



Creating a Youth Development Department for the City of Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles should create a Youth Development Department to promote and uphold the principles and core competencies of youth development. Without a strong youth development department that includes the infrastructure and support of government, and that exists regardless of the agendas of individual officials, Los Angeles cannot realize either its vision for public safety or its vision for the economic, educational, health or leadership progress of future generations economically.

Similar to other major metropolitan regions, Los Angeles needs a Department of Youth Development with a coordinated, well-resourced strategy for supporting youth, and a commitment to becoming a city known for embracing - rather than fearing and punishing - its youth.

The city's current programs – Gang Reduction and Youth Development, Summer Night Lights, YouthSource and Hire LA's Youth should be moved under the Department of Youth Development, strengthened and expanded. The Department would also be responsible for allocating funds to youth centers across the city, administering the City's youth jobs program, hiring, training and building the capacity of intervention workers/peacebuilders, and coordinating leadership development and engagement opportunities for LA's youth and families including the creation of a Youth Leadership Board and Youth Participatory Budgeting Project.

Redirect at least 5% of the LAPD and LA City Attorney budgets to the Youth Development Department

A 5% redirection of suppression dollars (5% of LAPD's \$2.57 billion + 5% of L.A. City Attorney's \$188 million = \$137,736,255) to a Youth Development Department would result in a significant increase in funding for youth development, and would put Los Angeles on par with how other major U.S. cities are investing in their youth:

Law Enforcement and Youth Development Spending by City

	Total Population	Youth (10-24)	Police Spending	Per capita expenditure (Police)	YDD Spending	Per youth capita expenditure (YDD)	Police: YDD Spending Ratio	LA youth population* City's per capita YDD expenditure
Boston	617,594	156,725	\$323,509,388	\$524	\$30,376,147	*\$194	2.7	\$156,968,755
New York	8,175,133	1,606,307	\$9,397,668,398	\$1150	\$503,156,380	\$313	3.7	\$254,199,625
San Francisco	805,235	114,395	\$544,721,549	**\$676	\$99,881,170	\$873	0.8	\$700,963,366
Los Angeles	3,928,864	810,421	\$2,566,431,967	\$653	\$36,303,119	\$45	14.5	\$36,303,119
Los Angeles City with 5% redirection of LAPD & LACA	3,928,864	810,421	\$2,438,110,369	\$621	\$174,039,374	\$215	2.9	\$174,039,374

Population Data: ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Budget Data: FY2015/16

*Includes Boston's two youth development oriented departments

**Includes Police cost, not Sheriff cost



**Youth Development from A – Z: Key components of LA City’s Youth Development Strategy:
Youth Centers – and other safe spaces accessible to all youth, 6-24, open 365 days a year**

- a. Funding and technical support for at least **30 youth centers** in communities throughout the city that would provide a safe haven and education for out-of-school youth; educational enrichment, college and career prep, arts, recreation, cultural/ethnic studies, and health programming for youth 6-24; and an alternative to arrest, detention and incarceration for system-impacted youth. This would also include specialized programs within youth centers – and/or independent youth centers for young people wanting their own safe space - such as LGBTQ² or immigrant youth centers, or street-based drop-in centers open all night for youth surviving on the street.
- b. **Joint use agreements** with Los Angeles Unified School District and city parks to maximize the use of existing places as effective and engaging community spaces including youth center sites, as well as working for expansion and rehabilitation of existing **youth spaces in communities and schools** including parks, playgrounds, murals and other public art projects, skate parks, bike paths, programming in museums, cultural and sports venues, field trips, etc. **Street outreach** – (including peer education; street based messaging through murals, posters, street performances, and billboards; intervention workers/peacebuilders; and mobile units with health, legal, counseling and other services) – would take youth development programs to the county’s most isolated youth, including those who are detained or incarcerated, who are disconnected from, or distrustful of, formal institutions or spaces, and for those youth surviving in or around underground economies. **Co-located services** with other community-based organizations and government agencies would provide additional supports in health/mental health, legal services, case management, etc. The youth development department would also be responsible for ensuring that 211 has updated information on all youth services; for expanding the capacity of **teen line** and other hotlines to give anyone access to information on youth resources, as well as to provide crisis counseling and referrals; and for advertising and social media to promote programs and opportunities.
- c. In order to provide youth access to all the opportunities in their city, a youth development infrastructure must include access to **free and safe transportation** including using the city’s positions and influence on the MTA Board, its Members and managers, to provide a student Metro pass for all LA students pre-school through college, as well as to expand transportation options for all youth. This strategy should include development of an all-access pass for youth serving organizations to utilize public transportation for youth transportation to and from programs and for field trips.

Increasing and Ensuring Safety

- d. Coordination of **peacebuilding (intervention) and transformative justice** in neighborhoods and school districts, including linking intervention workers to youth centers and schools. This would include transfer of the current Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) program in the LA City Mayor’s Office under the City’s youth development department.
- e. Provision of **legal assistance / legal clinics for youth and “know your rights”** education.
- f. Partner (with the County) to build a countywide peacebuilders’ roundtable to coordinate community intervention, including the building of truces and cease fires, rumor control and inter-neighborhood relationship building among intervention workers in order to prevent street and school-based violence.
- g. Transformation of “gang injunction safety zones” into positive **youth empowerment zones** that include a higher concentration of youth and community development resources in those areas.



