LA County Department of Youth Development – Diversion Program

Process and Implementation Evaluation

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Executive Summary

Background: LA County YDD – Diversion Program

In 2017, the LA County Board of Supervisors approved a countywide effort to divert youth from the juvenile justice system. The approval of this motion established an ad hoc committee within the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC) tasked with the creation of a strategic work plan for the development of a youth diversion model for LA County. This approach evolved out of concern for youth and in recognition of the collateral consequences youth may experience due to arrest and/or incarceration (e.g., increased likelihood to drop out of high school, engaging in substance use, negative life outcomes). Additionally, given the disparate rates of contact youth of color in the County face in terms of law enforcement contact, arrest, incarceration, and probation supervision, equity was a critical factor considered in developing the model.

The committee developed recommendations for a coordinated approach that would connect youth to existing resources within their community to facilitate their growth and skill-development with attention to their overall wellbeing. The motion was unanimously approved, leading to the establishment of the Division of Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) with the following purpose:

1. Create a county network of diversion services that utilize a health-centered approach to addressing youths' needs,
2. Develop a connection between law enforcement agencies and local youth-serving providers,
3. Facilitate youth growth and provide youth with the ability to complete programming without a documented arrest (and a sealed record), and
4. Reduce the overall number of youth arrests, probation referrals, and petitions filed.

In 2019, YDD awarded eight community-based organizations (providers) throughout LA County with contracts to provide case management services to youth referred to diversion. The providers were selected following a multi-phase review process in which a committee of county staff assessed providers' proposal submissions.

In July 2022, YDD was transitioned to a new Department of Youth Development (DYD) established to advance the vision for youth justice transformation and the County's efforts to equitably reduce youth justice system involvement. The transition to DYD did not bring any changes to the YDD model of diversion.

Evaluation Overview

YDD contracted RDA Consulting (RDA) as the external evaluator of the diversion program in January 2022. The evaluation will be completed in two phases. In the first phase, or year one, the RDA

evaluation team completed a process and implementation evaluation that examined the YDD diversion model. In the second phase of the evaluation, or year two (2023), RDA will complete an outcome assessment, a cost/cost-benefit analysis, an equity analysis, and a sustainability and replicability memo.

The process and implementation evaluation explored evaluation questions related to YDD's diversion goals including:

1. Indicators of net widening and disparity in referrals and enrollments.
2. How youth and parents/guardians experienced the referral and enrollment process.
3. Services offered to youth, youth engagement, and barriers that youth face in accessing those services.
4. How YDD partners are implementing the YDD diversion model.
5. The impact diversion has had on youth.

The current evaluation explored the implementation of the YDD model by holding focus groups and interviews with those people that were responsible for implementing the model. The RDA evaluation team collected data on successes, key lessons learned, barriers to implementation, and have been able to identify recommendations for YDD to consider over the coming months and years as diversion continues to develop and grow.

Key Findings

The YDD diversion model was designed to be adaptable to each location in which it is implemented. The ability of the model to be responsive to each community is one of the foundational pieces of the model and one of the strongest successes. In each community, providers have been able to respond to the youth that they serve in unique and individualized ways that has resulted in youth who have found a space that is safe, engaging, and where they can learn. YDD has also been directly responsible for the success of the model through their ongoing support for providers. The bi-monthly calls and easy access to program managers was identified by every provider as having made their

YDD Diversion: Key Findings

- During the evaluation period, April 1, 2019 – August 31, 2022, 2,496 distinct youth were referred to diversion through YDD's diversion program.[1]

    o 1,625 youth were formally referred to diversion

    o 857 youth were informally referred to services

- In the same period 1,009 distinct youth choose to enroll in diversion services.

- Youth and Family/Guardians have had positive and impactful experiences in diversion.

- The model's foundational principal of adapting to its community is a major strength of YDD's diversion program.

- Lack of adherence to data reporting requirements is negatively impacting

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[1] In the YDD Diversion: Key Findings callout box, it should be noted that of the 2,496 distinct youth referred to diversion, the type of referral (i.e., formal, or informal) was missing for 14 youth.

work with the diversion program easier. Additionally, the support provided to programs through YDD-sponsored training opportunities ensures that YDD is actively supporting the providers with the implementation of the model and with evidence-informed and evidence-based practices to use in their daily interactions with youth. The YDD model of diversion has also been able to grow because it has embraced an online case management system, which comes with a set of challenges, but is a step in the right direction of streamlining how youth can be referred to services in an effective and efficient way.

Summary of Recommendations

Referrals. Continue to work with those partners that refer youth to diversion to improve consistency and reduce disparity and inequity in the referral process. Utilize the materials created by the YPAR team that help explain diversion to youth and families so that at the time of referral they have an explanation of what diversion services are and what to anticipate when providers contact them.

Enrollment. Consider the addition of standardized language that can be shared with providers to include in their outreach and initial contact with youth and parents/guardians that ensures that diversion is a choice and excludes language that is coercive in any way. Evaluate the intake procedures and tools that are currently in use for their relevancy to the data needed to monitor program goals and youth outcomes as well as assisting providers in making programmatic decisions.

Service Delivery. Although YDD does not need to prescribe specific services to youth, it would be beneficial for YDD to have a subject matter expert(s) on staff that are well-versed in the services that YDD providers most commonly offer or that YDD would like to see providers be able to offer. Additionally, follow-up coaching to ensure that training is being applied with fidelity would be a feasible next step.

Data. With a vendor, address issues with the program's current web-based referral and case management system (referred to as "case management system" throughout the remainder of this report) that would make the case and data management system more user friendly, allow for greater transparency of the data, and allow for providers to be able to use the system to its full potential. Collaborate with partners on how to improve the data collection and monitoring process.

Communication between Partners. Establish regular and ongoing meetings that occur at least monthly with all partners to discuss diversion and problem solve issues, share success stories, and discuss data.

Introduction and Background

The 2023 Report on YDD Diversion Programs builds on the evaluation work of others to provide YDD and the larger LA County community additional insight into how well the model of diversion developed by YDD is serving youth across the County. The impetus for this report is to define, collect, and analyze data on 1) youth formally referred to YDD contracted providers, 2) the level of adherence to the diversion model developed by YDD and carried out by both providers and law enforcement partners, and 3) the utilization and effectiveness of current programs and services available for youth and their families to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities to **ensure a continuum of equity-informed, health-centered services is in place to prevent juvenile justice system involvement and support youth who are already system involved.**

This report begins with a brief historical look at youth diversion and how youth diversion came to be a focal point in LA County, followed by a description of the evaluation framework, and the role of equity and the guiding principles RDA followed over the course of the last year as the evaluation team completed this portion of the process and implementation evaluation. Next, the report provides an overview of YDD and the contracted providers that participated in the current evaluation. These sections are followed by 1) a description of the data and methods used to develop the report, 2) the research questions that framed the evaluation, 3) the findings across those research questions (described in more detail in the *Methodology* section), and 4) a discussion and recommendations section summarizing the findings and highlighting recommendations.

Youth Diversion Historically

Recognition that youth were distinctly different from adults was fundamental to the development of a juvenile court system, separate from the adult system, at the end of the 19th century.[1] The creation of this system arose from the efforts of moral crusaders calling for the separation of young people from the adult criminal justice system. This was, in part, influenced by the understanding that youth, from a developmental standpoint, had diminished decision-making capacities, but were more responsive to treatment compared to adults.[2] Additional concerns for child welfare, and a recognition that incarcerating youth in adult correctional facilities had harmful impacts, influenced this shift toward treating youth with their "best interests" in mind.[3] However, these benevolent efforts were not equitably applied in practice, with youth of color experiencing disproportionate rates of detention in juvenile reformatories.[4]

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[1] Feld, B. C. (2017). *The evolution of the juvenile court*. New York: New York University Press; Platt, A. M. (1977). *The child savers: The invention of delinquency*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Tanenhaus, D. S. (2004). *Juvenile justice in the making*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[2] Kempf-Leonard, K., & Peterson, E. S. (2000). Expanding realms of the new penology: The advent of actuarial justice for juveniles. *Punishment & Society*, 2(1), 66-97.

[3] Cain, C. M. (2017). Child savers. In C. J. Schreck, M. J. Leiber, H. V. Miller, & K. Welch (Eds.), *The encyclopedia of juvenile delinquency and justice*.; Feld, B. C. (2017). *The evolution of the juvenile court*. New York: New York University Press; Tanenhaus, D. S. (2004). *Juvenile justice in the making*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[4] Ward, G.K. (2012). *The Black Child-Savers: Racial Democracy and American Juvenile Justice*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Over time, the system transformed, adopting a punitive approach like that of the adult justice system, under the guise of child welfare.[5] Key procedural shifts occurred in the 1960s and late 1980s. These shifts were associated with the institutionalization of legal due process for youth and a "tough on crime" approach, respectively. These orientations led to the rejection of the rehabilitative approach to juvenile justice.

Modern policies have gradually (re)accepted that youth have developmentally distinct needs and can be diverted away from both adult and juvenile justice systems.[6] Diversionary programs have become increasingly popular due to their purported ability to 1) keep youth out of courts and detention facilities, 2) promote positive skill development to lessen youths' continued engagement in delinquency, and 3) limit youths' overall exposure to the legal system and the collateral consequences resulting from system contact.[7]

Youth Diversion in Los Angeles County

Youth in LA County, particularly youth of color, have experienced high levels of contact with law enforcement and subsequent justice system involvement.[8] Recognizing that youth were receiving citations or being arrested for both low-level and status offenses–particularly for incidents that occurred on school grounds – community organizers, advocates, youth, and other invested parties pushed for change. In 2016, the LA County Board of Supervisors established the Youth Diversion Subcommittee of the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee to address how to divert youth from the justice system.[9]

In 2017, the LA County Board of Supervisors approved a countywide effort to divert youth from the justice system. By approving this motion, an ad hoc committee was established within the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC) to create a strategic work plan for the development of a youth diversion model for LA County. This diversion-based approach evolved out of concern for youth and in recognition of the collateral consequences youth may experience due to arrest and/or incarceration (e.g., increased likelihood to drop out of high school, engaging in substance use, negative life outcomes). Given the disparate rates of contact youth of color in LA County faced in terms of law enforcement contact, arrest, incarceration, and probation supervision, equity was an important consideration in developing the model.

Instead of perpetuating an approach that facilitated youth involvement in the justice system, the committee developed recommendations for a comprehensive and coordinated approach that

[5] Feld, B. C. (2017). *The evolution of the juvenile court*. New York: New York University Press; Tanenhaus, D. S. (2004). *Juvenile justice in the making*. New York: Oxford University Press.
[6] Feld, B. C. (2017). *The evolution of the juvenile court*. New York: New York University Press.
Ray, J. V., & Childs, K. (2015). Juvenile diversion. In M. D. Krohn & J. Lane (Eds.), *The handbook of juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice*.
[7] Rasmussen, A. (2004). Teen court referral, sentencing, and subsequent recidivism: Two proportional hazards models and a little speculation. *Crime & Delinquency, 50*(4), 615-635; Ray, J. V., & Childs, K. (2015). Juvenile diversion. In M. D. Krohn & J. Lane (Eds.), *The handbook of juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice*.
[8]Designing Youth Diversion & Development in Los Angeles County
https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dhs/1125236_YDDBOOKLET-052422.pdf
Black, Brown, and Over-Policed in LA Schools https://www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/CA_Strategy-Center_Black-Brown-and-Over-Policed-in-LA-Schools.PDF#page=10
Youth Justice Reimagined Report https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SmVPbimigdufNriWjL0JVuMWXYZxPTFd/view
[9] For an in-depth analysis and timeline of key developments in LA County, see the Los Angeles County: Youth Justice Reimagined report.

would connect youth to resources within their community to facilitate their growth and skill-development with attention to their overall wellbeing. The motion was unanimously approved, leading to the establishment of the Division of Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) within the LA County Department of Health Services Office of Diversion and Reentry.

Development of YDD

YDD was tasked with overseeing, coordinating, and expanding county-funded youth diversion and health and wellbeing programs. Specifically, YDD was instructed to develop a pre-booking model of diversion to reduce youth contact with the justice system altogether (see **Appendix A** for a visual representation of the YDD model). This approach seeks to formalize diversion practices across county and municipal law enforcement agencies throughout the County while ensuring that all youth who might benefit from community services are able to access programming.

In 2019, YDD awarded eight providers throughout LA County with contracts to provide case management services to youth referred to diversion. The providers were selected following a multi-phase review process in which a committee of county staff assessed providers' proposal submissions. Specific attention was paid to how well programs were able to serve the needs of young people, if providers had a strong presence in their communities, and the geographic areas of the county the providers served. Within this process, YDD provided oversight in the development of the statement of work and rubric for scoring proposals.

YDD'S Purpose:
● **Create a countywide network of diversion services that utilize a health-centered approach to addressing youths' needs.** 　○ Improve the health, academic, economic, and social outcomes of youth. ● **Develop a connection between law enforcement agencies and local youth-serving providers.** 　○ Utilize an effective, equitable model of youth diversion and development. 　○ Reduce disparities in youth contact with law enforcement, access to services, and outcomes. ● **Facilitate youth growth and provide youth with the ability to complete programming without a documented arrest (and a sealed record).** 　○ Individualize youth care plans and tailor services to youth needs. ● **Reduce the overall number of youth arrests, probation referrals, and petitions filed.**

An additional determining factor in the selection process was an assessment of the law enforcement agencies that would participate in the diversion process. Agency factors considered include youth arrest rates, geographic location, and agency preparedness. The law enforcement agencies that participate in diversion agree to refer youth to providers for diversion in alignment with the program model, and in accordance with the eligibility criteria established by their department during discussions with YDD. In 2021, YDD developed a partnership with the District Attorney's Office to refer youth to diversion in lieu of filing a petition. Additionally, the LA County Probation Department's Coalition Diversion Program ended and was retroactively transitioned to YDD.

Providers were awarded contracts with YDD and entered into a partnership agreement which serves as a guidance document. The partnership agreement details 1) program goals and purpose, 2) eligibility and suitability for YDD referrals, 3) responsibilities of each stakeholder throughout program implementation, 4) agreements on reporting and communication, and 5) the importance of confidentiality in securing youths' rights.

Law enforcement agencies are not awarded contracts by YDD, unlike service providers; instead, most sign the partnership agreement stating that they will adhere to the terms of the agreement to the best of their abilities.[10] The partnership agreement serves as a guide between law enforcement agencies, providers, and YDD. Specific components of the partnership agreement reflect alignment with the diversion model, but providers and law enforcement agencies can negotiate components specific to their partnership, such as which youth are eligible and suitable to be referred to diversion.

In addition to coordinating diversion countywide, YDD provides funding, program management support, evaluation, provider training and technical assistance, and accountability measures to ensure services are equitable and effective to contracted providers. YDD is additionally responsible for scheduling quarterly partnership meetings with law enforcement agencies and providers and contract monitoring meetings every six months and provides monthly data and status reports to monitor program compliance.

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[10] Law enforcement agencies can actively refer youth to providers while reviewing the partnership agreement (i.e., before signing the partnership agreement).

Evaluation Overview

Background

In April 2021, the County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services (DHS) released a request for services (RFS) seeking a vendor to conduct a two-year mixed-methods evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the Youth Diversion and Development diversion program, concluding in December 2023. In May 2021, RDA Consulting (RDA) submitted a proposal to the RFS providing a thorough explanation of how RDA would meet and exceed the requirements of the RFS. In June 2021, RDA was notified that the proposal had been accepted. In January 2022, RDA signed a contract with LA County to complete a two-year evaluation that includes the current strengths-based, asset-focused, stakeholder-engaged, mixed-methods process and implementation evaluation and an outcome assessment, equity analysis, cost/cost-benefit analysis, and a sustainability memo in the second year.

Evaluation Framework

RDA's approach to this evaluation maximizes methodological rigor and stakeholder participation to best illustrate the landscape of YDD program implementation, understand the outcomes of YDD programs and services, and contribute to the County's decision-making around YDD strategies.

The overarching goal of the YDD Diversion Program is to prevent juvenile justice system involvement, or prevent any further involvement, by supporting youth and helping address their needs and promote their interests. This system-level change required collaboration, data sharing, capacity building, and coordination across agencies and providers. The evaluation completed by RDA assessed the model at each touchpoint within the model and how YDD is responding to the challenges and promoting the successes at each of those touchpoints.[11] Additionally, the RDA assessment team looked at the model overall to determine how it is serving the youth of LA County and how the implementation of the model could be strengthened to see improved outcomes for youth.

YDD's diversion program is anchored around contracted providers and their corresponding law enforcement partners and their commitment to refer and enroll according to the agreed upon terms and eligibility requirements. The program-level analysis identified trends and outcomes related to the adherence of these partners to the YDD model. Findings from the program-level evaluation activities are intended to help identify progress, challenges, and successes in how YDD is supporting its partners in the implementation of the diversion model.

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[11] The term "touchpoint" is borrowed from the report, *Advancing Racial Equity in Youth Diversion: An Evaluation Framework Informed by Los Angeles County*, completed by the Human Impact Partners (HIP). To maintain consistency between evaluations and to continue with the important work that HIP started in 2019, this report carries on the term touchpoints and centers the analyses in equity.

One of the main goals of YDD's diversion program is to promote the positive health and well-being of youth. The current evaluation does not include an individual-level analysis. A forthcoming Outcomes Assessment will be assessing individual outcomes data of youth who participated in YDD Diversion programming.

The RDA evaluation team developed this process and implementation report after a thorough review of materials provided by YDD including operations manuals, training materials, and previous evaluations, such as the *Advancing Racial Equity in Youth Diversion: An Evaluation Framework Informed by Los Angeles County*, completed by the Human Impact Partners (HIP).[12] Additionally, RDA engaged in an extensive data collection effort that included focus groups with YDD staff, YDD's first cohort of contracted provider organizations, law enforcement agencies that have partnered with YDD and providers to refer youth to diversion in lieu of arrest, and families and youth that have received diversion services from YDD diversion providers in LA County. Finally, RDA accessed law enforcement stop data and YDD's case management system data to understand youth referrals, program enrollments, and their spatial distribution. RDA additionally extracted boundaries for geographic units of interest from Los Angeles County's Enterprise GIS data portal. Much like the HIP evaluators, the process and implementation evaluation completed by RDA was guided by five principles.

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[12] Human Impact Partners. June 2019. Advancing Racial Equity in Youth Diversion: An Evaluation Framework Informed by Los Angeles County. Oakland, CA.

Guiding Principles

Unequal outcomes for youth of different races, ethnicities, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. are systemic in the justice system. The current evaluation sought to gather and analyze data to identify where these disparities exist among youth who encounter YDD diversion services. We have sought to gather representatives, with the help of YDD, from across LA County to form the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC). This body composed of YDD providers, law enforcement, the District Attorney's office, the Probation Oversight Commission, and additional stakeholders, meets with RDA twice a year to provide feedback, direction, and context from those who know their communities best. Finally, RDA, with assistance from YDD providers, completed an outreach process and worked with five Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) teenagers on the evaluation.

Equity and Justice: RDA is keenly aware of the prevalence of racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, and child welfare-involved disparities in outcomes across the justice system. The evaluation team is experienced in gathering and analyzing data to identify these disparities, with the goal of supporting equitable service delivery and outcomes.

Youth Leadership: A significant component of this evaluation is the work of the YPAR team. In participatory research, the experience and leadership of system-impacted individuals are critical to ensuring system accountability and sustaining long-term institutional change. Participatory research offers a protective element for communities who may have been stigmatized and/or harmed historically and encourages trust between researchers and community members to mitigate these historical experiences, incorporate local knowledge into the evaluation, and strengthen the capacity of communities to affect change.

