

Updated Youth Diversion and Development Quarterly Data Dashboard: Youth Referred to YDD Programs by January 1, 2022

Section 1: Overview of all Referrals Received by YDD Providers To-Date

The Los Angeles County Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) initiative began receiving referrals for our first program cohort in April 2019. This first cohort included 8 program locations with the goal of expanding by 5-10 locations each year to reach full, countywide implementation by 2024. As of January 1, 2022, the organizations in the first YDD cohort received 1152 total youth referrals from Culver City Police Department, El Monte Police Department, Pasadena Police Department, Huntington Park Police Department, Long Beach Police Department, Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, and the District Attorney’s Office (see Figure 1).

Implementation has been staggered since the launch of the program with referral partners coming on board at different times. In 2021, the YDD network is prioritizing increasing the number of youth served by both bringing on additional program locations and substantially increasing the proportion of eligible youth referred per month with the goal of receiving referrals for ~ 80% of youth arrests in each partnering law enforcement jurisdiction. YDD has not reached an initial benchmark of receiving an average of approximately 100 referrals per month by July 2021 as hoped. YDD is committed to continuing to strive for an increase in youth diversion across partnerships and across LA County. The launch of Cohort 2 sites, March 2022, will increase YDD’s ability to connect youth with services.

Launched in November 2021, this quarter also marks YDD’s participation in the District Attorney’s Restorative Enhanced Diversion for Youth (REDY) program, extending eligibility for diversion services. YDD has also begun accepting Probation Citation referrals. However, these youth are considered informal participants and do not appear in this dashboard.

Figure 1. Youth Referred to YDD Programs by Quarter, through December 2021 (n=1152)

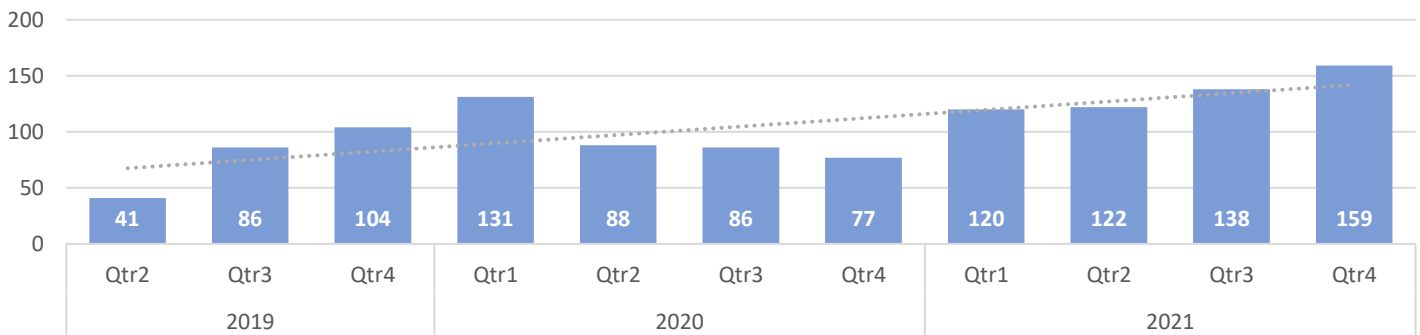


Fig. 2. Total YDD Referrals by Completion Status, December 2021 (n=1152)

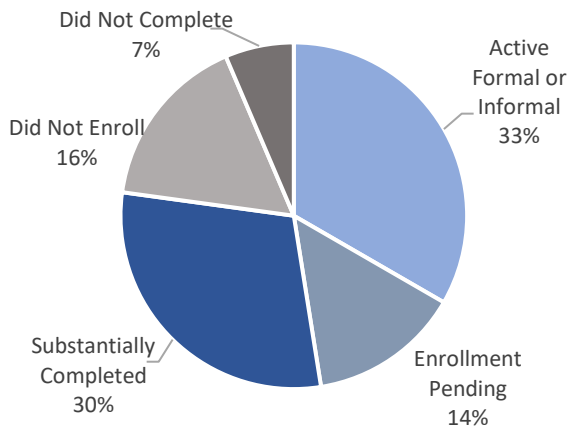


Fig. 3. Most Common Types of Youth Goals, December 2021

The top 5 most common youth goals for youth participating in YDD programs are:

1. School-Related Goals (23%)
2. Civic Engagement or Social Justice Goals (13%)
3. Behavioral Health Goals (13%)
4. Recreational or Creative Goals (11%)
5. Work-Related Goals (11%)

Remaining categories of youth goals in order of frequency include: conflict resolution and restorative goals, mental

Section 2: Demographic Information for Youth Formally Referred to Diversion

Nationwide trends show that Black youth are consistently more likely than their peers to be arrested and less likely to be referred to diversion programs. Black youth are disproportionately arrested in Los Angeles County—youth arrests reported in recent years are consistently about 62% Hispanic/Latinx, 24% Black/African American, 10% White, and 4% Asian/Pacific Islander or “Other.” YDD works to reduce the disproportionate arrest of Black youth and advance equitable access to community alternatives to justice system involvement by ensuring that youth are not disproportionately excluded from diversion referral, enrollment, or completion by race, age, or gender (Figures 4-6).

