who facilitates the MDTs and what guidelines are followed to ensure that youth and families have a voice?
- *A: Usually they are organized by the DPO and DPO will contact all the parties involved. Then they go over the IRP and check-in with the youth about how things are going. Probation should be able to identify if no services are in place or which*

agencies have not started services because the DPOs have contact with the youth on a weekly basis.

18) Q: Currently there are two students enrolled with LACOE. How are the students receiving the education services? Is everything remote?

○ *A: The education services are community workers who go to the site and provide additional support services (ie. tutoring, college prep courses) in addition to the regular classes.*

19) Q: Is the plan moving forward to have all students follow the LACOE model that's provided in camps and hall schools or is there a plan to have a different educational model?

○ *A: Need to follow up*

20) Q: Will credible messengers be able to guide young people to address the stress that comes with having to present yourself in front a judge every 6 months?

○ *A: Once credible messengers are assigned it shouldn't be a problem to then connect them to a youth. And then a process can be established to support that youth. Having the team meetings with the DPO, however, means there shouldn't be kids returning to court not knowing where they are in the process.*