Positive Youth Development Lens: RDA approaches evaluation work with young people from a positive youth development lens. Evaluation work is based on how programs are connecting youth to resources for those youth who may be growing up in circumstances that do not equip them for challenging situations or the transition to adulthood. This approach recognizes that public policy should be doing more than reacting to the behavior of young people but rather recognizing their strengths and what they need to flourish and increase their resiliency.

Systems-Focused Action: Systems are the practices, policies, and procedures of agencies and organizations that influence the outcomes of those the system professes to help. Improving systems, and the way in which they work together, is RDA's approach to eliminating disparities in outcomes.

Implementation Science: Implementation science involves studying the process of introducing, establishing, and sustaining policies, programs, and activities in complex settings. This allows evaluators to investigate how and why a program had the impact that it did. For implementation science to reach its full potential there needs to be a shift toward greater stakeholder input and improved reporting on external validity. RDA approaches process and implementation evaluations using implementation science frameworks to improve the relevance of the research and help guide decision makers in their selection of interventions.

Evaluation Questions

RDA worked collaboratively with YDD to identify evaluation questions listed in Table 1. Process evaluation questions examine the progress of YDD's diversion program implementation from the viewpoint of those that have been a part of the implementation of the model at YDD, the providers who have been contracted to carry out case management services, law enforcement who have agreed to refer youth to diversion who are eligible, and, finally, the youth and families that have participated in diversion. These questions guided the data collection process. Not all questions were pursued due to data limitations.

Table 1. Process and Implementation Evaluation Questions

YDD Diversion Program Goal	Evaluation Questions
Reduce the overall number of youth arrests, referrals to probation, and petitions filed.	• Are there any indicators of net-widening among formally diverted youth? • In an examination of the referral trends over time (e.g., share of referred youth enrolling over time, by provider, by law enforcement agency, by stop location), are there indications of disparity in referrals, enrollment, and completion? • How equitable are youths' reported experiences with the referral process? • How equitable are parent/guardians' reported experiences with the referral process?
Reduce disparities in law enforcement contact, access to services, and youth outcomes.	• How equitable are youths' reported experiences with the enrollment and completion process? • How equitable are parent/guardians' reported experiences with the enrollment and completion process? • What were the demographic characteristics and needs of YDD youth?
Increase the number of youth connected to services that support their growth and well-being	• How many and what types of care plans are generated and completed through diversion? • How do youths' goals and articulated needs align with the treatment plans created by providers? • What goals were included in care planning and how do these goals align with the literature on youth development and assessing and addressing needs? • What services did youth receive, and how frequently did youth have contact with the provider they received services from?

	• Do youth feel they have been connected to services that support their development?
	• What barriers exist to connecting youth to services during diversion?
	• How did they incorporate youth goals?
	• Is it possible to assess the cultural competency of providers and fidelity of service delivery to best practices?
	• How many youths were referred by their diversion provider to a non-YDD provider to address their needs?
Increase and improve collaboration between community-based organizations, other youth serving agencies, and law enforcement through an effective and equitable model of youth development and diversion.	• How supportive are law enforcement and providers of YDD's diversion model?
	• How supportive is the community of YDD's diversion model?
	• Is law enforcement referring youth to YDD diversion in accordance with outlined protocols and YDD's model?
	• What, if any, factors are inhibiting the implementation of the model by law enforcement and providers?
Increase and improve knowledge of alternatives to justice system involvement for youth and other strategies that prevent, reduce, and heal harm among partners and the public.	• What impact has participation in YDD's diversion program had on youth from the youth's perspective?
	• What impact has participation in YDD's diversion program had on youth from the parent/guardian's perspective?
	• Has diversion changed youth's perception about their behavior, law enforcement, or system involvement?
	• What proportion of youth substantially completed the program?

Methodology

The evaluation integrated qualitative data collected during site visits, focus groups, and other exploratory interviews to corroborate and validate quantitative findings, and vice versa. RDA designed this mixed-methods approach to provide breadth and depth to the evaluation with a particular emphasis on elevating youth voice by adding a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) component in which diversion-involved youth themselves served as part of the research team.

To ensure the evaluation was conducted with the highest research and ethical standards and adherence to applicable state and federal law, prior to engaging in data collection activities, RDA applied to the Los Angeles County Public Health Institutional Review Board (IRB) for expedited review. The application included CVs and Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training certificates for Human Subjects research completion for all RDA team members and the main point of contact at YDD, a HIPAA individual authorization waiver, budget detail, a protocol summary and detail, consent forms and waivers, and data collection instruments. The application was approved by the IRB in June 2022.

Qualitative Data Collection Activities

Site Visits

The RDA team conducted site visits with each of the YDD diversion providers to deepen understanding of each organization shown in Figure 1. The evaluation team completed site visits in July and August which included tours of the providers' sites and observations of services when possible,

Figure 1. Participating Service Providers
● Alma Family Services (Alma)
● Asian Youth Center (AYC)
● California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ)
● Centinela Youth Service (CYS)
● Champions in Service (CIS)
● Flintridge Center (Flintridge)
● New Earth
● Soledad Enrichment Action (SEA)

or appropriate. In July, the team met with Flintridge, CIS, SEA, and New Earth. In August, the team met with CCEJ and Alma Family Services. AYC and CYS participated in virtual site visits. While each provider participated in some form of site visit, not all participated in program observations due to scheduling challenges or because of the sensitive nature of the topics discussed with youth receiving services. The research team mitigated these limitations by holding in-depth conversations with the provider(s) about their services and operations.[13]

Focus Groups

The RDA and YPAR teams conducted 30 focus groups and 10 interviews between June and the end of September 2022 with the following stakeholder groups. The protocols used with each group can be found in *Appendix B.*

Diversion Service Providers. Providers described their processes for referrals, outreach, enrollment, service delivery, and program completion. RDA also asked about providers' relationships and interactions with their law enforcement partners and YDD, including communication quality and frequency, level of support, and contractual obligations.

Youth and Families/Guardians. Youth and families/guardians shared their experiences with diversion referral, enrollment, service delivery, and program completion, as well as impact. The research team asked youth and families/guardians to comment on their satisfaction with diversion, note any challenges, and identify any recommendations for improvement. To accommodate the scheduling

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[13] All quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to diversion providers is confidential, as these providers are private entities.

needs of some participants, a small number of youth and families/guardians participated in 30-minute interviews instead of a focus group.

Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) Partners. Seven law enforcement agencies comprise the first cohort of LEAs that have partnered with YDD and providers to refer youth to diversion. RDA spoke with LEAs shown in Figure 2 about their referral processes, asked about their relationship with their provider

Figure 2. Participating Law Enforcement Agencies
● Culver City Police Department
● El Monte Police Department
● LA County Sheriff's Department – Industry Station
● LA County Sheriff's Department – Lancaster Station
● LA County Sheriff's Department – Palmdale Station
● Long Beach Police Department
● Los Angeles Police Department
● Pasadena Police Department

partner, and discussed their interactions with YDD including communications, support, and the partnership agreement. Interviews were conducted when the size of a law enforcement agency, or the number of staff dedicated to working with diversion youth, necessitated a one-on-one discussion, rather than a focus group.

YDD. Questions asked of YDD focused on partnership agreement formation, day-to-day operations, relationship-building with providers and LEAs, and future directions for YDD. The RDA evaluation team was able to complete focus groups with research staff, program managers, and leadership.

It should be noted that interviews were conducted with three law enforcements agencies due to the size of the agency and the number of staff currently completing the referral process to the diversion program. The interviews with these agencies lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. All other law enforcement agencies participated in focus groups that lasted at minimum 90 minutes. One provider participated in a 90-minute leadership interview, while all other agencies either asked to have a combined staff/leadership focus group or multiple members of the leadership team attended the focus group. Additionally, four youth completed interviews. These youth were either the only youth from their provider's diversion program interested in participating or were not able to attend the focus group due to a scheduling conflict, but still wanted to participate and were accommodated with an interview time that worked for them. These interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Finally, two parents/guardians were interviewed, separately, as they were the only parents interested in participating. Their interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

Youth Participatory Action Research

To prioritize youth voice in the evaluation, RDA worked with a team of system-impacted youth researchers between the ages of 16 and 18 using a method called Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). YPAR enhances the evaluation's equitable and cultural responsiveness and validity by including individuals who have been impacted by YDD as part of the evaluation team. In this highly participatory approach that recognizes system-impacted youth as experts, youth researchers not only provided input on the evaluation, but also took an active role in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting evaluation data. Additionally, they engaged in an "Action" component in which they decided how to utilize the evaluation findings to make a meaningful impact on diversion for LA County Youth. For their work, the YPAR youth were compensated at $25 an hour.

RDA made efforts to reduce barriers to participation, including providing transportation and meals for in-person YPAR sessions, offering virtual sessions, and working around youths' schedules. In-person meetings were held in a conference room at the Palmdale Holiday Inn, which was selected based on the youths' proximity and the type of space needed for YPAR activities.

The following sections describe the YPAR process and Figure 3 outlines the sessions. A more detailed description of each of these sessions can be found in **Appendix C**.

Recruitment. To ensure the participatory nature of YPAR, RDA recruited young people ages 14 to 22 who had graduated from a diversion program, who were currently or formerly enrolled in a diversion program or had been part of the Youth Justice Coalition. No other prior work or research experience was required. To do this, RDA informed the YDD diversion providers about the program via email and video call in March and April of 2022. The providers then assisted in identifying interested youth (who were either currently enrolled in or had graduated from) their programs.

Training. The youth engaged in five training sessions to equip them with the research and evaluation skills needed to carry out the evaluation activities with the RDA team. In the training sessions, the youth researchers learned about YPAR and its importance, the purpose of research, different types of data and data collection methods, writing research and interview questions, and ethical research considerations. The youth researchers also revised the youth and family focus group protocols (originally prepared by the RDA team) to ensure the language would be appropriate and the questions were relevant for participants.[14] Once revisions were complete, the YPAR team prepared to facilitate focus groups themselves by observing RDA staff conduct focus groups with other stakeholder groups and simulating focus groups with each other for practice.

Data Collection and Analysis. After completing training and observations, the YPAR team facilitated real focus groups with diversion youth and families using the consent script and protocol questions they revised and practiced. Each youth was accompanied by an RDA staff member who took notes and assisted during the focus group as needed. Two of the focus groups were in-person and the rest took place over Zoom.

In total, YPAR youth conducted seven youth and family focus groups out of the total fifteen. Although the RDA evaluation team had originally planned for the YPAR team to facilitate all youth and family focus groups, scheduling conflicts arose when the school year began and prevented the YPAR from leading all fifteen groups.[15] When a YPAR youth was unavailable to facilitate, an RDA staff member led the focus group. The difference between an adult and a youth leading the focus groups may have impacted participant responses. However, most participants seemed to be comfortable and forthcoming during the focus groups. When an RDA evaluation team member facilitated a youth or family focus group, the same focus group protocol that was edited and approved by the YPAR youth was used to ensure consistency.

Upon completion of all youth and family focus groups, the YPAR team met to reflect on their facilitation experiences and analyze the data. In the interest of time, RDA pre-coded the youth and family transcripts in NVivo and organized them for the YPAR team to read, edit, and analyze. The

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[14] RDA drafted the interview protocols in advance to comply with IRB submission deadlines, which required inclusion of all protocols.
[15] RDA provided transportation and compensation to YPAR youth to help reduce barriers to facilitation. Two of the YPAR youth also became unavailable due to external factors during this data collection period and were unable to facilitate any focus groups.

YPAR team determined if RDA's coding was accurate, summarized and identified themes in participants' responses, and highlighted surprising or interesting points.

Taking Action. The YPAR team's analysis was used to determine what they wanted to do with the information. This "Action" component, a critical piece of Participatory Action Research, was an opportunity for the youth to utilize the findings in a way that felt most meaningful to them. The YPAR team decided to create an informational card and pamphlet that could be distributed by the individual making the referral to better inform youth and families about diversion. These deliverables will be reviewed and incorporated as part of YDD's referral process. The YPAR team also chose to write and produce a short podcast episode outlining challenges and opportunities for improvement within the referral process. This podcast was distributed to YDD and will be shared widely. These materials can be viewed in *Appendix D*.

Additionally, the YPAR team's analysis of the youth and family focus groups is integrated into this report.

Figure 3. YPAR Timeline of Evaluation Activities

Session #1
Intro to Research and Participatory Action Research (Jun. 25, 2022)

Session #2
Understanding the Evaluation and Research Questions, Understanding Data Collection Plans (Jul. 27, 2022)

Training

Session #3
Ethical Research, Review & Revise Evaluation Protocols (Jul. 31, 2022)

Session #4
Review & Revise Evaluation Protocols Continued (Aug. 8, 2022)

Session #5
Learning and Practicing Focus Group Facilitation (Sept. 11, 2022)

Focus Group Observations (Aug. 15-Sept. 15, 2022)

Youth and Family Focus Group Facilitations (Sept. 19-Oct. 12, 2022)

Data Collection and Analysis

Session #6
YPAR Focus Groups and Interview (Oct. 24, 2022)

Session #7
Learning About and Doing Qualitative Data Analysis (Nov. 6, 2022)

Session #8
Qualitative Data Analysis, Continued (Nov. 7, 2022)

Session #9
Qualitative Analysis Continued & Preparation for EAC Meeting (Nov. 13, 2022)

Session #10
Qualitative Analysis Continued & Action Step Preparation (Dec. 4, 2022)

Taking Action

Session #11
Action Step Execution (Dec. 10, 2022)

Session #12
Action Step Execution & Project Close (Dec. 11, 2022)

Quantitative Data

RDA utilized incident-and participant-level law enforcement and diversion provider data for all formally referred youth to YDD during cohort one, running roughly from April 2019 to August 2022. Although law enforcement partners also make informal referrals to service, these youth would likely be counseled, released, and not pursued further and are therefore not considered diversion youth. As a result, the bulk of the analysis contained in this report focuses on formal referrals. For select analyses, such as the suitability of law enforcement referrals, RDA did include informal referrals to evaluate program implementation according to the YDD diversion model. YDD provided incident data collected from partnering law enforcement agencies and obtained through the City of Los Angeles' open data portal. This data included incident dates and location, alleged offense codes, booking status, citation status, and diversion eligibility. YDD additionally provided program data collected from providers. This data was both shared with RDA in Excel format and extracted directly from YDD's referral and case management system. Program data included additional demographic information and client characteristics, referral and enrollment status, intake assessments, care plan goals, youth goals, exit assessments, program satisfaction, and program completion. To understand the spatial distribution of youth referral and program enrollments, RDA additionally extracted boundaries for geographic units of interest from LA County's Enterprise GIS data portal. A full list of data sources can be found in *Appendix E*.

Data Analysis

RDA analyzed qualitative data, in the form of focus group and interview transcripts, using directed content analysis strategies. Working in NVivo, the team employed a combination of deductive and inductive coding to understand patterns, quantify recurring themes, and identify interesting topics that arose in the focus groups and interviews. Intercoder reliability checks ensured consistency across analysts prior to setting the codebook. Additionally, the YPAR team conducted an analysis of the youth and family focus groups by reviewing and validating RDA's coding, summarizing similarly coded quotes into main ideas, voicing reactions and providing additional context to the data.

Quantitative data was cleaned and prepared for analysis in both Excel and Stata. All data was promptly de-identified after datasets were merged. Analysis for this evaluation included descriptive statistics, such as basic frequencies, cross-tabulations, and tests of association (e.g., chi-squared tests of association) to examine the direction and relative strength of the relationship between data elements. Quantitative analysis additionally included spatial analysis of youth enrollment spread and distribution utilizing choropleth maps.[16]

Limitations

Methodological Limitations

Selection Bias. The RDA evaluation team did not have access to the contact information for youth and families/guardians of youth who have participated in YDD diversion services. Therefore, the

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[16] Data visualizations were created using the web-based visualization platform Datawrapper and spatial analysis was conducted in QGIS.

evaluation team relied on providers to complete recruitment for youth and family/guardian focus group participation. Therefore, the views presented here may not be representative of all diversion participants and family/guardians.

Response Bias. Scheduling conflicts and last-minute availability also affected youth and family focus group facilitation. When a YPAR team member was unavailable to facilitate a youth or family focus group, an RDA staff member would fill that role. Though facilitators followed the protocols and practiced facilitation ahead of time, youth and families may have responded differently when speaking with RDA staff or with youth as facilitators.

Implementation Limitations

Limited Quantitative Data. Data obtained from YDD prevented a complete analysis of previously planned evaluation questions and related topics due to limited data availability and data collection inconsistencies. For example, providers did not report a large share of data for certain youth characteristics of interest for this and other evaluations, rendering certain analyses by youth sub-groups (e.g., Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) involvement, sexual orientation) meaningless. About one third of formally enrolled youth were missing data related to DCFS involvement, Individual Education Plan (IEP) status, sexual orientation, and language spoken. Additionally, over one-quarter of formally enrolled youth were missing living situation information. The most consistently available youth characteristic data available is race/ethnicity, gender, age, and youth zip code. Law enforcement partners typically collect and report this data. While collection may vary from agency to agency, the evaluation team would expect that officers are most likely reporting youth's perceived racial and ethnic identity, which may differ from how youth identify themselves.[17]

Providers have not consistently entered either care plan or youth goals into case management software. The introduction of the new case management system in November 2021 roughly corresponds with a major decline in reporting these service delivery data points, which restricts analysis of the program impact on youth with certain goals during diversion. This change in data collection during the program has impacted data quality as well. Since the case management system's launch, providers have required ongoing technical assistance and training to ensure they are correctly entering the required case management data (i.e., enrollment, consent, intake, care plan/youth goals, and exit data).

Additionally, several law enforcement jurisdictions are not currently reporting youth stop data to YDD. Specifically, just nine out of 13 total partner sites report complete stop data to YDD. This prevents a program-wide evaluation of the YDD framework to determine if eligible youth stopped by partner agencies are being diverted to the program. Even among agencies sharing more complete data with YDD, data collection and reporting has changed over time. For long-term studies, this prevents analyses measuring net widening during YDD's diversion program.

Finally, when YDD entered into the agreement with LA County Probation to take the massive volume of Probation Citation Diversion Program youth referrals, it created a significant backlog of cases that YDD staff had to manually enter the case management system. This process, and the inability of

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[17] Other agencies that are not actively sharing data are either limited by staffing shortages or involved in ongoing negotiations with the YDD program to provide more complete data.

YDD staff to retroactively correct errors in the data management system, led to data entry errors that had to be accounted for and overridden during the analysis.

These quantitative data limitations related to data availability only allow for a partial analysis of certain evaluation questions and topics in this report as well as subsequent reports analyzing program equity and outcomes for different youth populations.

The YDD Model for Diversion Services

Previously--in the section titled *Development of YDD*--this report introduced the partnerships that have been created to implement the YDD diversion model. Now, in the *Evaluation Overview,* the evaluation team dives further into what the YDD model is and RDA's approach to examining the model's implementation as well as the impacts that model fidelity, both internal and external, have on the successful implementation, and potentially on the outcomes of youth in LA County who are selecting to participate in diversion.

In Figure 4, YDD has identified the model of diversion that they and their law enforcement and provider partners have agreed to in the partnership agreements. This model reflects the touchpoints at which youth move through the diversion model. For example, the first touchpoint is the referral touchpoint. This is seen in the smaller blue circle under the Law Enforcement Agency box in dark blue. The reason this touchpoint is separated from the providers indicates that law enforcement is responsible for carrying out the referral process in the diversion model.[18] Consequently, RDA assessed, through a rigorous review of available data, how law enforcement has been making referrals to diversion programs, whether those referrals are for youth that meet the agreed upon eligibility criteria, what is the timeframe for referrals, etc. Each of the touchpoints is described in greater detail in the subsequent corresponding sections.

