

Recommitting to Decarcerating Girls and Gender Expansive Youth in Los Angeles County

On November 30, 2021, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) passed the motion, *Decarceration of Girls and Young Women: Addressing the Incarcerated Youth Population in the Los Angeles County Camps and Halls*.¹ The motion supported the establishment of processes and partnerships to reduce the number of girls and gender-expansive (GGE) youth incarcerated in the County’s juvenile camps and halls, with a focus on community-based, trauma-informed alternatives. While ending girls' incarceration remains a priority for the Board, the County continues to have an average population of approximately 50 GGE youth. The County must establish additional coordinated strategies to move the Ending Girls Incarceration (EGI) Initiative forward. Launched by the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera Institute) in 2017, the EGI Initiative provides a framework for reducing harm to GGE youth and creating meaningful opportunities for them to reenter their communities.

There are young people in custody who do not pose a threat to community safety or themselves, and many could be safely served through community-based alternatives. As of May 20, 2026, of the 49 GGE youth detained in the County, 19 were being held on

¹<https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/164026.pdf>

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bench warrants, 6 on misdemeanors, and 22 were involved with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). On March 1, 2026, there were 53 total GGE youth in custody; of those, 41 were held on non-707(b) offenses, which refers to offenses that are not among the serious or violent crimes outlined in California Welfare and Institutions Code section 707(b).

Black and Latine GGE youth are also disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system. The Vera Institute found that “Black, Indigenous, Latine, and Southeast Asian girls were first involved in the system at younger ages than others.”² Further analysis showed that GGE youth are arrested and detained for low-level offenses at higher rates than boys. In 2022, 44% of GGE youth in California detention were held for misdemeanor charges including assault, vandalism, low-level drug offenses, joyriding, and petty theft. Additionally, in the same year, “29% of the girls’ detentions in California were for subsequent rather than new referrals.”³ It is apparent that detention is not addressing the root causes that contribute to GGE youth becoming justice-involved.

Youth incarceration must be understood as a symptom of unmet needs. According to a January 2025 report by the Probation Oversight Commission, nearly 50% of youth in the facilities had previous DCFS involvement, and nine DCFS youth were listed as Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). All nine were Black or Latine girls.⁴ Coordinated release planning would support the County in identifying and developing capacity for alternative placements, expanding transitional homes for dependents and non-dependents, and addressing the root issues that contribute to youth incarceration by tracking data and identifying trends.

The County has already seen successful examples of coordinated release planning. On November 4, 2025, the Board unanimously passed the motion, *Ensuring Safe Living Conditions for Pregnant Justice-Involved Youth*,⁵ and since its

² <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/Vera-YWFC-Freedom-and-Justice.pdf?dm=1748016708>

³ [POC25-0010.pdf](#)

⁴ [POC25-0010.pdf](#)

⁵ <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/209374.pdf>

passage, the Probation Department (Probation) has consistently identified alternative placements for pregnant youth in collaboration with stakeholder departments. While the EGI Initiative will require resources from the department, these resources have been made available through a grant from the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OCYR). In April 2023, the Vera Institute in partnership with OYCR expanded the EGI Initiative in California in the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego. This effort followed the success in Santa Clara County, which saw a 60% drop in girls' annual detention admissions.

While Probation has been engaged in statewide efforts to end the incarceration of girls—alongside OYCR, the Vera Institute's EGI Initiative, the Young Women's Freedom Center, the Superior Court, the Public Defender, the Alternative Public Defender, the District Attorney, and the Department of Youth Development—it is imperative that Probation's participation in these efforts is sustained and formalized regardless of future staffing changes. It is also important that this working group has clear deliverables, including success metrics, a rapid-release protocol for GGE youth and for CSEC youth, and continuous monitoring for opportunities to decarcerate and improve efficiency.

The County must engage in strategic and focused case analysis, release planning, and barrier resolution to reduce unnecessary detention, shorten lengths of stay, and strengthen community-based alternatives for GGE youth. Once the County demonstrates success through the EGI Initiative, these impactful practices should be expanded for all youth.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Chief Probation Officer to designate and resource two sworn staff members and two civilian staff members to establish and sustain a dedicated Ending Girls Incarceration (EGI) Initiative Team, utilizing Office of Youth and Community Restoration funding to support the ongoing implementation of this team. The working group should include resourced positions with the following functions:
 - a. Data Analysis;
 - b. Staff dedicated to working with partner agencies and community-based organizations;

- c. Field staff with Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and gender expertise for probation case management and court representation. (two Deputy Probation Officers).
2. Direct the Chief Probation Officer and the Director of the Department of Youth Development (DYD), in collaboration with the Directors of the Departments of Children and Family Services, Mental Health, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Probation Oversight Commission, the Public Defender, the Alternate Public Defender, Beloved Village, and other relevant community-based partners with demonstrated experience serving youth, to establish a weekly Multi-Disciplinary Team focused on real-time service barriers, placement challenges, release planning, and rapid problem-solving for girls and gender-expansive youth. Implementation of the EGI Initiative shall be conducted in consultation with the Juvenile Court and in alignment with the Los Angeles County WIC 241.1 protocol to ensure consistency with existing court and agency established processes.
3. Direct the Chief Probation Officer to prepare weekly data reports for the EGI Initiative Team, to identify drivers of detention and guide reform efforts in the weekly interagency problem-solving meetings. The reports should be shared with meeting participants at least one day prior to each meeting, and include but not be limited to:
 - a. Admissions by zip code;
 - b. Admission reasons (new arrest, probation violation, bench warrant, etc.);
 - c. Charges and Los Angeles Detention Screener risk scores;
 - d. Dual Status involvement;
 - e. Length of stay by youth;
 - f. Reasons for overrides/barriers to release for eligible youth;
 - g. Disaggregated data by race, ethnicity, developmental disability, and sexual orientation.
4. Direct the Chief Probation Officer and the Director of DYD, in collaboration with the EGI Initiative Team, to report back on the status and progress of the initiative at each regular Board meeting at which the "Report on Status of the Probation Department," is agendaized. Required reporting metrics should include:

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- a. Progress toward the overall goal of rapid release planning and reduced time in detention;
 - b. Number of youth and families supported through this model;
 - c. Trends in charges and admissions over time.
5. Direct the Chief Probation Officer, in collaboration with the EGI Initiative Team, to conduct monthly audits of detention reports to identify gaps or areas for improvement in the process.

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