

REPURPOSING AND REIMAGINING CHALLENGER MEMORIAL YOUTH CAMP

In recent years, the County of Los Angeles has made a commitment to focus efforts on helping transition those previously involved with the justice system through Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI).

On October 30, 2018, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to support the repurposing of Challenger Memorial Youth Center (Challenger) into a residential vocational training facility for young adults, and directed the Probation Department and the Chief Executive Officer to develop a comprehensive plan for repurposing Challenger and implementing a pilot residential vocational training program (Program) at the facility, including a summary of the necessary capital improvements, programming, an implementation timeline, a proposed budget, and potential funding sources.

The County has engaged with a consultant to help frame the envisioned Program, which will serve young women and men, ages 18-25, who were formerly involved in the criminal justice and/or foster care systems, who are homeless, or who are otherwise opportunity youth. Those participants who are parents will be permitted to bring their young children. While there, participants will be offered a pathway to education, career counseling and training, comprehensive mental health services and robust life skills.

The Program will also build collaborative partnerships with local community-based organizations, academic institutions, and industries to ensure a robust training and curriculum. It is proposed, that upon successful completion of the Program, participants will be linked with employment and housing opportunities, and will be offered alumni support services.

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MOTION

MITCHELL	_____
KUEHL	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
SOLIS	_____

Challenger is located in the Antelope Valley, one of the most culturally diverse and highest need areas in the County, and historically underserved. As the largest youth probation camp in the country, nearly 220,000 square feet and sitting on 65 acres, Challenger presents an opportunity to redevelop and reimagine how we support our youth. The campus affords plenty of space to operate a comprehensive vocational youth training program, and provides an opportunity to build on existing initiatives, bring resources to the community, and leverage partnerships and investments.

In October 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom signed California Senate Bill 823 (SB 823), a budget trailer bill, that would lead to the closure of the State's youth justice system, the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). In addition, SB 823 mandated the creation of the Office of Youth and Community Restoration, a new State entity that will have the job of guiding counties in creating a system of care, supervision, healing, and rehabilitative programs for the youth who, in the past, would otherwise have been sent to the soon-to-be-closed State facilities. It also created a Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant program to provide the needed funds for the State's 58 counties in order to finance this reimagined approach to youth justice.

The reimagining of Challenger will be a multi-step and multi-phase process, building upon the lessons learned in the renovation of Camps Kilpatrick and Gonzales, and will lead to a first of its kind program for supporting and developing transition aged youth, in line with many of the priorities of our Board.

The County has identified and secured nearly \$10 million in funding, including \$5 million in seed grant funding from the State of California from the 2019-2020 budget, \$3 million in SB678 funding from the 5th Supervisorial District, as well \$1.5 million in Department of Mental Health funding for capital costs.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE, that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to serve as the agent of the County for the reimagining and redevelopment of Challenger (Project).
2. Direct the CEO Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to advocate during FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22 for an additional \$25 million total for the Project.

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3. Delegate and authorize the CEO, or her designee, in coordination with the Center for Strategic Partnerships, the Departments of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services, Children and Family Services, Mental Health, Health Services, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and any other pertinent County Departments or agencies such as the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority (Metro) to:
 - a. Identify and enter into exclusive negotiations with a non-profit organization for the design and operation of the Program;
 - b. Develop recommendations, including implementation schedule, evaluation of funding needs, and a review of available funding streams for capital development; and,
 - c. Report back in 45 days

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KB:aso