Figure 4. YDD Model of Diversion
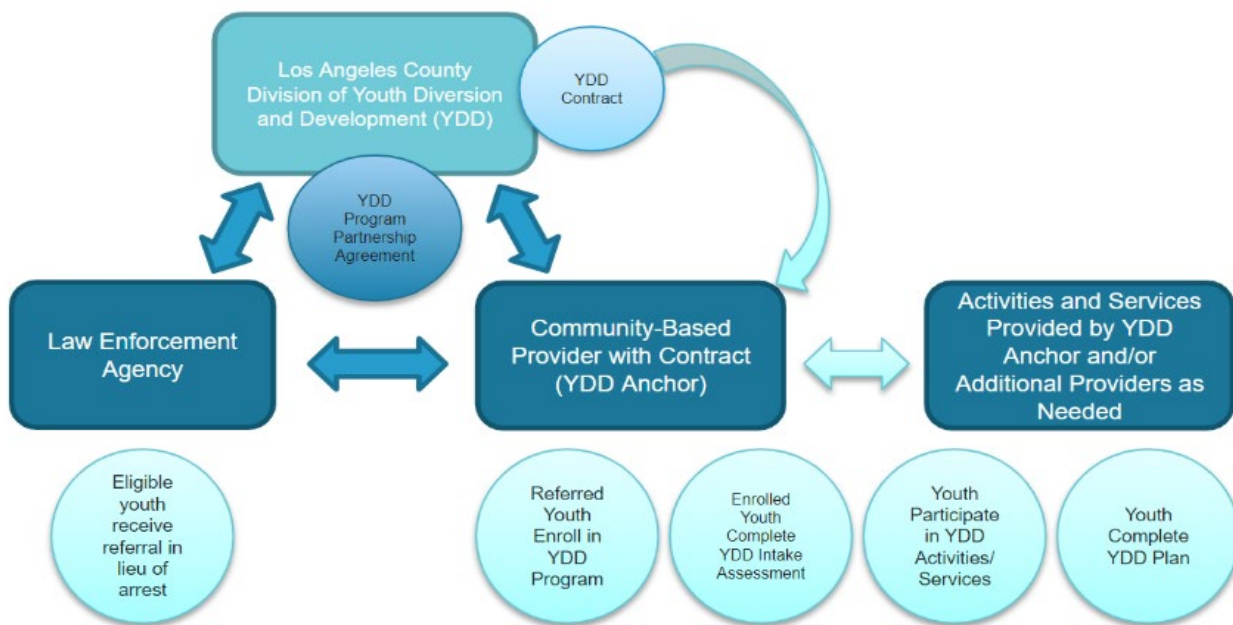
Additionally, RDA examined the role of providers in implementing the outreach and enrollment touchpoint, the care planning and service delivery touchpoint, the program completion

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[18] Since 2019 YDD has established a growing referral system with the LA County District Attorney's Office as well as LA County Probation. For the ease of explanation, and due to low representation among these referral sources in the data, the evaluation team will focus on law enforcement.

touchpoint, and finally the impact touchpoint.[19] At the completion touchpoint, when youth have substantially met their goals and have successfully completed their diversion program, the process to have all charges for any alleged offense is initiated. This analysis was completed through a review of available secondary data; however much of the data that is provided to support the findings is from the qualitative findings collected from the focus groups and interviews. This qualitative data provides insight from those who are directly responsible for and directly impacted by the diversion model.

Finally, RDA examined the role of YDD in the diversion model. Examining how YDD is able fulfill its role as the partner responsible for inter-agency coordination, data-collection, and evidence-driven policy making provides context to understand how the model has been implemented. Equally important is how the partners perceive the role of YDD and how the YDD supports their partners in meeting the partnership agreements and contracts. The YDD model is intentionally adaptable and responsive to each community the model is operating within. To ensure that youth are thriving post-diversion (e.g., improved school attendance, improved mental health, improved communication in the home, no future offense history), then it is important that YDD can collect data that allows them to track the adaptations in programs and make decisions accordingly. The evaluation considered the data that is currently being collected.

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[19] In the *Advancing Racial Equity in Youth Diversion: An Evaluation Framework Informed by Los Angeles County*, completed by the Human Impact Partners (HIP), this touchpoint was labeled "thrive." The name of the touchpoint was changed to "impact," because prior to data collection, RDA evaluation team members thought it was important to name the touchpoint something that would allow for youth and families to express what their realities may be after participating in diversion, whether it be positive or negative.

The Five Main Touchpoints in Pre-Booking Youth Diversion

These five touchpoints have been identified in the *Advancing Racial Equity in Youth Diversion: An Evaluation Framework Informed by Los Angeles County*, completed by the Human Impact Partners (HIP) report, and by RDA as the points in the YDD model for diversion when it possible for the introduction or exacerbation of inequality in the diversion process. It is also at these touchpoints where adaptations to the model can take place that impact youth outcomes and fidelity to the model.

Referral - Following youth contact with law enforcement, the process by which officers determine youth eligibility for participation in diversion, tell youth they are eligible, and enter the information into the case management system and contact the diversion provider.

Outreach and Enrollment – The 30-day period when a program attempts to reach out to youth and their parent/guardian to explain what the diversion program is and how it can be beneficial for them to participate and get them to agree to participate. The program staff will have the youth and parent/guardian sign paperwork and an assessment will be administered.

Care Planning and Service Delivery - Once a youth is enrolled in the program, they will begin by completing a care plan and youth goals sheet. This helps the provider to identify what youth are interested in and what needs they may need assistance addressing. Then youth will begin receiving services. This could be attending groups, virtual sessions, art therapy, mediation, or restorative justice practices, tutoring or mentoring, etc.

Program Completion - Completion is based on the individual youth. They had to make substantial progress toward their goals to complete the program.

Impact - Youth who complete diversion may have long term positive impact. A determination of this will be made in the Outcome Assessment.

Touchpoint 1: Referral

Law enforcement referrals to providers are the first touchpoint in the YDD model as implemented.

The referral process itself starts when an officer stops, or encounters, a youth for allegedly committing an offense. The youth is assessed for diversion eligibility and suitability based on the negotiated terms and timeline in their partnership agreement with YDD and the provider. The YDD model sets "minimum eligibility criteria" for law enforcement agencies and providers to consider. At minimum, YDD recommends referring youth between the ages of 12 and 18 unless they are 14 years of age or older in custody for a Welfare and Institution Code Offense (WIC) 707(b) alleged offense or an alleged felony committed with a firearm. Additionally, YDD allows youth to be referred to diversion multiple times. Law enforcement partners may also require guardian consent prior to referring youth. In these cases, YDD has program materials to be distributed to guardians, explaining diversion.

To assess eligibility and suitability criteria's impact on the referral process, the YDD model further recommends that partners share their stop data with YDD and conduct annual data reviews to ensure their negotiated eligibility and suitability criteria do not disproportionately exclude specific youth populations, such as youth of color.

Once a youth has been deemed eligible for diversion, law enforcement refers youth to a provider. This includes informing youth and their guardians about diversion.

Shared in **Appendix F,** YDD provides a basic referral form for law enforcement partners to use for this purpose, collecting youth and caregiver contact information, alleged offense information, and youth demographic information. Law enforcement agencies may use their own referral form if it collects the same required data elements and has received YDD approval. Depending on the law enforcement agency, referrals have alternately been shared via email and, more recently, YDD's case management system.

Law enforcement partners make two basic types of referrals: formal diversion referrals and informal referrals for service. Youth allegedly committing offenses that would lead to an arrest are formally referred. According to YDD eligibility criteria, these alleged offenses could include misdemeanors that would not be counseled and released and non-WIC 707(b) felony offenses. Formal referrals are considered "pre-booking" referrals if a youth has not yet been arrested, or "post-booking" if an arrest has been completed. Following the YDD model, formal referrals are ideally made at the pre-booking stage.

Law enforcement makes an informal referral to service for youth allegedly committing offenses that could lead to an arrest or citation, but would likely be counseled, released, and not pursued further. According to YDD eligibility criteria, these alleged offenses could include status offenses, low-level misdemeanors, and incidents in which school, guardians, and service providers may be better suited to intervene. Informal referrals are intended to reduce arrests according to the YDD model and not to increase youth contact with the justice system.

Once law enforcement has shared a referral, their partner provider confirms the referral has been received within seven days and reviews the referral for missing information and criteria that may impact its eligibility and suitability. These criteria can include how long ago the alleged offense took place, youth's involvement with DCFS, and the youth's age. After review, a referral is accepted for diversion, converted from a formal to informal referral and accepted, or returned to the referring agency (e.g., due to missing contact information, youth found to be ineligible for formal diversion).

Providers share referral information with YDD for new youth that have been informally and formally referred. After the referral touchpoint, providers are no longer required to report informally referred youths' data (e.g., enrollment status or program completion status) to law enforcement partners.

Findings

The following section weaves together both quantitative and qualitative findings to understand program implementation at the first touchpoint in the YDD diversion model. The section begins by establishing YDD's programmatic reach in terms of youth referred and those youths' characteristics, followed by an examination of the referral process itself to evaluate whether it has been implemented in-keeping with the YDD model. The findings analyze each of the five major steps identified in the preceding referral touchpoint summary, including 1) law enforcement refer eligible youth, 2) law enforcement make suitable referrals, 3) law enforcement refer youth in the allotted timeframe, 4) law enforcement inform youth/caregivers about diversion, and 5) providers confirm referral receipt and acceptability.

Referral Reach

In total, law enforcement made 2,496 referrals to YDD during the evaluation period for 2,406 distinct youth. Broken down by referral stage, law enforcement and referring partners made 1,222 formal referrals to diversion and 1,254 informal referrals for services.[20] Among law enforcement, the largest

Figure 5. All YDD Referrals Over Time, by Calendar Year Quarter (April 2019 – August 2022)

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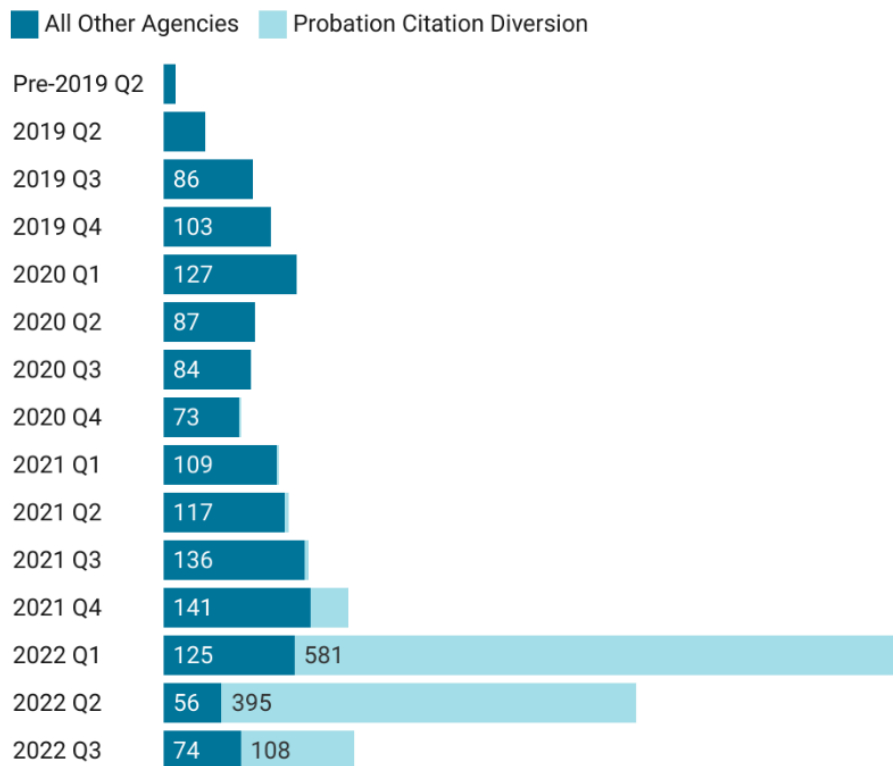
[20] There are 20 youth in the data that have an unknown or missing referral type (formal or informal).

number of referrals came from Probation Citation Diversion (45%, n = 1,127) (Figure 6). Almost all the Probation Citation Diversion referrals came in the final calendar year of this evaluation and helped to contribute to a general trend of increasing referrals to YDD. Among providers, the largest share of referrals was made to Provider A (22%, n = 543) (Figure 7).

Referrals Made Over Time
Over the first program year, referrals steadily increased by about 20 referrals a quarter, on average (Figure 5). Coinciding with the beginning of the county's pandemic shutdown, referrals dropped by about one-third (31%) from 127 to 87 between the first and second quarters of 2020, remaining relatively stable over the remainder of the calendar year, if not slightly decreasing. As the county started to recover from the pandemic in 2021, referrals to YDD began to increase each quarter.

Figure 6. All Referrals, by Eligible Partners (April 2019 – August 2022)

Eligible Partner	Referrals
Probation Citation Diversion	1,127
LAPD	426
LA County DA	294
LASD	213
Long Beach PD	201
El Monte PD	91
Culver City PD	70
Pasadena PD	60
Huntington Park PD	8
Missing & Other	6
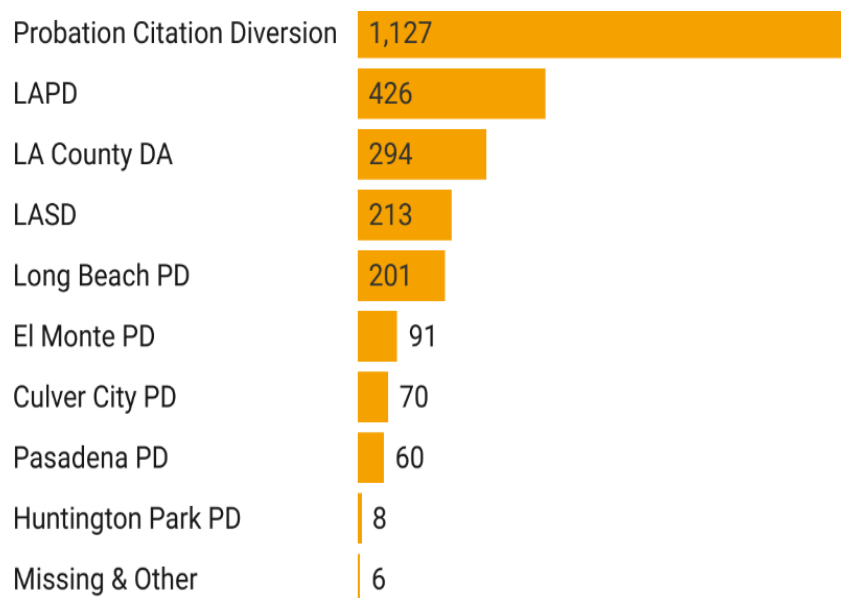
As shown in Figure 5, referrals quadrupled between the final quarter of 2021 (n = 176) and the first quarter of 2022 (n = 706) owing to a large influx of Probation Citation Diversion referrals.[21] Ultimately, more than half of YDD's total referrals came in the final year of this three-year evaluation period (54%, n = 1,339). These findings correspond with Figure 6, highlighting the Probation Citation Diversion as the largest source of referrals for YDD, responsible for almost half of all referrals (45%, n = 1,127), followed by LAPD (17%, n = 426), and LA County DA (12%, n = 294). As a note, both LAPD and Long Beach PD are large jurisdictions operating within LA County, while Probation Citation Diversion and the LA County DA operate throughout the county.

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[21] Probation Citation Diversion Program referrals were made after that program concluded and are therefore considered "retroactive." Additionally, all citations were fully dismissed before youth were connected to the YDD diversion program. As a result, all Probation Citation Diversion referrals were informal referrals for services.

Simultaneously, as referrals overall spiked, referrals from all other agencies dropped. Referrals from agencies other than Probation Citation Diversion fell by more than half (55%) from 125 in the first quarter of 2022 to 56 in the second quarters of 2022, the lowest since the YDD program launched in 2019 (Figure 5). In the third quarter of 2022, referrals from other agencies rose again to levels previously seen during the pandemic.

As shown in Figure 7, Provider A received the largest share of referrals (22%, n = 543) from law enforcement partners, followed by Provider B (18%, n = 451), and Provider D (13%, n = 336). Provider A received slightly more referrals than the smallest three providers (i.e., Providers F, G, and H) combined (n = 537).

Figure 7. All Referrals, by Providers (April 2019 – August 2022)

Provider	Referrals
Provider A	543
Provider B	451
Provider D	336
Provider C	329
Provider E	300
Provider F	230
Provider G	162
Provider H	145
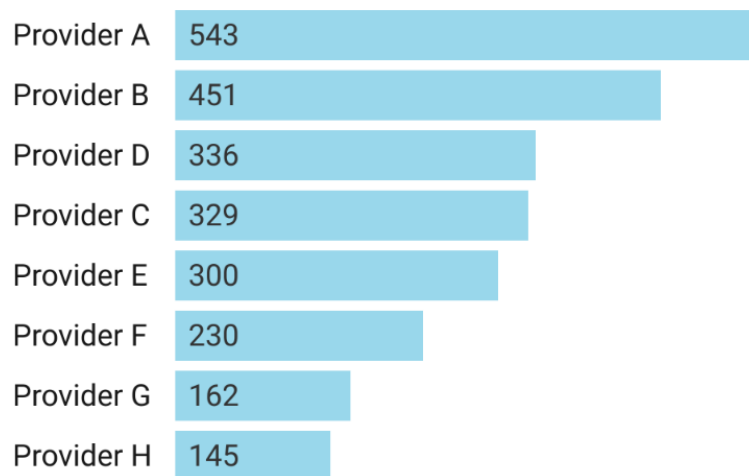
Formal Diversion & Informal Referred Youth Profile

Law enforcement made 1,222 referrals to YDD for formal diversion, representing about half (49%) of all referrals made to the program. As displayed in Table 2, law enforcement identified slightly more than half of distinct formally referred youth as Hispanic or Latinx (52%, n = 616) and more than two-thirds as cis-male or male identifying (69%, n = 816).[22] On average, formally referred youth were about 17 years of age when they were initially stopped by law enforcement and referred to YDD.

Law enforcement and other partners made 1,254 referrals to YDD for services, representing half (50%) of all referrals to the program.[23] Following the same trends as formally referred youth, law enforcement identified more than half of distinct informally referred youth as Hispanic or Latinx (55%, n = 681) and about two-thirds as cis-male or male identifying (69%, n = 851).[24] Similarly, informally referred youth were also about 17 years of age on average when law enforcement initially stopped them.

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[22] Law enforcement partners provided the most complete demographic data for analysis in this evaluation. Their reporting is used in this evaluation to examine the demographic profile of both referred and formally enrolled youth. While the collection methodology may vary from agency to agency, the evaluation team would expect that officers are most likely reporting youth's perceived racial and ethnic identity, which may differ from how youth identify themselves to providers.
[23] Referral stage (i.e., formal, or informal) information was missing for 20 referrals (1%).
[24] To protect youth privacy, any demographic group with fewer than five youth was rolled into "Missing" categories.