Fig. 4. Formal YDD Referrals by Race and Ethnic Identity, December 2021 (n=530)

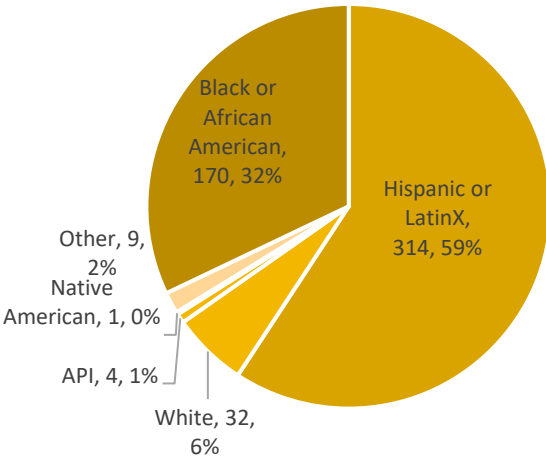


Fig. 5. Formal YDD Referrals by Age, December 2021 (n=772)

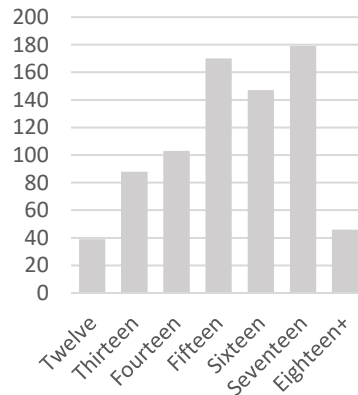
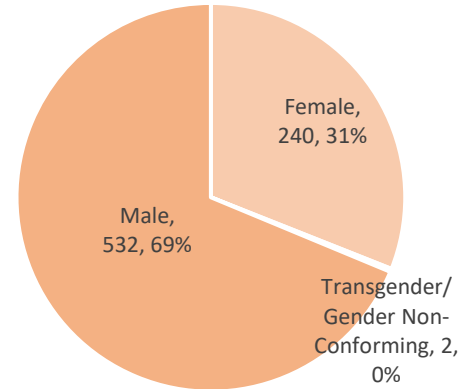


Fig. 6. Formal YDD Referrals by Gender Identity, December 2021 (n=774)



Section 3: Incident Data for Youth Formally Referred to Diversion

The majority of referrals to YDD programs are the result of law enforcement encounters at school or in the community (Figure 7). Although some providers have established relationships with local schools, the YDD network will be supported by the Youth Justice Reimagined initiative to develop a concrete plan in 2021 to better collaborate with schools to reduce school-based arrests. We also hope to finalize an assessment of current capacity and needs related to reducing arrests and increasing referrals to supportive alternatives for youth living in group homes.

Fig. 7. Formal YDD Referrals by Location of Occurrence, December 2021 (n=596)