Employment and Career and College Preparation

- h. Creation and support of youth **employment and entrepreneurship** within government, business and the community, *in partnership with unions and community colleges*, to link youth to training, certification and living wage careers, (including transferring existing city youth jobs programs to the City's Department of Youth Development), with a guarantee of providing at least **25,000 youth jobs** each year. Work with the county to ensure that youth institutions – such as group homes, placements, detention centers (juvenile halls), county jails and youth prisons (camps), mental health hospitals and drug treatment centers – have unions, community colleges and community based organizations assigned as partners to develop and coordinate community re-integration plans, to ensure youth leave facilities college and career ready, and to link youth to job apprenticeships and higher education.

Programming to Address Unique Needs

- i. Creation and support of **innovative programming for youth with particular resource needs** – including but not limited to youth with mental or physical conditions, parenting youth, youth with addictions, foster youth and other youth without permanent housing. As described above, this would include transfer of the current Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) program under the City's youth development department.
- j. As described under goals, advocate that the County **transfer all “juvenile Probation”** resources and responsibilities (field Probation for youth up through age 24, juvenile halls and camps) to the County Youth Development Department; and limit Probation terms for one year.
- k. Advocate that the County transfer to the LA County Department of Youth Development *and expand* the County's **outreach, shelter and transitional living programs** for youth without housing – including those youth living on the street, in foster care, in group homes, placements and those incarcerated.

Challenging LA's and California's Addiction to Suppression and Incarceration

- l. Creation of **alternatives to suspension, expulsion, arrest, court, detention and incarceration**, including training and supporting government agencies, schools and communities to create comprehensive school and neighborhood safety plans that reduce suspensions, expulsions, ticketing, arrests and institutionalization, while also engaging people in promoting and ensuring safe and positive environments for youth. Savings accrued through reductions in detention, incarceration, injuries, homicides, and use of force law suits should be reinvested into the youth development departments, to ensure **justice reinvestment**.

Funding, Training, Technical Assistance, Mentorship and Research to Build LA's Youth Development Infrastructure

- m. A **training institute**, in partnership with community colleges and California's State University to establish certificate, undergraduate and graduate programs in positive youth development, intervention/peacebuilding, transformative justice and non-profit management.
- n. Funding processes that are fair, accessible and transparent; that support both small and large organizations, new and established programs; that honor the value of programs indigenous to communities; and that prioritize community based, owned and operated organizations that are rooted in neighborhoods. Allocation of youth development resources would occur through open RFPs/RFAs with oversight by a community board of government officials, youth, parents and community-based organizations.



- o. Funding and contracting processes that are manageable; that provide assistance and encouragement to applicants; that ensure transparency and appeal processes in regards to department decisions; and that hold funded organizations accountable, while also supporting them to improve.
- p. Eliminating overly harsh contracting requirements and expectations, including strict performance-based contracting, that drives many groups out of the work.
- q. Advocacy for the redirection of applicable state, federal and private funding for youth (such as state Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act funds) to the County or City Departments of Youth Development to ensure that funds *are distributed* to the community; that funds are allocated according to youth development values, outcomes and evaluation; and that funding occurs in a way that is timely, transparent and fair.
- r. **Research**, including data collection and analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of youth development programs and to share lessons learned. All sub-contractors would receive training, technical assistance and mentorship, and be required to meet rigorous youth and community development outcomes in order to receive continued funding.
- s. A **not-for-profit arm** to solicit additional community, corporate, state and federal funding for the department and its programs.

Challenging Discrimination and Expanding Access

- t. A commitment to provide youth development resources and opportunities to all youth up to age 24, and their families, regardless of their income, age, gender, race, LGBT2Q² identity, religion, immigration status, convictions, physical or mental condition, or labels.
- u. Programming that builds youth knowledge of their own identities, culture, language, spirituality and histories, while also gaining an understanding and appreciation for the identities, cultures, spirituality and histories of other groups.
- v. Programming that equips all youth with the knowledge and skills to recognize and challenge discrimination in all its forms, and to advocate for fair treatment, access and opportunities for all.
- w. Support for youth and young adults returning home from lock-ups to reconnect them to their communities, and to push the County to ensure full implementation of the new policy that everyone returning home from juvenile hall, Probation camp, county jail and state prison have the identification and documents needed to access essential services and opportunities (housing, public assistance, education, employment, health care).
- x. Challenge institutional discrimination against people with convictions in accessing school, public assistance, housing, employment and other resources – (including advocating further for banning the box on applications, decreasing barriers in hiring and job certification, and ensuring full implementation of AB1756).
- y. Support for undocumented people and their families to expand rights and opportunities, decrease criminalization, protect against discrimination, provide alternatives to deportation, and ensure access to essential services.

Expanding Youth and Community Civic Engagement and Power

- z. Engagement of youth, families and their allies in leadership development, organizing and advocacy work to shape the future of youth development in Southern California; to expand youth and community involvement and authority in the running of schools, communities and government; to protect and expand voter education, rights, access and representation; and to contribute to movements for youth development, decriminalization, de-carceration, and the protection and expansion of youth rights across the state, nationally and internationally.