Table 2. Referred Youth Demographic Profile (April 2019 – August 2022)

	Formally Referred (N = 1,188)	Informally Referred (N = 1,229)
Race & Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latinx	616 (52%)	681 (55%)
Black/African American	324 (27%)	375 (31%)
White	60 (5%)	95 (8%)
Asian & Pacific Islander	9 (1%)	11 (1%)
Indigenous	11 (1%)	--
"Other"	8 (1%)	20 (2%)
Bi/Multiracial	38 (3%)	--
Missing	122 (10%)	47 (4%)
Gender		
Cis-Male or Male Identifying	816 (69%)	851 (69%)
Cis-Female or Female Identifying	321 (27%)	371 (30%)
Genderqueer, Non-Conforming, Non-Binary	6 (1%)	--
Missing	45 (4%)	7 (1%)
Age[25]		
12	44 (4%)	52 (4%)
13	119 (10%)	103 (8%)
14	137 (12%)	173 (14%)
15	242 (20%)	270 (22%)
16	231 (19%)	247 (20%)
17	263 (22%)	244 (20%)
18-25	91 (8%)	105 (9%)
Missing	61 (5%)	4 (0%)

[25] Only youth between 12 and 17 years of age are eligible for YDD diversion; however, a small number of youth between the ages of 8-11 were observed in the data. The presence of these youth could be the result of data entry issues at the referral stage. To protect privacy, formally referred youth in the 8-11 age group are presented in the "missing" age group. Among informally referred youth, 31 (3%) were between ages 8-11. Of additional note, some youths do not enroll in YDD diversion or are otherwise not referred to a YDD provider until well after their initial incident. This lag between initial police contact and YDD referral or enrollment accounts for the presence of youth in the data who are 18-25 years of age.

The Referral Process

Broken down by referral process steps at this first programmatic touchpoint, the following findings identify where law enforcement partners and providers have implemented the YDD model as intended.

> **Six Referral Process Steps Reviewed in the Evaluation**
>
> **Step 1:** Law enforcement refer eligible youth held for alleged non-707(b) offenses or felonies not involving a firearm.
>
> **Step 2:** Law enforcement make suitable referrals to diversion.
>
> **Step 3:** Law enforcement refers youth in the timeframe allotted by partnership agreements.
>
> **Step 4:** Law enforcement informs youth and their caregivers about diversion.
>
> **Step 5:** Providers confirm referral receipt within seven days and review referral acceptability.

These findings show that law enforcement partners generally make referrals per the YDD Handbook and Partnership Agreement Template. However, not all eligible youth are being diverted or diverted at the right referral level. Among those sharing complete youth stop data, law enforcement partners diverted just 41% of all eligible youth to YDD. Eligible youth who had committed an alleged felony were diverted at a rate almost two and a half times lower than youth committing alleged misdemeanors. Although law enforcement partners made suitable formal referrals for youth allegedly committing offenses such as "other assaults," larceny, and aggravated assault, law enforcement partners also made formal referrals for low-level misdemeanors, alleged status offenses, and curfew violations. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies made more than one-quarter (28%, n = 347) of formal referrals at the post-booking stage.

Step 1: Law enforcement refer eligible youth for alleged suitable offenses

To understand the extent to which law enforcement partners are referring eligible youth, this evaluation examined all stop data collected for law enforcement partners submitting the most complete data for non-diverted and diverted youth. Limiting analysis to these agencies allows for more accurate comparisons to assess the extent to which law enforcement's youth stops have changed over time and to what extent they are diverting eligible youth to YDD. The nine agencies with the most complete stop data included in the subsequent analyses can be found in Figure 8.

Other agencies that are not actively sharing data are either limited by staffing shortages or involved in ongoing negotiations with the YDD program to provide more complete data.

Figure 8. Agencies Included in Stop Data Analyses

- Culver City Police Department
- El Monte Police Department
- Huntington Park Police Department
- Pasadena Police Department
- LAPD 77th Division
- LAPD Harbor Division
- LAPD Mission Division
- LAPD Newton Division
- LAPD Olympic Division
- LAPD Southwest Division

All Youth Stops for Selected Agencies
Overall, the nine agencies examined for this evaluation stopped 2,061 youth during the evaluation period.[26] Trends in youth arrests over time are displayed in Figure 9 for youth with non-missing incident or arrest dates. This figure shows that quarterly youth stops were increasing across all nine agencies by about 12 total stops on average in the first program year, settling around 75 total arrests for the first two quarters of 2020.

During the first summer of the pandemic and amidst George Floyd protests, youth arrests tripled to an evaluation period high of 240 total arrests in the third quarter of 2020. Subsequently, quarterly arrests have generally been decreasing, albeit unevenly. As a note, the final quarter of this evaluation period, 2022-3, only includes two months of data. It is likely that total arrests for the selected agencies will ultimately be higher.

This observed increase in arrests may be a product of the pandemic, which largely kept LA youth out of in-person classes through Fall 2021, and improved data reporting over time. For example, the third quarter of 2020 also coincides with a marked increase in the reporting of alleged vehicle theft, carrying or possessing weapons, aggravated assault, burglary, and other assaults. Specifically, reports of youth allegedly committing an offense increased almost six times from 19 in the prior quarter to 110.

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[26] This includes 38 youth who did not have an incident or arrest date recorded in available data, as well as 11 youth with incident or arrest dates pre-dating the second quarter of 2019. This count excludes 359 youth held in protective custody and/or had a WIC 707b recorded offense code.

In total, more than half of youth stops among the nine agencies were for an alleged felony (61%, n = 1,264), and 31% were for alleged misdemeanors (n = 618). Most of the remaining youth stops did not have available offense level data (n = 133), while 13 and 33 stops, respectively, were recorded for alleged non-status infractions and alleged status offenses.

Figure 9. All Stops for Selected Agencies, by Calendar Year Quarter (April 2019 – August 2022)

Quarter	Count
Pre 2019-2	11
2019-2	28
2019-3	58
2019-4	99
2020-1	74
2020-2	77
2020-3	240
2020-4	158
2021-1	230
2021-2	186
2021-3	221
2021-4	194
2022-1	183
2022-2	115
2022-3	149
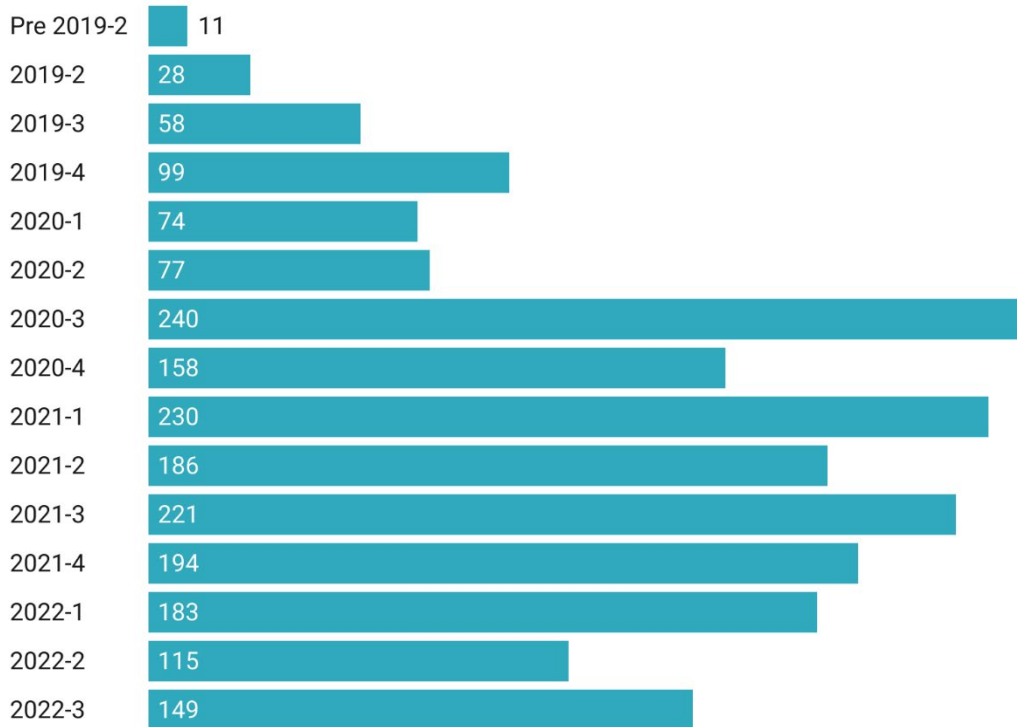
As shown in Figure 10, most alleged felonies were for robbery offenses (23%, n = 291), followed by carrying or possession of a weapon (22%, n = 276), and aggravated assault (13%, n = 168).[27] Along with alleged vehicle theft (8%, n = 102), these four offense categories collectively represent 66% (n = 837) of all alleged felony offenses.

Over a quarter of all alleged misdemeanor charges were for "other assault" offenses (30%, n = 185), followed by larceny (12%, n = 75), "other" offenses (8%, n = 51), and moving traffic violations (7%, n = 45). Collectively, these four offense categories represent 58% of all alleged misdemeanors (n = 356).

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[27] "Other" alleged offenses include the following: Forgery/Counterfeit, Possession of Live Ammo, Receive Stolen Property, Sexual Battery, Resisting Arrest, Drunkenness, Hit & Run, Distribution of Child Pornography, Prostitution/Allied, Fraud/Embezzlement, Elder Abuse, Eavesdropping, Gambling, Liquor Laws, Minor: Alcohol, Miscellaneous County Ordinance, Kidnapping, Attempted Burglary, Non-Criminal Detention, Protective Custody, Riots, Probation Violation, Disturbing the Peace, and Pre-Delinquency.

Figure 10. Youth Stops by Level and Offense Name for Selected Agencies (April 2019 – August 2022)

■ Alleged Misdemeanor ■ Alleged Felony ■ Alleged Non-Status Infraction ■ Alleged Status Offense

	Alleged Felony	Alleged Misdemeanor	Alleged Non-Status Infraction	Alleged Status Offense
Robbery	291	1	0	0
Weapon (carry/poss)	276	29	0	0
Aggravated Assault	168	17	0	0
Vehicle Theft	102	10	0	0
Other Assaults	74	185	0	0
Burglary	73	1	0	0
Vandalism	38	36	0	0
Moving Traffic Violation	37	45	3	0
Other	29	51	1	1
Rape	29	0	0	0
Larceny	24	75	0	0
Grand Theft	23	3	0	0
Sex (except rape/prst)	20	31	0	0
Homicide	20	0	0	0
Warrant Arrest	19	2	0	0
Miscellaneous Other Violation	17	40	0	0
Narcotic Drug Laws	13	9	3	7
Unknown	5	29	3	4
Battery	5	28	0	0
Driving Under Influence	1	10	0	0
Disorderly Conduct	0	14	0	0
Curfew	0	2	3	21

Eligible YDD Stops for Selected Agencies

For this evaluation, youth eligibility for YDD diversion was determined using offense codes, identifying youth as ineligible for alleged 707(b) offenses, alleged use of a firearm to commit a felony offense, or age at the time of incident (i.e., if over the age of 18 or under the age of 12). Some youths were additionally deemed ineligible for the reason of a probation violation or warrant. Of the 2,037 youth stops examined for the nine selected agencies, 1,556 youth were eligible for YDD diversion, and

ultimately 639 were referred. The nine analyzed agencies referred 31% of all youth that were stopped, and less than half (41%) of all eligible arrests.

After reaching a programmatic high of 104 eligible diverted cases in the fourth quarter of 2019, the total number of eligible youth diverted to YDD decreased for the nine selected agencies (Figure 11).[28] A note of caution, the selected law enforcement partners began sharing complete stop data at various points in 2020, impacting the observed trends in the share (i.e., percentage) of eligible youth diverted. For example, as law enforcement partners shared more complete stop data, the observed percentage of eligible youth diverted fell by almost 50 percentage points from three-quarters of all youth (74%, n = 49) in second quarter of 2020 to one-quarter (28%, n = 50) in the third quarter of 2020. However, the total number of youths diverted remained stable at about 50.

The total number of youths diverted dipped slightly but remained relatively stable through the fourth quarter of 2021 at approximately 44 eligible youth a quarter. Over the most recent three calendar year quarters, eligible diversions dropped to about 15 on average. As a note, data for the third quarter of 2022 is likely an incomplete accounting of total eligible and diverted youth owing to the length of time it takes law enforcement agencies to refer youth and delayed reporting.

Figure 11. Eligible Stops Diverted for Selected Agencies, by Calendar Year Quarter (April 2019 – August 2022)

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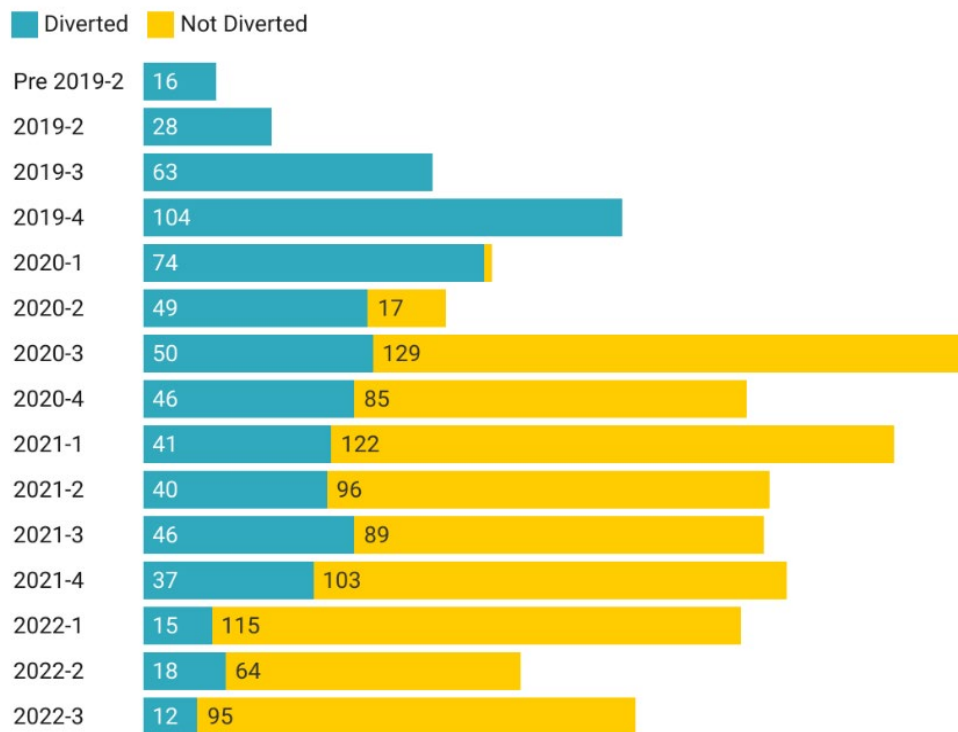
[28] Incident and arrest dates were not available for 37 youth stops. Evaluators backfilled missing data with each stop's corresponding referral date. The selected agencies referred 71% of diverted youth within one month. As a result, referral quarters, which span three months, are an appropriate proxy to approximate incident dates when they are not reported.

Most diverted cases from the nine selected agencies were referred to YDD for formal diversion (87%, n = 555), while just 12% (n = 74) received informal referrals to services.[29] Law enforcement partners made at least 55% (n = 304) of their formal diversion referrals at the pre-booking stage and made a much smaller share (4%, n = 22) post-booking.[30] Additionally, of the youth receiving an informal referral, at least 49% (n = 36) had been counseled and released.

While law enforcement partners could have diverted many more eligible cases based on YDD's referral criteria, the nine agencies are making formal referrals in alignment with the YDD model. Specifically, these partners are diverting most youth at the pre-booking stage. Additionally, these agencies informally refer youth that were counseled and released as intended by the YDD model, reserving formal referrals for a selection of non-707(b) youth that law enforcement would likely arrest.

Figure 12. Eligible Youth Not Diverted for Selected Agencies, by Alleged Felony Offenses (April 2019 – August 2022)

Eligible YDD Stops by Offense Level & Category for Selected Agencies

Further exploring when the nine selected agencies are not diverting eligible youth, Figure 12 shows the number of eligible youths allegedly committing felonies that agency partners did not divert by offense categories. Among eligible youth allegedly committing felonies, law enforcement stopped 33% (n = 260) for

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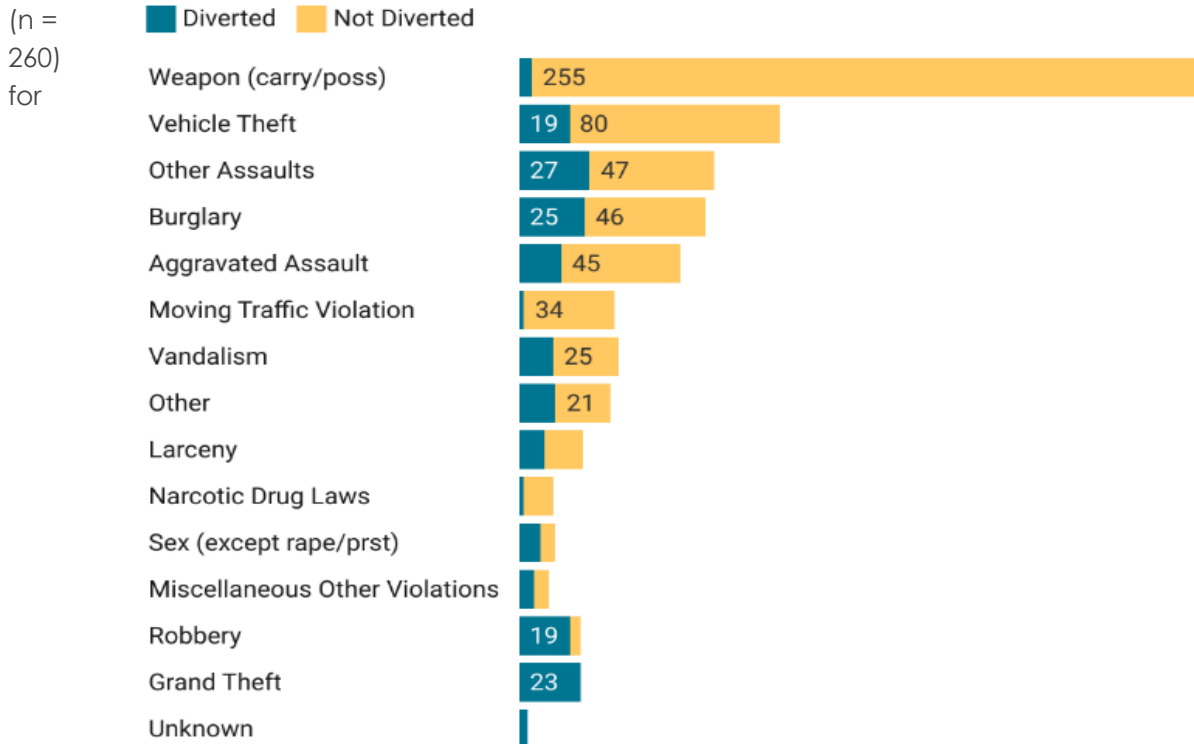
[29] Providers or law enforcement partners deemed an additional four ineligible at some point in the referral process.
[30] The phrase "at least" is used here because data is unavailable to determine the referral stage (e.g., before or after booking) for the remaining 229 formally diverted and 38 informally diverted youth.

allegedly carrying or possessing a weapon. Of these YDD-eligible youth, just 2% were diverted (n = 5).[31] Alleged weapons offenses consequently represent almost half (43%) of all eligible cases the selected law enforcement partners did not divert. After weapons, the largest number of eligible youth law enforcement did not divert were stopped for alleged vehicle theft (n = 80), "other" assaults (n = 47), and burglary (n = 46). Eligible youth allegedly committing these four offenses combined account for 72% (n = 428) of all eligible youth who law enforcement did not divert for alleged felonies.