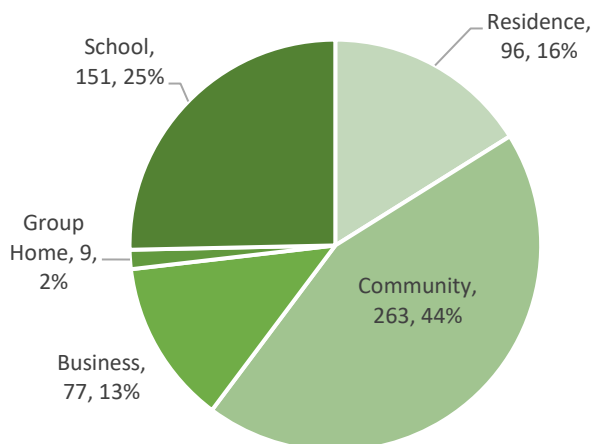
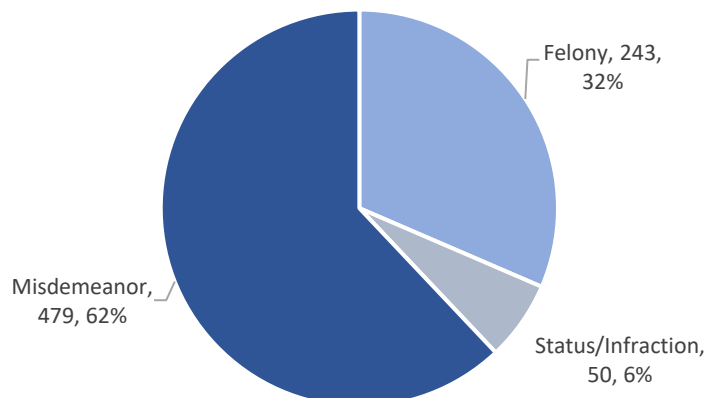
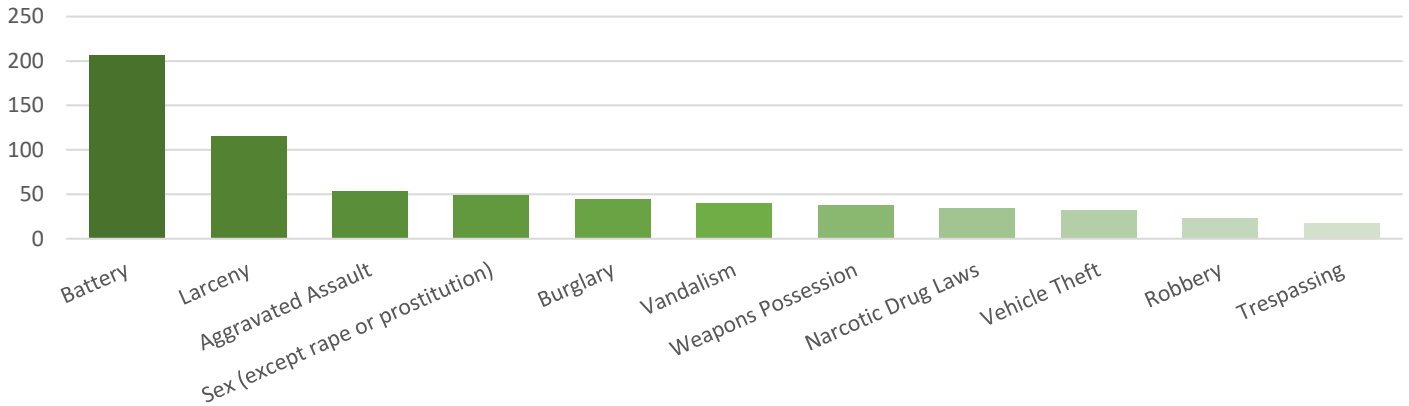


Fig. 8. Formal YDD Referrals by Level of Alleged Offense, December 2021 (n=772)



Of youth formally referred to diversion so far, 32% have been referred for alleged felonies and 62% have been referred for alleged misdemeanors (Figure 8). Although the percentage of referrals for alleged felonies is promising, referrals for low-level misdemeanor and status offenses or infractions are not currently aligned with YDD policy guidelines. YDD staff is working with program leadership and law enforcement leadership to transition referrals for alleged status offenses and misdemeanor petty theft offenses to the informal rather than formal participation status in alignment with the YDD model’s implementation and data sharing guidelines (Figure 9).

Fig. 9. Formal YDD Referrals by Type of Alleged Offense with >10 Referrals, December 2021 (n=711)

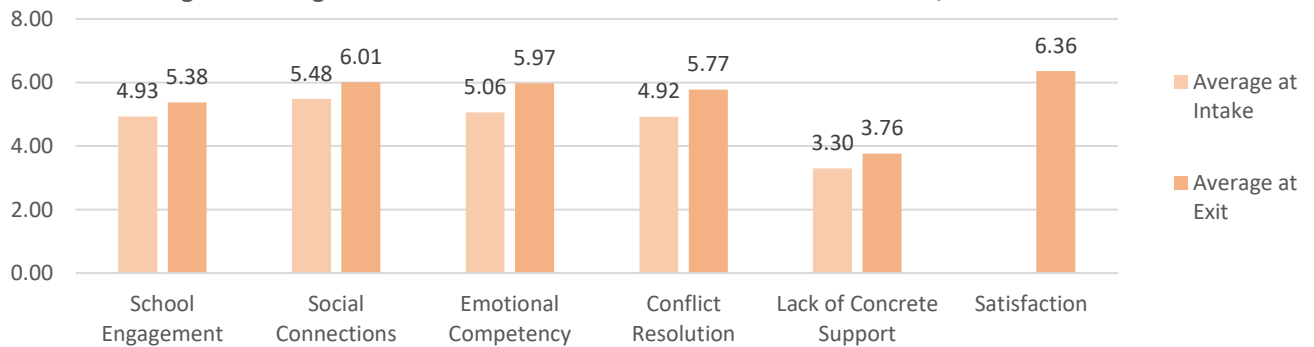


YDD has been working to include comparison data for young people who are not referred to diversion across program locations. YDD initially planned to have complete comparison data by this quarter’s dashboard, however we still do not have full comparison data for young people who are not referred to diversion across program locations. YDD is committed to providing complete comparison data to better contextualize the youth diversion landscape across Los Angeles County and is building data sharing agreements with law enforcement partners.

