

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

July 9, 2024

Supporting Youth-Centered Programming at Juvenile Probation Facilities

On March 21, 2023, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Department of Youth Development (DYD) to take "the lead role in establishing programs and services for youth in the halls and camps" in its motion Care First, Jails Last: Holding the Probation Department Accountable and Advancing Youth Justice Reimagined.¹ The directive was part of a series of motions aimed at addressing the gaps and harms experienced by young people in the Probation Department's (Probation) facilities and shifting youth justice approaches towards a model of rehabilitation and youth development. Delivery of consistent, quality, and structured programming that engages youth and supports their growth and development in facility settings has been shown to be fundamental to youth's rehabilitation and well-being as well as the overall safety of a facility.

In response to last year's motion, DYD proposed an evidence-informed model for programs and services in juvenile facilities based on meetings with Probation staff, youth survey and program data, and a series of listening sessions with over 200 County partners, community-based organizations, and formerly incarcerated youth. The model for a Multi-Level Youth Development Care Coordination in Juvenile Halls and Probation

¹ Motion by Supervisors Horvath and Mitchell: <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/178970.pdf>

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MOTION

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Camps would build on current efforts and implement best and promising practices in service coordination, contracting, and clearances to improve access to a trauma-responsive and culturally relevant continuum of care that supports youth through release and reentry.

As DYD builds out a fuller model, it has focused on responding to the urgent programming needs in facilities by investing additional resources in some existing contracts and partnerships with other County Departments to increase the availability of supportive activities and services. This has included launching a Drum Corps program at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall (BJNJH), in partnership with the Department of Arts and Culture, Probation, and the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles, to provide youth with an opportunity to learn how to play instruments, read music, and connect with musical programming and employment opportunities upon returning home. DYD has also invested in The Swan Within's Balletics Program at BJNJH, to engage youth in weight training, outdoor strength conditioning exercises, ballet exercise, and holistic wellness practices.

A year later, the need to support youth through structured programming is even more urgent considering the Board and State Community Corrections' (BSCC) findings in February that BJNJH and Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (LPJH) were unsuitable for youth. Among its conclusions, at that time, the BSCC found the lack of available or consistent programming for youth in both facilities to be an ongoing concern and noncompliant with the minimum hours of programming and activities required under Title 15. The BSCC found that rehabilitative programming at LPJH was not provided in some units at all. While BJNJH has added a few activities, the BSCC observed that recreational activity for youth remained insufficient at the facility.

DYD faces a unique opportunity and challenge to address these programming gaps with urgency. DYD has been called on to bring its youth development lens and expertise to help solve an ongoing crisis in juvenile Probation facilities, but the ordinary competitive process to procure services is too lengthy to respond to the exigency. Solicitation and contracting can take at least 9–12 months and is made lengthier by the limited capacity of a newer department. Only upon contract award is a service provider assured the resources to hire and prepare for program and service delivery, which can

extend the implementation timeline further.

The County cannot wait a full year for additional service gaps to be filled at Probation's youth facilities. DYD needs broad, time-limited authority to expand its ability to contract with community-based organizations through an expedited process, without eliminating the need to administer a competitive solicitation process in the long-term. DYD currently has authority to contract for Credible Messengers. Through focused outreach to County and community partners as well as an assessment of existing programming hours, frequency by unit and facility, and feedback from youth themselves, DYD has identified several organizations to provide additional programming. These programs include life coaching and a financial literacy program at LPJH; creative mindfulness and strength-based healing arts for youth at BJNJH, Camp Kilpatrick, and Dorothy Kirby; animal training and socialization at Camp Kilpatrick; and a pre-apprenticeship machinist program and vocational training in other facilities. Each organization has prior experience in Probation facilities and is positioned to ramp up quickly upon contract execution.

Such broad authority should be accompanied by additional measures to ensure transparency, fairness, and efficacy. DYD would provide advance notification to the Board about intended contract awards, including the outreach, research, and other methods used to identify service providers, communication, and collaboration with Probation to ensure services are complimentary and address key programming gaps, and the scope, nature, and budget for programs and services to be delivered. The timely alert to the Board would also provide additional vetting to DYD's process.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Find that the Youth-Centered Programming is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the activity is excluded from the definition of a project by Section 21065 of the Public Resources Code and consists of organizational or administrative activity of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment pursuant to Section 15378(b)(5) of the State CEQA Guidelines. This project will grant more flexibility to the Department of Youth Development (DYD) to bring equitable and healing programming and services to the youth housed in the Probation Department's juvenile facilities.

2. Authorize the Director of DYD to negotiate, execute and amend (as necessary) agreements not to exceed one year to implement and expand programming in the camps and halls to meet the urgent needs of youth while detained and during reentry. The maximum contract sum for all of the agreements shall not exceed a grant total of \$2,000,000, which will be fully supported by Senate Bill 823 and Assembly Bill 109 funds in DYD's Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget. Also authorize the Director of DYD to execute up to two six-month extension amendments to be exercised at the discretion of the Director of DYD. The Board shall waive the requirements of Board Policy No.5.100 for these agreements, but DYD shall provide advance notification to the Board at least 30 days prior to the execution of each agreement that shall include the agency name, scope of services, and budget for the upcoming contract award. The agreement(s) and any amendment(s) shall be approved as to form by County Counsel.
3. Direct the Director of DYD to provide a written progress report to the Board, within 180 days, on efforts to launch additional programming and progress on its implementation, including efforts to research, assess, and identify resources to address programming gaps, estimated timelines for implementation upon contract award, and any success and challenges in implementation.

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