Overall, the selected agencies diverted a significantly larger share of eligible youth allegedly committing misdemeanors (60%, n = 364) than felonies (24%, n = 192). Among eligible youth allegedly committing misdemeanors, law enforcement stopped 30% (n = 170) for "other assaults" (Figure 13). Of these YDD-eligible youth, law enforcement diverted over half, 56% (n = 95). Those not diverted for "other assaults" make up 35% (n = 75) of all alleged misdemeanors not diverted. After "other assaults," the largest number of eligible youths were not diverted for alleged moving traffic violations (n = 41), "other" alleged offenses (n = 20), and vandalism (n =15).[32] Youth allegedly

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[31] "Other" alleged felony offenses include the following: Possession of Live Ammo, Receive Stolen Property, Resisting Arrest, Distribution of Child Pornography, Fraud/Embezzlement, Elder Abuse, Attempted Burglary, Riots, Battery, Rape, Driving Under Influence, and Warrant Arrest.

[32] "Other" alleged misdemeanor offenses include the following: Forgery/Counterfeit, Possession of Live Ammo, Receive Stolen Property, Sexual Battery, Resisting Arrest, Drunkenness, Hit & Run, Distribution of Child Pornography, Fraud/Embezzlement, Elder Abuse, Eavesdropping, Gambling, Liquor Laws, Minor: Alcohol, Miscellaneous County Ordinance, Curfew, Vehicle Theft, Prostitution/Allied, Driving Under Influence, Robbery, Narcotic Drug Laws, Grand Theft, Burglary, Disturbing the Peace, and Pre-Delinquency.

committing these four offenses combined account for 71% (n = 151) of all eligible youth that law enforcement did not divert for alleged misdemeanors.
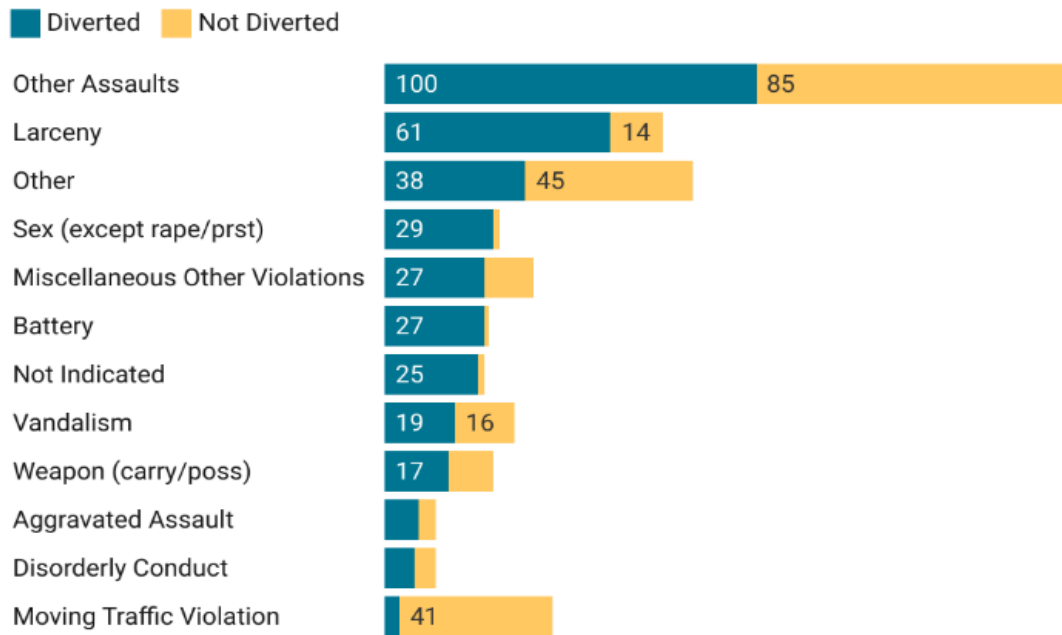
Figure 13. Eligible Youth Not Diverted for Selected Agencies, by Alleged Misdemeanor Offenses (April 2019 – August 2022)

Step 2. Law enforcement makes suitable referrals to diversion

Further exploring how partners implemented the YDD model at the first touchpoint, the following analysis looks at referrals made across all eligible referring partners. This larger sample is used in the evaluation to assess the suitability of formal and informal referrals made based on alleged offense categories.[33] Law enforcement agencies made 2,496 referrals to YDD for distinct incidents. Of these referrals, law enforcement formally referred about half 49% (n = 1,222) of youth to formal diversion, informally referring the remainder to services (50%, n = 1,254).[34]

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[33] In addition to YDD partner law enforcement agencies, referrals came to YDD from various sources. The following agencies all made at least one referral to YDD: Culver City PD, El Monte PD, Huntington Park PD, LA County DA - Antelope Valley Office, LA County DA - Compton Office, LA County DA - Eastlake Office, LA County DA - Inglewood Office, LA County DA - Long Beach Office, LA County DA - Pomona Office, LA County DA - Sylmar Office, LA County DA - Truancy Mediation, LAPD 77th Division, LAPD Harbor Division, LAPD Mission Division, LAPD Newton Division, LAPD Olympic Division, LAPD Southeast Division, LAPD Southwest Division, LAPD Topanga, LASD Altadena, LASD Century, LASD Industry, LASD Lancaster, LASD Palmdale, Long Beach PD, Los Angeles School PD, Pasadena PD, Probation Citation Diversion, Whittier Police Department.
[34] The referral type was missing or otherwise unknown for about 1% (n = 20) of the total referrals.

Suitability: Formal Referrals

According to the YDD model, law enforcement partners should make formal referrals to the program for youth they would likely arrest. Law enforcement made 57% of all their formal referrals for youth committing alleged misdemeanors (n = 701) and another 33% (n = 405) for alleged felonies. About 5% (n = 56) of law enforcement referrals were made for alleged status offenses and infractions.[35]

Shown in Figure 14, 22% of formally referred youth with a known offense level had allegedly committed offenses in the "other assaults" category (n = 250), followed by larceny (11%, n = 133), vandalism (9%, n = 107), sex (7%, n = 81), and aggravated assault (7%, n = 80), and weapons offense categories (7%, n = 76).[36] These six alleged offense categories represent almost two-thirds (63%, n = 727) of total formal referrals, indicating that law enforcement partners appropriately refer most formal referrals. However, law enforcement partners also made referrals for at least 54 low-level misdemeanors (i.e., possession of liquor on school grounds, drunkenness, possession of alcohol, use of offensive words), status offenses, and curfew violations. According to YDD eligibility criteria, law enforcement partners should have given youth allegedly committing these offenses an informal service referral, which comes with less data reporting requirements to referring law enforcement agency about enrollment and progress in the program. Consequently, these referrals may represent increased system involvement for some youth who would have otherwise been counseled and released without further action referred to as net-widening.

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[35] 60 (5%) of alleged offenses were reported with unknown offense levels.
[36] "Other" alleged offenses for formal referrals include the following: Assault on School Employee, Bank/Etc. Robbery, Criminal Threats, Distribution of Child Pornography, Drunkenness, Fireworks (sale/possession), Forge/Alter Vehicle Registration/Etc., Forgery/Counterfeit, Fraud/Embezzlement, Disturbing the Peace, Driving Under Influence, Rape, Hit & Run, Invade Privacy: With Camcorder, Minor: Alcohol, Missing Manufacturing Serial Number, Multiple Offenses, Offensive Words University/Etc., Possession Liquor School Property, Possession of Live Ammo, Receive Stolen Property, Sexual Battery, Suspended: Committed Act, and Unlawful Riding: Vehicle.

Following the YDD model, formal referrals are ideally made at the pre-booking stage, although this is only sometimes the case. Law enforcement partners made at least 32% (n = 347) of formal referrals at the pre-booking stage; however, they made an almost similar share of formal referrals (28%, n = 390) post-booking. These post-booking referrals include referrals made at the pre-filing stage and through Court and DA Diversion programs.[37]

Figure 14. Offenses and Levels for All Formal Referrals (April 2019 – August 2022)

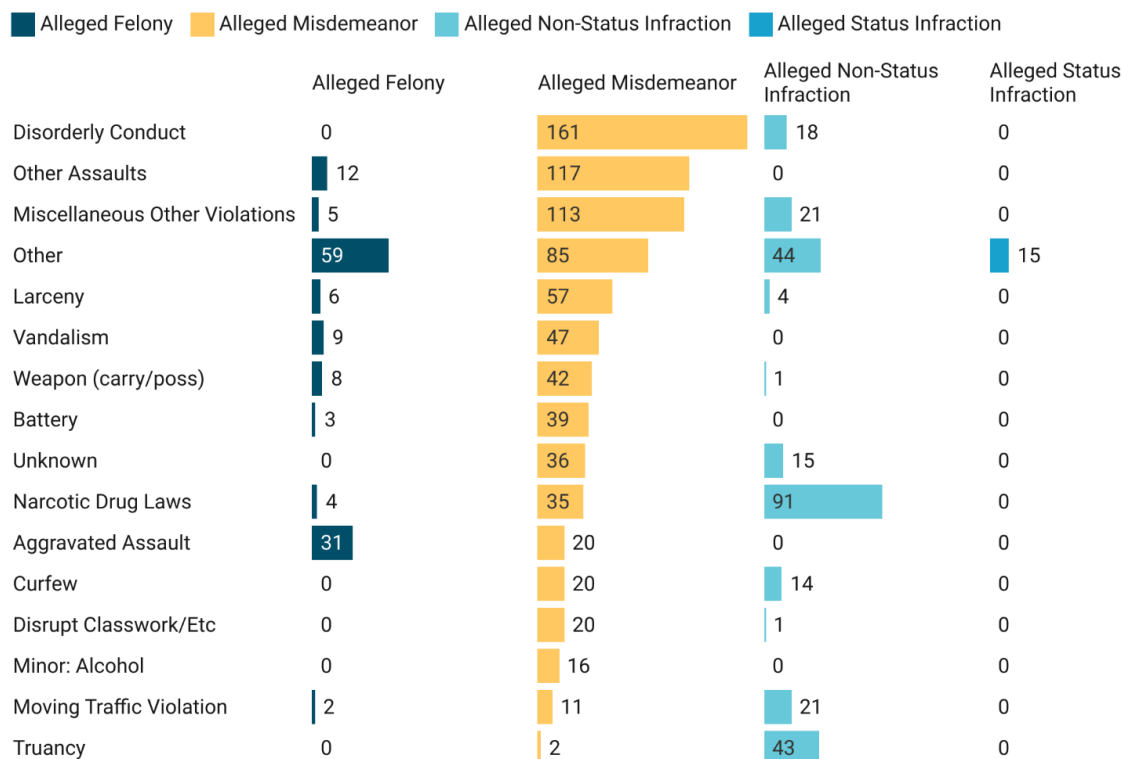|	Alleged Felony	Alleged Misdemeanor	Alleged Non-Status Infraction	Alleged Status Infraction
Burglary	52	13	0	0
Vandalism	46	61	0	0
Robbery	44	3	0	0
Aggravated Assault	40	40	0	0
Larceny	40	93	0	0
Other Assaults	39	211	0	0
Vehicle Theft	36	13	0	0
Sex (except rape/prst)	29	52	0	0
Weapon (carry/poss)	28	48	0	0
Other	24	36	7	0
Miscellaneous Other Violations	10	44	0	0
Grand Theft	6	4	0	0
Moving Traffic Violation	4	10	0	0
Narcotic Drug Laws	4	21	11	0
Battery	3	13	0	0
Curfew	0	9	2	0
Disorderly Conduct	0	16	0	0
Non-Status Infraction	0	0	11	0
Status	0	0	1	24
Unknown	0	14	0	0

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[37] The phrase "at least" is used here because data is unavailable to determine the referral stage (e.g., before or after booking) for the remaining 485 formally diverted youth.

Suitability: Informal Referrals

Law enforcement partners make informal referrals for low-level misdemeanors that could lead to an arrest but would more likely counsel and release without further action. Of the youth that were informally referred, almost two-thirds (65%, n = 821) were referred for alleged misdemeanors. After misdemeanors, alleged infractions made up the second largest share of referrals at 23% (n = 288). Law enforcement made just 11% (n = 139) of informal referrals for alleged felonies.[38]

Figure 15. Offenses and Levels for All Informal Referrals (April 2019 – August 2022)

■ Alleged Felony　■ Alleged Misdemeanor　■ Alleged Non-Status Infraction　■ Alleged Status Infraction

	Alleged Felony	Alleged Misdemeanor	Alleged Non-Status Infraction	Alleged Status Infraction
Disorderly Conduct	0	161	18	0
Other Assaults	12	117	0	0
Miscellaneous Other Violations	5	113	21	0
Other	59	85	44	15
Larceny	6	57	4	0
Vandalism	9	47	0	0
Weapon (carry/poss)	8	42	1	0
Battery	3	39	0	0
Unknown	0	36	15	0
Narcotic Drug Laws	4	35	91	0
Aggravated Assault	31	20	0	0
Curfew	0	20	14	0
Disrupt Classwork/Etc	0	20	1	0
Minor: Alcohol	0	16	0	0
Moving Traffic Violation	2	11	21	0
Truancy	0	2	43	0

At the offense category level, law enforcement made the largest share of informal referrals for the "other" offense category (16%, n =203), followed by alleged disorderly conduct at 14% (n = 179), miscellaneous other violations 11% (n = 139) and narcotic drug laws 10% (n = 130) (Figure 15).[39] Combined, youth allegedly committing "other" offenses, disorderly conduct, miscellaneous other violations, and narcotic drug offenses comprise 52% (n = 651) of all informal referrals made. Overall, these findings indicate that law enforcement partners are making appropriate informal referrals.

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[38] 6 (0%) of alleged offenses were reported with unknown offense levels.
[39] "Other" alleged offenses for formal referrals include the following: Assault on School Employee, Bank/Etc. Robbery, Criminal Threats, Distribution of Child Pornography, Drunkenness, Fireworks (sale/possession), Forge/Alter Vehicle Registration/Etc., Forgery/Counterfeit, Fraud/Embezzlement, Disturbing the Peace, Driving Under Influence, Rape, Hit & Run, Invade Privacy: With Camcorder, Minor: Alcohol, Missing Manufacturing Serial Number, Multiple Offenses, Offensive Words University/Etc., Possession Liquor School Property, Possession of Live Ammo, Receive Stolen Property, Sexual Battery, Suspended: Committed Act, and Unlawful Riding: Vehicle.

Qualitative Findings

During the focus groups and interviews conducted with law enforcement, RDA inquired about the referral process and the factors that went into the decision to refer youth to diversion. Answers varied widely across the County. There were some municipalities that had a checklist in place, others that said it was completely discretionary, and still others that simply stated that a youth must not have been alleged to have committed a WIC 707(b) offense.

> *"Offense is a big part of the decision. Certain crimes that whoever is referring may not feel comfortable with. Some we're not allowed to – homicides, violent crimes. But there's some we are allowed to, but you just may not feel comfortable with." ~ Law Enforcement*

> *"There is no set policy, very discretionary. So, there's certain things we must arrest for…anything felonious, sexual nature, so thinking like vaping, cigarettes, marijuana, misdemeanor and below…truancies, fighting on campus, disrupting in class. The way it was explained to us in class, it must be a citable offense to go into diversion." ~ Law Enforcement*

Suitability: Number of Times Previously Referred

The YDD program model does not limit the number of times law enforcement can refer youth to the program. Of the 2,406 distinct youth referred, about 3% (n = 83) were referred to YDD diversion multiple times.[40] Although it is unclear how often law enforcement partners decided not to re-refer youth, this finding indicates that they are open to and have made multiple referrals to the program in keeping with the YDD model.

Step 3. Law enforcement refers suitable youth in the timeframe allotted

To understand if referrals are made within the timeframe allotted in partnership agreements, this analysis again includes the full sample of all eligible referring partners. As a note, Probation Citation Diversion Program referrals are not included in this analysis because those referrals were made retroactively after that program concluded. In the "Partnership Agreement Template," YDD provides four different timeframes by which law enforcement partners will complete their referral process: within 24 hours, within 48 hours, within seven days, every six months. Eligible referring partners submitted almost half (47%, n = 606) of their referrals within ten days of an alleged incident, while 9% (n = 123) of referrals took six months or longer. These findings are closely aligned with the YDD model outlined in the "Partnership Agreement Template," although a little more than half of referrals do take longer than the recommended seven-day referral process window. While partnership

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[40]Law enforcement referred youth a maximum of four times for distinct incidents. Almost all the youth referred multiple times had been referred twice (93%, n = 77).

agreement terms may vary, these results indicate that law enforcement agencies are largely completing referrals within the timeframe outlined in the YDD model.

Qualitative Data: Timeliness of Referral to Diversion

During the focus groups that RDA and the YPAR evaluation teams completed with youth and family/guardians, youth that reported being referred by law enforcement said that the time that it took to get referred varied. Many indicated that it was immediate and came up in discussion with the law enforcement officer handling their case. Others indicated that the referral did not come for a couple of weeks, and therefore was surprising when youth learned about it.

> *"The detectives handling my case, they explained it to me when I went in to meet with them." ~ Youth*

> *"I didn't know I was going to join till a couple weeks after [I got in trouble] so I did not know what to think at first." ~ Youth*

Youth who were referred to diversion through other sources reported an extensive lag between the alleged incident and the referral. The amount of time between the alleged incident and the referral was quite jarring for these youth and families/guardians.

> *"Three or four months later I got a ticket that said I either needed to go to court or diversion." ~ Youth*

Importantly, when there is a gap in time between when youth allegedly commit an offense and receive the referral, it can not only catch youth and their parent/guardian off guard, but it can also foster resentment and disinterest in participating.

> *"Not waiting till it has been so long till after the event. So, parents are more on board with us." ~ Provider*

Step 4. Law enforcement inform youth and their guardians about diversion

Understanding how law enforcement shares information with youth and parent/guardians is important because law enforcement is youths' first point of contact the information that is shared and how it is shared can be a factor in youth and their parent/guardian's decision-making process to proceed with participating in a voluntary diversion program.

Qualitative Findings:

When youth and family/guardians were asked about how they were informed of the diversion program, family/guardians overwhelmingly shared they were informed by law enforcement. They

additionally reported the information conveyed to them by law enforcement was not about the diversion programs themselves but rather about the legal benefits of enrolling and successfully completing the program.[41]

"The police officer said I could get my charges dropped, and that it was the best option." ~ Youth

"The detective told me about it, said it would keep me from more trouble, and it would get my charge off." ~ Youth

Youth were also asked whether they felt as though diversion was a choice or whether it was mandatory. Youth from across the County had different reactions to this question. Some responses were as simple as yes or no, without choosing to expand further. Other youth spoke about how the choice was not theirs to make because their parent/guardian made it for them. Still other youth viewed diversion as the lesser of two bad options. Some youth viewed participating in diversion as a way out of a bad situation they had found themselves in and were happy to have the choice.

"I felt like it was a requirement because of my charge, and I was made to feel like I had to do so because I could not be looking at this [charge] stuff anymore." ~ Youth

"I think it was a requirement." ~ Youth

"My parents told me I had to do this or go to jail." ~ Youth

"I think it's more of a choice, but if you don't participate you have to go to court, it was either diversion program or the court date, and they sounded convincing about the program, so I decided I'd rather do that as opposed to court." ~ Youth

"The officer told us if we don't participate what the risks were, basically the alternative is that we would go to jail, we knew it wasn't required, but at the end of the day the other option was terrible." ~ Youth

"It was a choice, I just wanted the help, otherwise I would have gone in the system." ~ Youth

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[41] A small number of focus group participants reported being sent a letter that explained their option to either proceed with their case, or to participate in diversion, and, if successfully completed, have the charge dismissed, as well as instructions on how to contact the appropriate diversion provider. Since these youth and parents/guardians were directed to a provider familiar with the services youth would receive should they participate in diversion, the evaluation team has focused on those youth that received their initial information from law enforcement.