Section 4: Connections to Activities and Services and Progress Over Time

The most common categories of activities and services included in individualized YDD programs based on youth needs and goals so far have been: 1) school-related support (including tutoring and educational rights advocacy), 2) restorative and transformative practices (including conflict resolution and civic engagement / social justice), 3) recreational and arts activities (including dance classes and connections to local sports), and 4) work-related support (including employment and career development).

Fig. 10. Average Protective Factor Scores at Intake and Exit Assessment, December 2021



On average, participants have shown increases in their protective factors across the board over the course of their participation, increasing the average score across the board from an average of 5 to an average of 6 where 1 is strong disagreement and 7 is strong agreement (Figure 10).

Section 5: Case Study Shared by a YDD Care Coordinator in 2021

Case Study #1

Each young person carries their own unique experiences, stories, struggles, and hopes with them through our doors. No two are the same in the load they bear. One youth comes to mind when I think through the battles our youth overcome each day and the layers of themselves that they show to us—Emma. One of Emma’s parents was incarcerated, and working sideways with Emma felt like an opportunity to interrupt a cycle of harm she found herself in. From the facts of her case alone, I knew she would need to dedicate a lot of herself to a process that would enable her to overcome her circumstances, and I was ready to support her through this journey.

Leading up to her diversion, Emma struggled with bullying in school and turned to pledge allegiance to a gang for a sense of acceptance. She struggled with challenges regarding substance use and sex work, all the while, her family was facing eviction concerns. When she was referred to us, she was overwhelmed by news of a pregnancy. I knew I needed to build up trust with her fast so she could begin to embrace the changes to come. Together, we laid out her personal needs and goals for the next few months and built out a service plan to help her achieve them.

For two months, she persevered consistently through substance use counseling, therapy, and parenting classes, all while remaining a part-time student in school. We also worked to make the conditions around her more favorable for her personal growth and success. She worked on and restored her relationships with family and enrolled in a different school to have a fresh start and move past her known triggers. Her grades improved and she was proud to achieve her personal goals of being sober for the duration of the program.. After taking care of her needs and learning how to respect herself, she feels excited about her baby and the support system she has built around her family.

Her strength coupled with her extreme circumstances highlight the importance of providing opportunities for the youth who are enduring the most. For many, this is their first glance at a program that centers their wellbeing. I do not know what Emma’s journey would have looked like if she were incarcerated, but I am grateful that she found the stability and support she was needing sooner rather than later.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BREAKING BARRIERS TO ENROLLING IN YDD

WITH A FOCUS ON YOUNG WOMEN OF COLOR

INTRO TO YDD & THE YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Los Angeles County's Department of Health Services Office of Diversion and Reentry Division of Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) is a countywide initiative that focuses on building up and strengthening pathways for youth to connect with diversion service providers. The youth diversion model allows for young people to opt into whole-person rehabilitation programming that centers on mentorship, connection to community care services, and restorative justice practices. Time in these programs allows for young people to have their arrest records sealed and connect with professionals who are equipped to support concrete goals for diversion and their future.

YDD's Youth Fellowship incorporates youth voice directly into the building and improvement of diversion pathways countywide. As a YDD Youth Fellow, Alexia Cina focused her work on using data combined with her lived experiences to guide strategic recommendations to improve diversion enrollment. She analyzed barriers to enrollment for youth who were eligible for diversion, with a focus on young women of color. Her recommendations prioritize clear and honest communication with young people, with an emphasis on how these programs can best serve them and their personal growth and development.

Diversion Model, with Recommended Strategies to Promote Enrollment

1 Youth receive a referral to YDD in lieu of arrest

YDD should develop referral communications tools and trainings to make sure that when making a referral, officers explain more about benefits of youth diversion and development to both youth and families.

2 Community provider initiates contact with youth

YDD should identify concrete support to increase and improve provider outreach to young people and families or guardians, especially for young people who may live in group homes or other DCFS placements.

3 Diversion goals are created

Once enrolled, they create diversion goals; if they complete those goals, youth won't have an arrest record.

Providers should make sure a young person and guardian's first impression of diversion is clear, thorough, compelling.

- Be mindful to reduce time burden associated with program.
- Emphasize benefits versus arrest.
- Explain what youth will be offered, helped with, grow and learn from.
- Especially for young women: share how they will be accepted and mentored by someone they can relate and open up to.

MAIN BARRIERS

Youth and Guardians Chose Traditional Legal Process

- Benefits of Diversion Unclear to Families
- Time commitment

Emphasize Tangible Benefits

- Record Sealing
- Connections to Services

Emphasize Intangible Benefits

- Acceptance
- Mentors to relate to
- Fulfilling personal goals

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