RDA additionally asked youth about their perceptions of law enforcement attitude and tone during the referral discussion. Youth and parents/guardians reported having mixed interactions with law enforcement.

"Like any law enforcement, deep, straightforward. Law enforcement tries to intimidate you when they talk to you." ~ Youth

"They explained that it was a program where they check in on her. It'll be okay, there's no court or arrest, and it is just to make sure that everything goes well. They were nice to her." ~ Parent/Guardian

In focus groups with law enforcement, responses varied regarding how individual departments, substations, or divisions share information with youth and parents/guardians. Some law enforcement partners responded that they use a checklist, or script, to ensure everyone gets the same information. The script does not contain information on specific services offered, however. Another officer described reading a script with more program information, which still felt inadequate.

"We're supposed to read the advisement on the form. But what justifies the 3-month versus a 12-month program? The family always wants to know, how long will it take? And I say, 'I don't know.' We don't know what the 3-month versus 6-month versus 12-month program is. Or if it depends on the child and how long they take." ~ Law Enforcement

"Maybe an explanation of what happens in the class would help us too." ~ Law Enforcement

Step 5. Providers confirm referral receipt within seven days and review referral acceptability

When the YDD program launched, law enforcement partners sent referrals to providers via email. Under this arrangement, confirming receipt of referrals was necessary to ensure that providers received information about referred youth. However, with the transition to the new case management system, providers automatically receive law enforcement partners' submitted referrals, and there is no longer any question of providers missing referrals in an email inbox. As a result, the date a provider received a YDD referral is no longer collected. The referral date in the case management system is always the same date a provider received the referral.

After receiving a referral from law enforcement partners, providers review their acceptability. During their review, providers are looking for things such as the age of the youth referred, complete referral information, length of time between the incident and referral, and youth DCFS involvement. Overall, 93% (n = 2,332) of referrals made by all law enforcement partners during the evaluation period were accepted; just 3% were not eligible (n = 73), and 4% (n = 91) were pending, under review, or otherwise had an "unknown" or "other" referral status at the time of data collection.

Touchpoint 2: Outreach and Enrollment

Once providers have confirmed that a youth referred for diversion services is eligible to participate, a provider, per the partnership agreement and YDD Policies and Procedures Handbook, is encouraged to begin the outreach process to a youth and their parent/guardians within 72 hours. During outreach, providers give youth and their caregivers an in-depth description of diversion, available services, and an overview of what options youth have should they choose not to enroll.

Once youth and their caregivers consent to participate in formal diversion or informal services, the youth is enrolled, and providers update their program status in the case management system.[42]

Additionally, providers receive authorization to share programmatic information with YDD and a notice of privacy practices in place to protect their data.

YDD recommends providers give youth 30 days to enroll; however, the time allotted to enroll youth may vary for each partnership.

When providers cannot contact youth or their caregivers using the provider information on the diversion referral form, they return the referral to law enforcement for additional outreach or continued case processing.

While enrolling youth, providers may also complete their intake assessment to establish care plan goals. This report discusses intake assessment and care plan goals in greater detail in Touchpoint 3: Care Plan and Service Delivery.

Touchpoint 2 – Outreach and Enrollment Summary

1. Providers initiate outreach to contact referred youth within one to three days of referral receipt, explaining diversion to youth and parents/guardians.

2. Providers allow youth 30 days to enroll and receive consent for program participation along with information sharing authorizations.

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[42] While providers are required to enter enrollment status updates for formally referred youth, providers are not required to make these updates for informally referred youth. This YDD policy is intended to minimize data collection and tracking for youth that would otherwise have no further contact with the justice system following their initial incident. See YDD Handbook, "Types of Referrals."

Findings

Results show that while more than half (55%, n = 456) of youth in formal diversion enrolled within the timeframe set by the YDD model, hundreds of youths (65%, n = 372) required additional time to enroll. This indicates that there is room for improvement in the enrollment process to align it more closely with the YDD model. Despite delays, youth interviewed reported a positive experience with enrollment, while providers shared concerns related to the time required to complete the YDD intake and data collected. Providers expressed to RDA that there is some concern that the intake process has lengthened. The following section presents both quantitative and qualitative findings related to 1) enrollment reach, 2) enrollment outreach timeline, 3) enrollment timeline, and 4) enrollment experience.
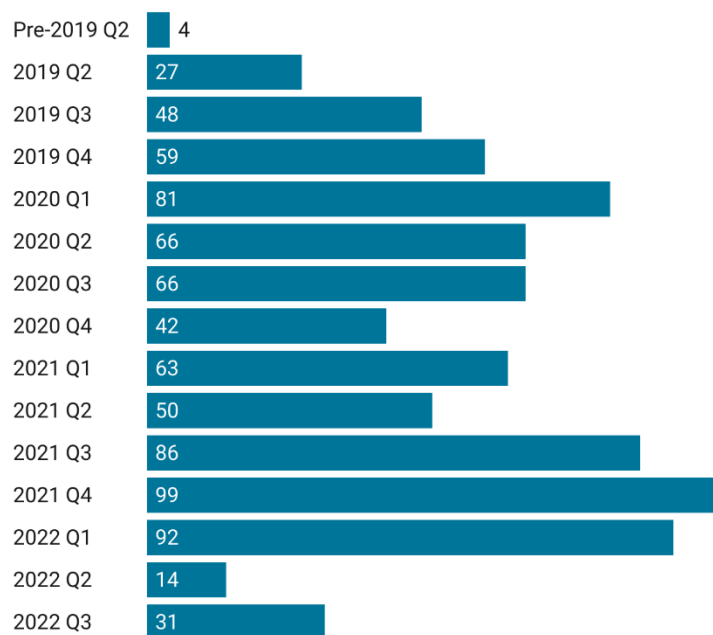
Enrollment Reach

In keeping with YDD's model to limit data collection and tracking for informally referred youth, this evaluation focused on youth participating in formal diversion to understand enrollment reach. Overall, 853 formally referred youth enrolled in YDD during the evaluation period, or 837 distinct youth. The number of youths enrolled represents 80% of all formal referrals accepted by YDD providers (n = 1,069). Youth most commonly did not enroll in YDD because providers could not reach them with the information provided or youth and their guardians were unresponsive.

Enrollments Over Time

Largely following trends in referrals for all other partners besides Probation Citation Diversion, formal diversion enrollments expanded and contracted over time (Figure 16).[43] Initially, enrollments increased during the first program year by about 14 youth a quarter, on average. With the onset of the county's shelter-in-place response to the pandemic, enrollments dropped by about 20% in the second quarter of 2020, reaching a low of 42 enrollments in the final quarter of the 2020 calendar year. By the third quarter of 2021, enrollments reached pre-pandemic levels again with 86 total enrollments. Enrollments continued to rise to a program-high of 99 in the first quarter of 2022 before dramatically decreasing again to just 14 enrollments in the second quarter. As a note, total enrollments for the third quarter of 2022 (n = 31) include

Figure 16. Formal Referrals Enrolling Over Time, by Calendar Year Quarter (April 2019 – August 2022)

| Quarter	Enrollments
Pre-2019 Q2	4
2019 Q2	27
2019 Q3	48
2019 Q4	59
2020 Q1	81
2020 Q2	66
2020 Q3	66
2020 Q4	42
2021 Q1	63
2021 Q2	50
2021 Q3	86
2021 Q4	99
2022 Q1	92
2022 Q2	14
2022 Q3	31

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[43] Enrollment dates were not available for 25 formally enrolled youth.

just two months of program data. If observed enrollment rates continued in that quarter, the total might have reached 47 total enrollments over three months representing the start of another cyclical increase in formal diversion enrollments.

Enrollments by Provider

More than three-quarters of youth with an accepted formal referral enrolled in YDD diversion. As displayed in Figure 17, the share of accepted referrals that led to youth enrollment varied by the provider, ranging from 57% to 99%. In total, Provider A (n = 243), Provider B (n = 133), and Provider F (n = 151) enrolled the most formal diversion youth overall. Additionally, Provider F (99%, n = 151) had the highest rate of youth enrolling, followed by Provider D (93%, n = 63). Provider B had the largest share of youth that did not enroll (43%, n = 99). Provider E (21%, n = 22), Provider A (18%, n = 54) and Provider C (17%, n = 17) had the next largest shares of youth that did not enroll.

Figure 17. Enrollment Status of Formal Referrals, by Provider (April 2019 – August 2022)
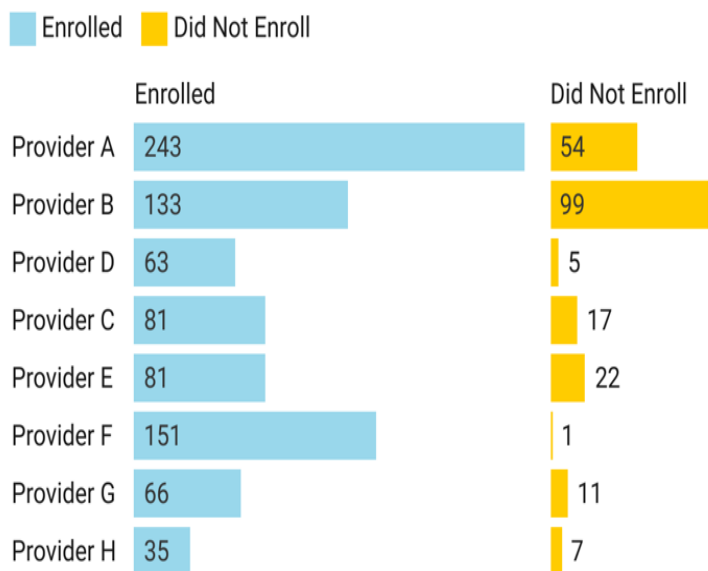
Reasons Formally Referred Youth Did Not Enroll

In examining why formal diversion youth did not enroll, about half (45%, n = 98) of accepted referrals did not lead to enrollment because the provider could not make contact, or the family/youth were unresponsive (Figure 18). Parents and guardians declining (n = 29) and youth declining (n = 28) led to a youth not enrolling about 13% of the time.[44] Other reasons for youth failing to enroll include youth aging out, enrolling in a different diversion program, youth being detained, providers declining to enroll the youth, and youth unable to travel to their providers.

Figure 18. Reasons Formal Referrals Did Not Enroll (April 2019 – August 2022)

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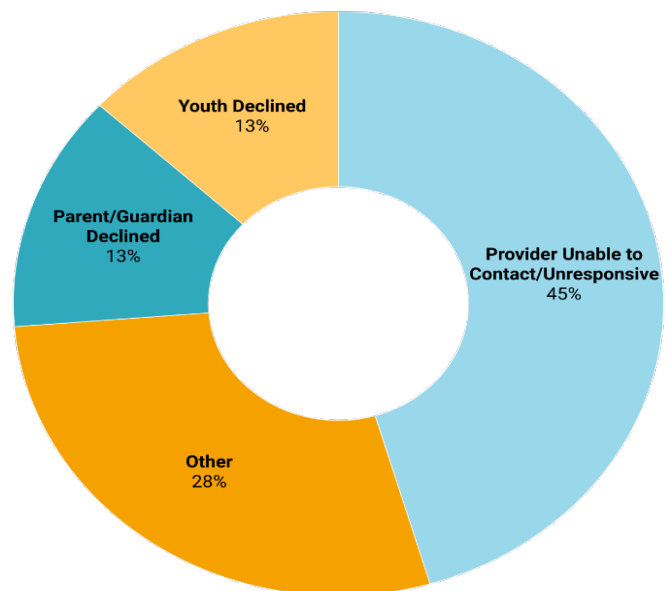
[44] Among accepted informal referrals, 31% (n = 138) did not enroll because a parent or guardian declined.

Figure 19. Map of Each LA County Zip Code's Count of YDD Formally Enrolled Youth (April 2019 – August 2022)
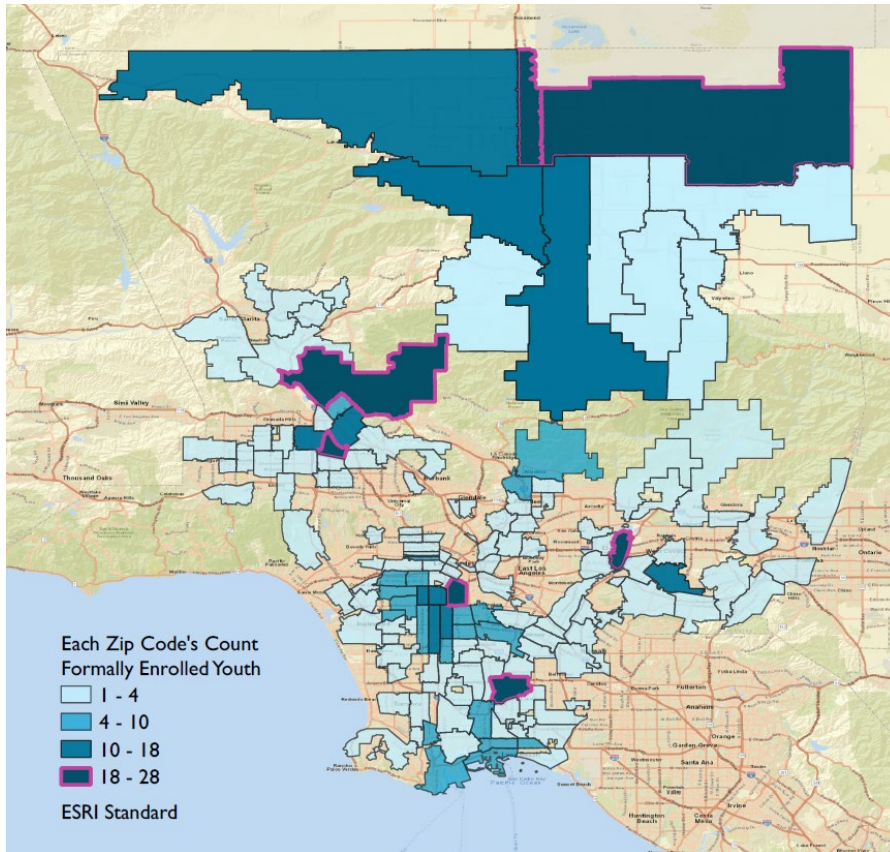

YDD served 837 formally enrolled distinct youth. As displayed in Table 3, law enforcement identified more than half of all youth that enrolled as Hispanic or Latinx (57%, n = 476) and more than two-thirds as cis-male or male identifying (71%, n = 594). [45] On average, formally enrolled youth were about 17 years of age when they were initially stopped by law enforcement and referred to YDD. Shown in Figure 19, the highest number of formally enrolled youth lived in two different zip codes within Lancaster (n = 28 and n = 25 respectively), El Monte (n = 28), Santa Clarita (n = 26), South Central (n = 26), North Long Beach (n = 24), and Van Nuys (n = 24). The map displays zip codes with the most formal diversion enrolled youth in the deepest shade of blue with a pink boundary. At the other end of the spectrum, just 1-4 formal diversion enrolled youth live in the zip codes colored in the lightest shade of blue.

For comparison, Table 3 also displays the profile of distinct formally referred youth and formally referred youth that did not enroll.[46] Overall, there is a higher share of youth with missing information for youth who did not enroll. Additionally, a smaller share of the total youth not enrolling were Hispanic relative to distinct formally referred and enrolled youth. At the same time, a larger share of total youth not enrolling were Black/African American, White, or had missing race and ethnicity relative to distinct formally referred and enrolled youth. Similarly, a slightly larger share of total youth not enrolling were cis-female or female identifying. A forthcoming equity report will further explore the differences between these cohorts of formally referred youth.

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[45] To protect the privacy of youth, any demographic group with fewer than five youth were rolled into "Other" or "Missing" categories.
[46] At the time of the data query for this evaluation, providers accepted 1,164 formal diversion referrals. Of these accepted referrals, 95 had a pending enrollment while 216 youth did not enroll and 853 did. Unduplicated, this amounts to 212 distinct formally referred youth that did not enroll and 837 youth that did enroll.

Table 3. Demographic Profile for Formally Enrolled Youth and by Enrollment Status (April 2019 – August 2022)

	Formally Referred (N = 1,188)	Formally Referred, Did Not Enroll (N = 212)	Formally Referred, Enrolled (N = 837)
Race & Ethnicity			
Hispanic/Latinx	616 (52%)	70 (33%)	476 (57%)
Black/African American	324 (27%)	72 (34%)	216 (26%)
White	60 (5%)	14 (7%)	44 (5%)
Asian & Pacific Islander	9 (1%)	--	--
Indigenous	11 (1%)	--	10 (1%)
"Other"	8 (1%)	--	--
Bi/Multiracial	38 (3%)	--	38 (5%)
Missing & Other	122 (10%)	56 (26%)	53 (6%)
Gender			
Cis-Male or Male Identifying	816 (69%)	131 (62%)	594 (71%)
Cis-Female or Female Identifying	321 (27%)	61 (29%)	231 (28%)
Genderqueer, Non-Conforming, Non-Binary	6 (1%)	--	6 (1%)
Missing	45 (4%)	20 (9%)	6 (1%)
Age[47]			
12	44 (4%)	6 (3%)	34 (4%)
13	119 (10%)	19 (9%)	81 (10%)
14	137 (12%)	29 (14%)	97 (12%)
15	242 (20%)	47 (22%)	181 (22%)
16	231 (19%)	45 (21%)	161 (19%)
17	263 (22%)	37 (17%)	196 (23%)
18-25	91 (8%)	13 (6%)	62 (7%)
Missing	61 (5%)	16 (8%)	25 (3%)

Enrollment Outreach Timeline

While providers should initiate contact with youth and their guardians within three days of receiving a referral, no data is currently collected via the case management system to measure when

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[47] Only youth between 12 and 17 years of age are eligible for YDD diversion; however, a small number of youths between the ages of 8-11 were observed in the data. The presence of these youth could be the result of data entry issues at the referral stage. To protect privacy, formally referred youth in the 8-11 age group are presented in the "missing" age group. Of additional note, some youths do not enroll in YDD diversion or are otherwise not referred to a YDD provider until well after their initial incident. This lag between initial police contact and YDD referral or enrollment accounts for the presence of youth in the data who are 18-25 years of age.

providers make their first outreach. As a result, this evaluation cannot determine with quantitative data the extent to which providers follow the YDD model regarding outreach timelines.

Qualitative Findings

In focus groups, providers expressed that there are times when meeting the 72-hour window to initiate outreach with youth has been difficult to meet due to staffing shortages or a high number of referrals in a short amount of time.

> *"Caseload is a bit excessive. Right now, it's like they're trying to give us as many referrals as we can take, but not enough people to take all the ones we're getting." ~ Provider*

It should be noted that this component of the outreach and enrollment process is further complicated by the funding model that YDD has put in place. YDD pays providers per case manager and caps the number of cases that each case manager can have on their caseload at one time. However, the hiring and training of case managers, especially in sections of the county that are considered resource deserts, is difficult, slowing down the number of active case managers. This could mean that more youth are being referred than a program has the capacity for.

Another factor that significantly impacted the outreach timeline among all providers was the lack of accurate contact information provided in the referral. The RDA evaluation team collected countless examples of how phone numbers, addresses, and emails were inaccurate or no longer in operation when they received the referral.

Enrollment Timeline

More than three-quarters (80%) of provider-accepted formal diversion referrals led to an enrollment, equal to 853 youth enrolled in formal diversion.[48] Of the youth enrolling in formal diversion with available referral and enrollment data (n = 828), more than half (55%, n = 461) enrolled within 30 days of a referral, while 26% (n = 212) took more than two months. Youth enrollment periods ranged from a minimum of zero days to a maximum of almost four years (46 months). Overall, 95% (n = 786) of all enrollments occurred within six months of referral.

Overall, 55% (n = 456) of youth formally enrolled in diversion within the timeframe YDD envisioned (i.e., one month). However, outreach periods varied to give youth ample opportunity to enroll. While the YDD model would ideally have youth enroll within 30 days, these findings also show that 372 formally diverted youth required more time to enroll.

> *"Or contact info is not provided. Like citations…there's no place for a phone number when an officer writes a ticket, so we only get the address. So, we send a letter hoping we have the right address." ~ Provider*

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[48] At the time of the data query for this evaluation, providers accepted 1,164 formal diversion referrals. Of these accepted referrals, 95 had a pending enrollment while 216 youth did not enroll and 853 did. Unduplicated, this amounts to 212 distinct formally referred youth that did not enroll and 837 youth that did.

"I feel like there's mostly problems with the referral system…the incorrect info, there's times there's no contact, contact number, address. Or there's erroneous info and they show up and they're like we don't know who that is. Or sometimes addresses that don't exist." ~ Provider

Enrollment Experience

Qualitative Findings

One of the obstacles to enrollment that nearly all providers shared with RDA is parent/guardian resistance to enrolling their youth in diversion. Providers speculated that parent/guardian resistance emanates from a fear that diversion providers are associated with law enforcement or that enrollment in the program is an admission of guilt.

"I've had to do a lot of convincing of parents. Especially informal, parents who say they don't have time, too busy." ~ Provider

Additional Qualitative Enrollment Findings

Knowing that it can be difficult to look past the events leading to enrollment in a diversion program, RDA asked youth for their perspective about the enrollment experience with provider staff. The feedback from youth was positive. Most of the youth that participated in the focus groups had either been receiving diversion services and were nearing the end of their time in diversion or had already completed the program. As a result, many youths simply said that they remembered it went smoothly.

"The fact that they didn't judge you, they were there to support you, they were there to help you grow as a better person." ~ Youth

"I liked that [provider staff] respected me and was patient and appreciated that [provider staff] would be there for him." ~ Youth

While youth, overall, reported a positive experience with enrollment, providers had some concerns of their own. Providers expressed to RDA that there is some concern that the intake process has lengthened to the point that it has become burdensome. Some providers have adapted while others are still struggling to see the relevancy of all the information that is captured during intake, especially if it is not being used in data collection and reporting.

"It's a lot of forms, usually they take 1 to 1.5 hours to complete…and it's a turn off because we're asking them so many questions." ~ Provider

"What's the purpose of the info we're collecting? If I gather full bio-psycho-social, what's the point? We ask about disabilities, needs folks have, so I think we find out some things, but there's others we don't utilize, or know why." ~ Provider

Touchpoint 3: Care Plan and Service Delivery

Care Plans

Once a youth has agreed to enroll in the diversion program, the provider will begin the intake process. This includes completing the intake paperwork, signing releases of information, and completing an initial assessment. At this stage, youth and their case manager(s) develop an individualized care plan that will guide the youth's participation in diversion. In addition to care plan goals developed by case managers, care plans also include goals that the youth would like to work towards during their time in the diversion program. These goals can range from improving their grades, to working on their relationship with their family members, to addressing their mental health needs. Each care plan goal is individualized and supports the youth in identifying their strengths and aspirations. The goals are referenced by case managers throughout the youth's participation in their diversion program.

As youth progress through the program, their case manager will note program participation and when youth have achieved objectives, they set in pursuit of their overall care plan goals. Participation and significant progress toward achieving goals serve as indicators for the "substantial completion" needed to exit the program. YDD has asked providers to develop at least two care plan goals with each youth that are specific, selected by the youth (not by the case manager), and provide a clear description of how diversion activities or services will support the goal. YDD provides a template providers can use to guide their care plan development. YDD requires that providers report initial care plan goals in their monthly/quarterly data submissions.

Service Delivery

After enrollment is complete and the care plan is developed, the case manager and youth will discuss the services that the youth is required to participate in (if any, depending on the provider) and any additional services the youth can engage in based on the care plan goals and other needs expressed during the intake process. The services offered by YDD service providers include but are not limited to those listed in Figure 20.

Should a youth need more intensive services, YDD providers are able to refer youth to other community-based organizations or service providers to access specific services.

Figure 20. Services Offered by Providers

- Mentorship
- Community Leadership, Civic Engagement, and Social Justice
- Academic Support
- Workforce Development
- Arts and Recreation
- Physical Health Support
- Mental Health Support
- Restorative and/or Transformative Justice
- Cultural and/or Spiritual Health
- Basic Needs/Crisis Intervention
- Caretaker Support
- Substance Use Support

Findings

Care Plans

Where available, care plan data typically supported formally enrolled youths' goals, indicating the care plan development process supports youth. However, these findings must be interpreted with caution. Care plan data alone was only available for less than one-third (31%, n = 263) of formal diversion enrollees. Additionally, youth goal data was available for less than half (47%, n = 389) of enrollees. Collectively, care plan and youth goal data were only available for 20% (n = 171) of formally enrolled youth.

Intake Assessments

To inform care plans, providers complete a county-approved strengths-based assessment with youth. This assessment includes five questions assessing social-emotional intelligence, school engagement, and social support. Providers ask youth to rate their level of agreement with the following statements on a Likert scale of one to seven.

YDD Approved Strengths-Based Intake Assessment

1. "When feeling anxious, angry, or depressed, I am able to take positive steps to help myself feel better."
2. "I feel engaged and supported at school."
3. "If there is a crisis, I have others I can talk to."
4. "If I needed help finding a job, I wouldn't know where to go for help."
5. "I am pretty good at figuring out how to resolve disagreements."

Scale

Strongly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

On average, formally enrolled youth with available assessment data "mostly agreed" (i.e., score of six) that they have others to talk to in a crisis – the most substantial level of agreement across the five intake assessment questions.[49] On average, youth "slightly agreed" (i.e., score of five) to questions regarding 1) their ability to take positive steps to help themselves feel better, 2) feeling engaged and supported at school, and 3) being "pretty good" at figuring out how to resolve disagreements. Equivalently, youth "slightly disagreed" (score of three) that they do <u>not</u> know where to go to help when looking for a job.

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[49] In total, formally enrolled youth had intake assessment data for each question at the following rates: question one, 74% (n = 622); question two, 74% (n = 621); question three, 74% (n = 622); question four, 72% (n = 599); question five, 74% (n = 620).

Care Plans

Following the YDD model, providers translate these intake assessment results into care plan goals alongside youth. While YDD requires providers to report care plan goals for formally referred youth, this data was only available for a fraction of enrolled youth. Among the youth with available care plan data (n = 259), 40% had a care plan related to education (n = 104). Figure 21 shows that care plans related to mental health (23%, n = 59) were the next most common, followed by employment at 21% (n = 55). About 5% of formally enrolled youth or fewer had care plans related to each of the following areas: physical health, family, "other," support for basic needs, cultural or spiritual, and substance use.
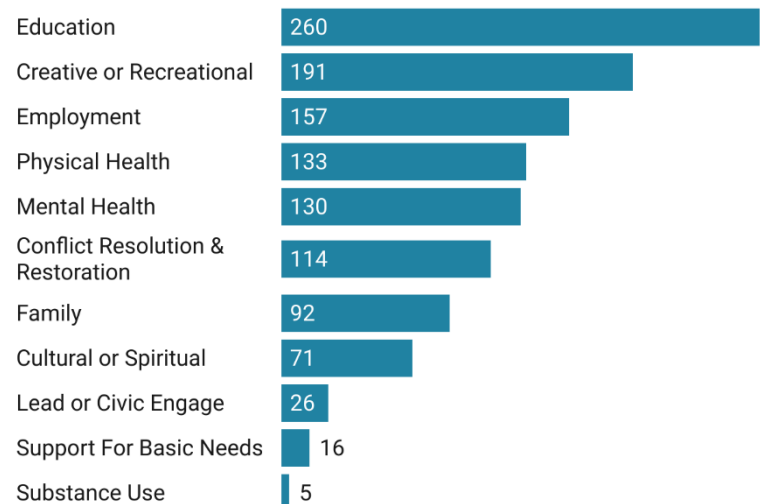
Figure 21. Care Plan Categories Selected (April 2019 – August 2022)

Category	Value
Education	104
Mental Health	59
Employment	55
Lead or Civic Engage	49
Creative or Recreational	40
Behavioral Health	40
Conflict Resolution & Restoration	38
Physical Health	15
Family	11
Other	7
Cultural or Spiritual	5
Support For Basic Needs	4
Substance Use	1
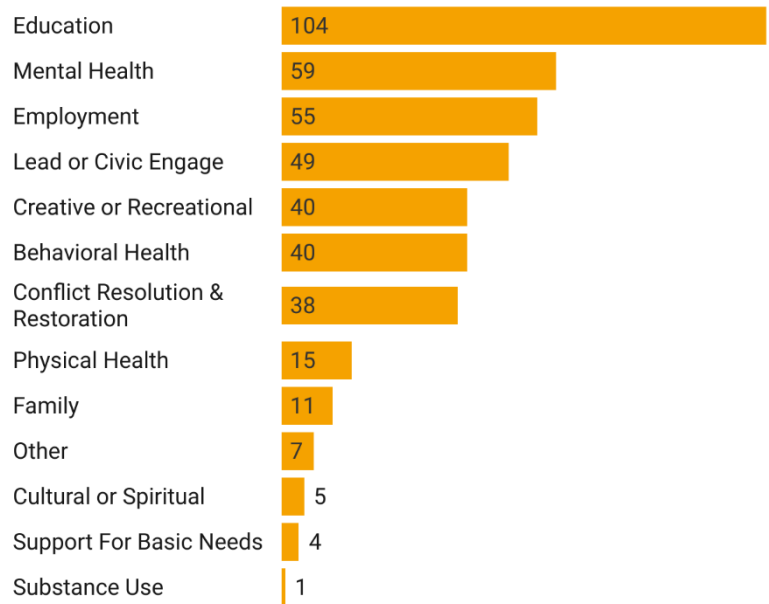
Care Plans Supporting Youth Goals

Providers are further asked to ensure that care plans support youth goals. Examining youth goals data individually, Figure 22 presents the target categories that youth with available data (n = 384) most often selected. Education goals were selected 68% of the time (n = 260), and 50% of youth selected a creative or recreational goal (n = 191). In total, 41% (n = 157) had an employment goal. About 5% of formally enrolled youth or fewer had goals related to support for basic needs or substance use.

Figure 22. Youth Goal Categories Selected (April 2019 – August 2022)

Category	Value
Education	260
Creative or Recreational	191
Employment	157
Physical Health	133
Mental Health	130
Conflict Resolution & Restoration	114
Family	92
Cultural or Spiritual	71
Lead or Civic Engage	26
Support For Basic Needs	16
Substance Use	5

To assess the extent to which care plans are aligned with goals as the YDD model intends, this evaluation limited the sample of youth for subsequent analysis to those with both available care plan and youth goal data (n = 171) for a more accurate comparison. The share of corresponding youth goals for each care plan is displayed in Figure 23.

YDD provider care plans are largely related to the personal goals for youth examined in this analysis. Almost all education (93%, n = 94) and employment (87%, n = 46) care plans had a related youth goal. Approximately three-quarters of youth with creative or recreational (82%, n = 32) as well as conflict resolution and restoration (71%, n = 17) care plans had a related goal. Supported to a slightly smaller degree, about two-thirds of youth with physical health (67%, n = 8), mental health (63%, n = 36), and cultural

Figure 23. Care Plan Goals With & Without Youth Goal Agreement (April 2019 – August 2022)

or spiritual care plans (60%, n = 3) had a related goal. However, no family (0%, n = 0), "other" (0%, n = 0), or behavioral health care plans (0%, n=0) had a related youth goal.
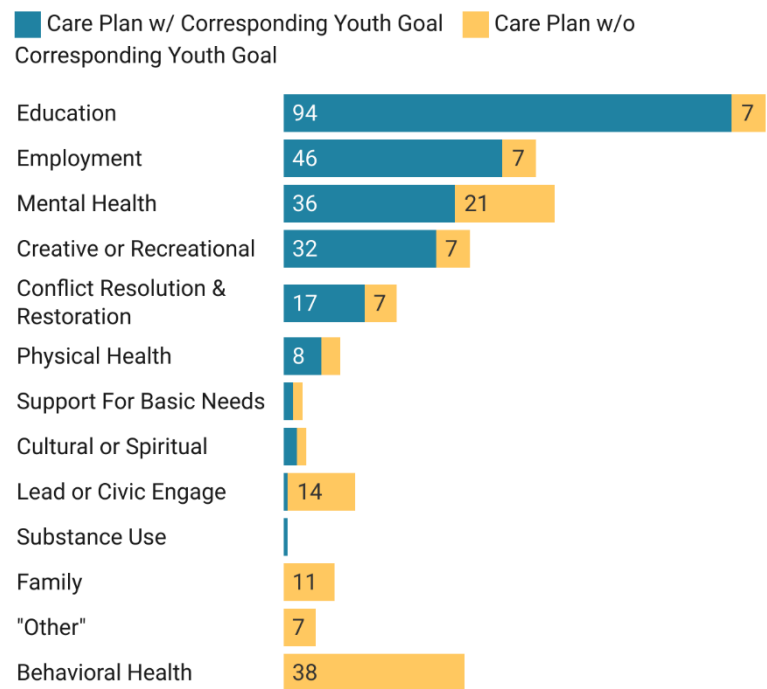
The Impact of Limited Data Reporting

Although providers formally enrolled 843 distinct youth during this evaluation period, they did not report care plan data for more than two-thirds (69%, n = 584) of their enrollees. Additionally, providers did not report youth goal data for 54% (n = 464) of enrollees.[50] Only one in five (20%, n = 171) formally enrolled youth had both care plan and youth goal data available.

The degree to which care plan and youth goal data were missing varied by provider (Figure 24). Three providers reported care plan data for 59% to 63% of the youth that were formal referrals. One provider reported as little as one percent of their care plan data.

Comparatively, youth goal data was available more often than care plan data. Provider F provided youth goal data for almost three-quarters (78%, n = 114) of distinct formally enrolled youth, displayed

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[50] In total, 837 distinct youth formally enrolled in diversion. Some of these youth enrolled at multiple provider sites. For the purposes of this analysis focused on provider data entry for care plan and youth goal data, formally enrolled youth were unduplicated using their unique identifier and the provider with which they enrolled. This deduplication process resulted in 843 distinct formal diversion provider enrollments.

in Figure 25. Provider E had the next highest youth goal availability (75%, n = 61), followed by Provider H (74%, n = 26).[51] Provider A again had the lowest youth goal data availability (1%, n = 2).

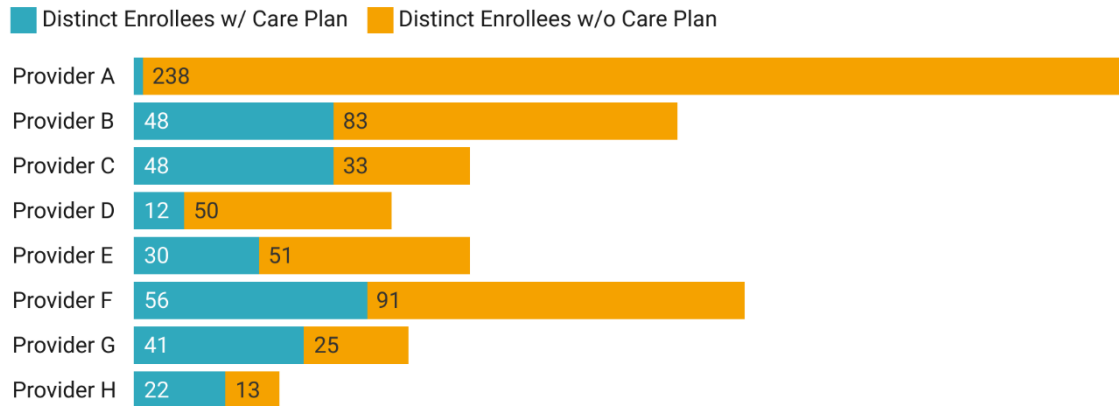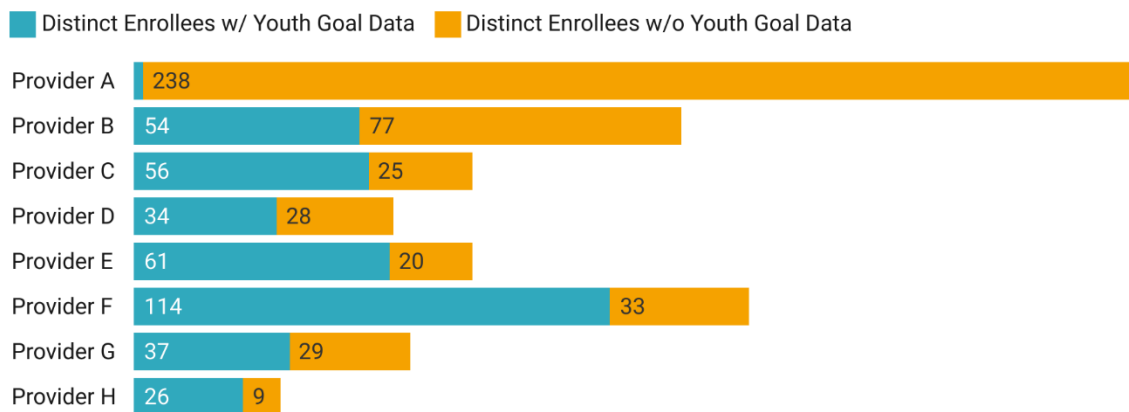## Figure 24. Providers With & Without Care Plans (April 2019 – August 2022)

Legend: ■ Distinct Enrollees w/ Care Plan ■ Distinct Enrollees w/o Care Plan

Provider A: 238
Provider B: 48 | 83
Provider C: 48 | 33
Provider D: 12 | 50
Provider E: 30 | 51
Provider F: 56 | 91
Provider G: 41 | 25
Provider H: 22 | 13

Figure 25. Providers With & Without Youth Goals (April 2019 – August 2022)

Legend: ■ Distinct Enrollees w/ Youth Goal Data ■ Distinct Enrollees w/o Youth Goal Data

Provider A: 238
Provider B: 54 | 77
Provider C: 56 | 25
Provider D: 34 | 28
Provider E: 61 | 20
Provider F: 114 | 33
Provider G: 37 | 29
Provider H: 26 | 9

Data availability for care plans and youth goals also varied over time at each provider site. Illustrated in Figures 26 and 27 heat maps, providers consistently reported care plan and youth goals between the start of YDD's program and the first quarter of 2021. During this period, providers receiving new enrollments entered care plan and youth goal data for 66% of distinct formally enrolled youth on average. Between the second quarter of 2021 and the end of the evaluation period, data availability dipped to just 12% on average for care plans and 41% youth goals.

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[51] Providers C, F, and H consistently ranked in the upper 50th percentile regarding data availability for both care plan and youth goal data availability.

Figure 26. Quarterly Enrollment Share with a Care Plan, by Provider (April 2019 – August 2022)
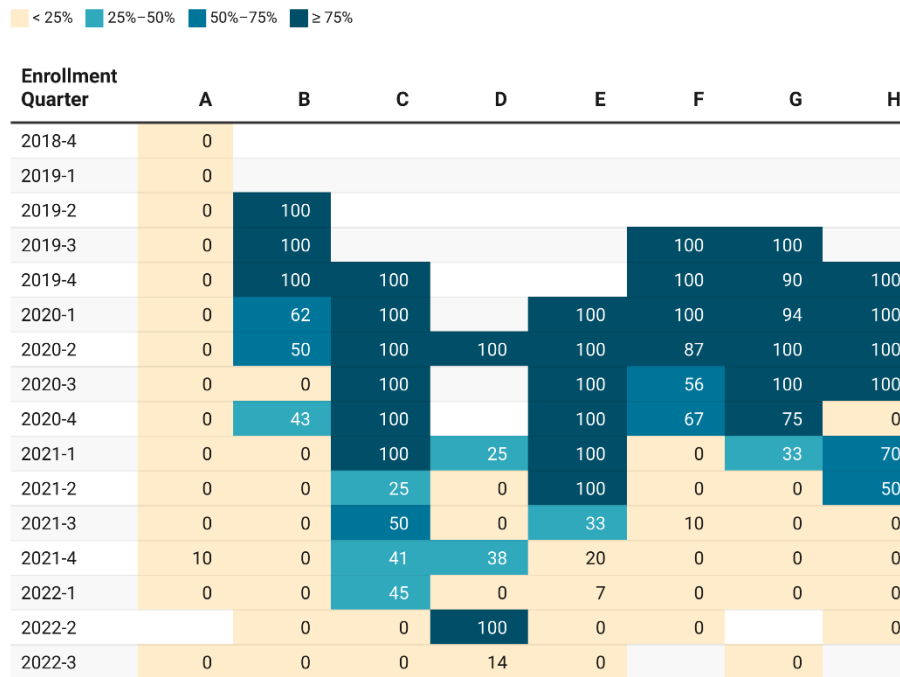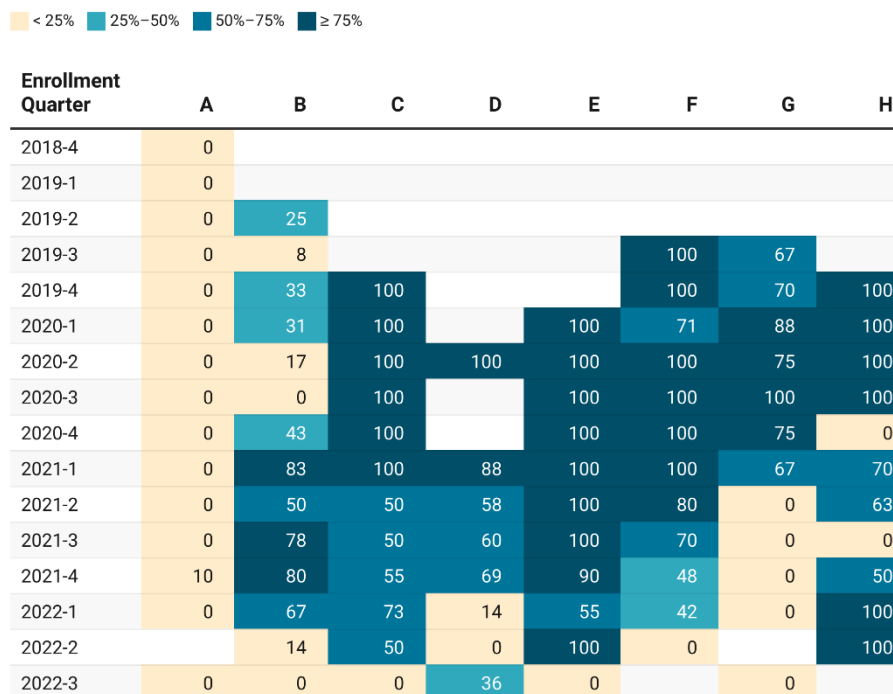
Legend: < 25% | 25%–50% | 50%–75% | ≥ 75%

Enrollment Quarter	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2018-4	0							
2019-1	0							
2019-2	0	100						
2019-3	0	100				100	100	
2019-4	0	100	100			100	90	100
2020-1	0	62	100		100	100	94	100
2020-2	0	50	100	100	100	87	100	100
2020-3	0	0	100		100	56	100	100
2020-4	0	43	100		100	67	75	0
2021-1	0	0	100	25	100	0	33	70
2021-2	0	0	25	0	100	0	0	50
2021-3	0	0	50	0	33	10	0	0
2021-4	10	0	41	38	20	0	0	0
2022-1	0	0	45	0	7	0	0	0
2022-2		0	0	100	0	0		0
2022-3	0	0	0	14	0		0	

Figure 27. Quarterly Enrollment Share with a Youth Goal, by Provider (April 2019 – August 2022)

Legend: < 25% | 25%–50% | 50%–75% | ≥ 75%

Enrollment Quarter	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2018-4	0							
2019-1	0							
2019-2	0	25						
2019-3	0	8				100	67	
2019-4	0	33	100			100	70	100
2020-1	0	31	100		100	71	88	100
2020-2	0	17	100	100	100	100	75	100
2020-3	0	0	100		100	100	100	100
2020-4	0	43	100		100	100	75	0
2021-1	0	83	100	88	100	100	67	70
2021-2	0	50	50	58	100	80	0	63
2021-3	0	78	50	60	100	70	0	0
2021-4	10	80	55	69	90	48	0	50
2022-1	0	67	73	14	55	42	0	100
2022-2		14	50	0	100	0		100
2022-3	0	0	0	36	0		0	

Data entry and availability are dependent on both YDD staff and provider capacity. While YDD staff review data with providers monthly, their ability to thoroughly check data entry to ensure providers meet program requirements depends on adequate staffing. Fewer staff monitored data collection during the second calendar year quarter of 2020, contributing to temporary gaps in data entry review.

"For care plans, we don't have a formal process of checking them." ~
Provider

Additionally, YDD's new data management system was launched in November 2021 (i.e., the fourth quarter of 2021). Since its launch, providers have required ongoing technical assistance and training to ensure they are correctly entering referral and enrollment data. In their meetings with providers, YDD staff have focused on ensuring providers reported basic data related to program reach. Consequently, YDD staff have been unable to dedicate the necessary time to working with providers to address data availability issues.

Qualitative Findings

Youth, families, and service providers highlighted the individualization of the care plans as a positive aspect of their diversion experiences. Utilizing a strengths-based approach, youth work toward their goals in ways that they are excited about. Furthermore, service providers tailor their care plans to youth and family needs. Participants also liked that care plans were dynamic, meaning that if youths' interests or goals changed, the care plan was allowed to be modified accordingly.

"Midway through the process we were brought in to do our own
goals…what would we like to see happen? How do we want our son to
be accountable? What kind of agreements do we want our son to come
to? What types of things does our son need to do differently?" ~
Parent/Guardian

"A lot of the goals were personalized to me. There was every day [goals],
family [goals], long-term, short-term [goals]. It was 80% me, 20% outside
goals." ~ Youth

"...The youth self-identified that he wanted to take better care of himself
and he, as part of his care plan, he was going to start getting exercise
and eating better. This was his goal. So that youth from last summer...I saw
him this summer and I didn't even recognize him. He lost 48 pounds. And
he identified that he wanted to do that. He was also in therapy and
making friends with another person…The case manager works with them
to establish something that's meaningful for them." ~ Provider

Care plan personalization was also a result of youths' close involvement in the goal-setting process, which is outlined as a priority in the YDD Handbook. Youth talked about working closely with their

case managers to develop their diversion goals. Case managers appear to play a role in guiding goal creation, but youth ultimately determine the goals for themselves.

"Creating goals was involved. [The service provider staff] didn't give me ideas, it was me doing most of the work; they would help me to clarify my thoughts. It was really cool. Kind of opened my mind up to think about myself a little bit more, which was really different. That part was pretty good." ~ Youth

"I was 100% on my goals. You were to identify goals, if [staff] pitched goals and they didn't feel like it was hitting [with you,] they would pivot." ~ Youth

"The care plan is how we support [the youth] to build capacity to take accountability and [identify] what are things contributing to why they did that action [like]anger, anxiety, no one to turn to for support. It's about assessing what we can realistically do in the timeframe we have with them. I might want them to get therapy, but they don't want it, so I collaborate with the young person and parents." ~ Provider

"[The youth is] very involved. It's a co-creation. We accompany our young people, we walk beside them, not in front of them, we're not telling them what to do - it's a collaboration. We make sure they're involved so they have buy-in." ~ Provider

Although there was widespread support for the care plan process, it is important to note that the experience was not universal. The parent/guardian involvement in care plan development differs across providers. Families at some service providers reported having input in their youths' care plan, but not at all sites. Caregivers noted this lack of involvement more frequently at the restorative justice providers than the others. In fact, some families were not aware of care plan development at all.

"Some of [the goals], yes. That process is just letting them know what your expectations are of the program and what you want to see more of in your child and where you want to see your child grow. That was asked of me. Then I'm more than certain they were asked of my daughter on a private level." ~ Parent/Guardian

"I'd say [the youth is] very involved. The care plan is developed in conversation with the case manager and the youth. The parent isn't involved in conversation, other staff are not involved. Sometimes care plans can change. I'm thinking of one who went to substance abuse, didn't start out with that but as things developed it became clear they

could really benefit from that. But I think that it's a process that's completed in a partnership between a case manager and the youth." ~ Provider

While individualization of care plans is a strength, the uniqueness of each care plan coupled with inconsistent data entry rendered comparisons between providers difficult, with implications for assessing youth outcomes in a standardized manner. Without greater compliance for care plan data reporting and clearer standardization, YDD cannot ensure that providers are effectively targeting social determinants of health.

Service Delivery

RDA asked youth and families about their experiences with their diversion provider. This included understanding staff interactions, the quality and relevancy of services that youth receive, and overall satisfaction with service delivery. Additionally, RDA asked staff and leadership at each provider about the types of services they provide, the impact of those services, and barriers to service delivery. This section summarizes strengths and challenges related to service delivery as identified by each of these groups.

Qualitative Findings

Youth and families had overwhelmingly positive perceptions of service provider staff across all provider sites. They reported feeling understood, respected, and cared for. Additionally, they described staff as easy to talk to, caring, and available to help them when needed. Youth and families also felt that their cultural and language needs were recognized and respected.

"The staff at the program are amazing. [Two of them] are like my best friends now. They are so nice and so respectful. They opened me up to new things." ~ Youth

"My son says everyone is really cool and welcoming. He feels like he fits right in. He's shy at first, but he opens up pretty quick when he's comfortable. When I pick him up, he's in no hurry to come home." ~ Parent/Guardian

"Even though we're not of the same ethnic background or where we grew up, her understanding of the needs of families and students was just really beneficial. Her approach was really informative and really concise." ~ Parent/Guardian

"They never disrespect us at all. Never. They keep it cool. They never disrespect our culture. They're doing a good job." ~ Youth

"98% of our staff are people [of] color, with lived experience. We make it a point to hire folks who can connect with our kids. Local to LA. Neighborhoods and communities are very strong, sometimes we compete with that. Folks who understand the neighborhood environment is very important." ~ Provider

Although staff are admired by youth, their frequent turnover disrupts providers' ability to deliver services. This concern was evident among multiple providers.

"More staffing is better, I've noticed, in this field. I keep in touch with people in this field and everyone is losing people. Everyone's leaving. Of course, more staffing would be amazing. But for right now, we're sustaining, and we have a lot of these resources to keep the program going. When there's a will there's a way." ~ Provider

Regarding the variety of services, providers offer an impressive variety of services ranging from therapy, restorative justice, and dating safety workshops, to rap workshops, music classes, and even hiking. This aligns with YDD's model which calls on providers to address the wide range of needs that youth may have. When asked to identify the most impactful services at their organizations, many providers commented that the combination of services is the key.

"This might sound cliché, but I believe [every service we offer] plays a massive role. In order for the clinical team to do our job, the intake team has to get the info and make the contacts. That comes to us and then we're able to officially connect with the youth. Then we're preparing them for the next mediation." ~ Provider

"What's effective is that we offer so many services. It's an immersion of services. It's holistic, treats the whole person. [It's] looking at an individual and what their needs are" ~ Provider

Providers made a strong effort to reduce youths' barriers for participation, including providing bilingual communications (i.e., Spanish and English), offering transportation, hosting virtual services, meeting youth at their homes, and more. In general, families and youth did not list many barriers to participating in diversion services; however, focus group participants from multiple providers mentioned transportation as a challenge.

"Before we would help out youth with transportation, but the staff moved out of the country. But [now] I'm working on telehealth for youth in specific zip codes, like a Zoom structure." ~ Provider

"We will try to get them free bus passes. There is some difficulty in providing direct services to young people, but we will meet them where they are at. Sometimes it is more about what the young are going through

and how it impacts them. [We will also] link them to food pantries." ~ Provider

"Our kids tend to be very transient, that's the biggest challenge. Lots of challenges have to do with transportation, we provide it but it gets very pricey. Uber/Lyft is hard with minors, Hop Skip Drive is crazy expensive. They have an MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] with DCFS, so foster kids can get that. And we have a van, looking for a full-time driver. We do a lot to engage them, but they're dealing with so much at home, on the streets, getting them here—and consistently—is the hardest thing." ~ Provider

Although the diversion providers offer a wide variety of services, not all services listed in YDD's model are available to each youth. While some providers offer multiple services, others specialize in a select few by choice, or because they do not have the capacity to offer multiple service types. Furthermore, due to low quality services or lack of services altogether, not all providers have access to organizations to which they can make referrals. Therefore, the set of services available to each youth may differ because of their geographic location. This geographical issue was of particular concern for providers in outlying areas of the County which lack the abundance of resources present in other areas like San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles.

When RDA asked providers about existing service gaps, providers commented that there is significant demand for mental health services, but there are not sufficient services available to meet the need. Staff said that additional recreational services would be beneficial, but the cost is prohibitive for youth.

"There are no resources in the community. There are some resources in the community, but they are more like social services. The case managers try to learn about social services but there are few." ~ Provider

Despite providers' efforts to reduce barriers to participation, some challenges remain related to transportation and internet connectivity. While some providers offer transportation, it is time consuming and expensive. As an alternative, some providers offer virtual services, but providers noted that some participants lack sufficient internet connection and, even when youth can connect, they tend to be less engaged.[52] Some youth who participated in only virtual diversion services mentioned this too, saying that the online sessions were "boring."

"The other [issue] is the digital disconnect. Kids who have to wait on their parents for the phone or computer…that's a big issue. The WIFI, [too]. I went near Sam's Club because I couldn't sign on…I couldn't even get a signal…now I know what the kids are talking about. I'm used to being

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[52] Some providers still offered only fully virtual services at the time of data collection due to COVID-19.

connected, but everywhere [else] I'm driving the network is unstable." ~ Provider

Additionally, YDD and the service providers are working on expanding restorative justice (RJ) services. This is one of the primary services the YDD recommends as part of the model. While only a few providers currently offer RJ services, many more have expressed interest in providing it at their organizations as well. YDD has created professional development opportunities for services providers to learn about RJ and anticipates its expansion in the future.

"All our team recently attended a restorative justice training, but we're going to look into getting further training in restorative justice…want to incorporate that more." ~ Provider

Assessing youth satisfaction with services, most youth focus group participants had positive feedback about the type and quality of services they received.

"[Provider] staff made sure that everything was in my interest and something that they thought I would like." ~ Youth

"I liked the music program, which was super cool, they had instructors come in and show us how to play guitar." ~ Youth

"I liked when we were at the church and giving people food." ~ Youth

"Enjoy the food and talking with folks." ~ Youth

"I like the meetings in there. It's cool, no one is awkward anymore and you have someone to talk to." ~ Youth

A small number of focus group participants said that they were dissatisfied with their diversion programs, finding them to be disengaging or lacking activities of interest. Negative feedback was more prominent among youth who had participated in virtual services (sometimes due to COVID-19).

"To be honest, I don't feel like we really did activities. We just stayed on the computer and did a girl group with two or three [people]. I feel like I was the main one doing the work in the girls group. It was really no activities… the leader, she'd be like 'do your homework' but there was no homework. It was boring." ~ Youth

"There are some camping trips we're gonna have. I'm not used to it, we're gonna go for three days. I've never been out of the city. If we don't do this, I can't go through the care plan, so I have no choice." ~ Youth

"I don't think [these services and activities support my needs] from what I see they don't talk about the [bad thing] I did. They just do activities. I don't really learn about anything here." ~ Youth

Providers expressed that a universal challenge to service delivery is the youth's buy-in and motivation. Providers, and even youth and families, concluded that successful diversion is dependent on the young person, as well as the family/guardian's investment in the program. Their motivation and buy-in is often influenced by a case manager's ability to build rapport and trust with the diversion participant.

"What is formal/informal to us is just data, but to the clients it's the same. So, for a parent to say she doesn't want youth to participate, nobody is going to support the youth and get resources. Eventually the youth will do the behavior again." ~ Provider

"[Services challenges faced include] buy-in, initial and throughout the program. Occasionally you do get youth even if they've been there five months, they don't like you or wanna talk to you. Motivation, too, wanting to go through with it or follow up with whatever they're doing. Some kids, they don't wanna do anything." ~ Provider

Youth and families had mainly positive experiences regarding care plan development and service delivery. Youth generally felt involved in the care plan development process, had overwhelmingly positive feedback about staff, and usually enjoyed the activities offered by providers or felt that they were relevant to their needs. Parents/guardians, however, were usually less aware of youths' care plan and services. Provider staff and leaderships' efforts to tailor their services to youths' needs in a variety of ways appear to be working, overall. However, limited care plan goal data collection makes it difficult to assess a youth's true growth and service providers' impact as it relates to successful program completion.

Touchpoint 4: Program Completion

Although length of program participation varies for each youth due to the individualization of care plans, most youth are expected to complete the program in three to 12 months. Providers are encouraged to support youth in completing the program and attaining their goals within the shortest time possible to limit unnecessary ongoing programmatic intervention in youths' lives. However, providers may extend services beyond the anticipated program length depending on youth need. In these situations, providers can confer with and obtain permission from YDD program managers to grant youth additional time to complete their diversion goals.

Providers are expected to provide program completion updates to law enforcement partners according to alleged offense status: six months for alleged misdemeanors and 12 months for alleged felonies for formally referred youth.

Providers are further instructed to update law enforcement partners when a youth's involvement in diversion has been extended, the reason for this extension, and when youth are expected to complete the program.

Youth are considered to have successfully finished the program when they have substantially completed their care plan goals. Program providers are given the discretion to determine what substantial completion looks like for each youth, with the general expectation that youth have been consistently engaged in the program and have met most of their diversion goals. Additionally, providers are expected to inform youth what "substantially complete" looks like in the context of their unique care plan.

Findings

Results show that most formally referred youth substantially complete the program in the expected amount of time. While this indicates that the YDD model is being implemented as intended, important data considerations remain (i.e., missing data), in addition to areas of confusion identified by program providers and participants. The following section will present quantitative outcomes concerning 1) time to program completion, 2) rates of substantial completion, and 3) youth satisfaction from program assessments. Additional insights from qualitative focus groups with providers, youth, and families will be discussed to provide greater context to the quantitative output.

Time to Complete the Program

In total, 680 distinct formally referred and enrolled participants completed YDD during the evaluation period. On average, these participants, completed the program in about seven and a half months.[53] Among these youth, 79% (n = 481) finished the program in the expected three to 12 months, while at the other end of the spectrum, 12% of participants completed the program in more than 12 months.[54]

Participants diverted for an **_alleged misdemeanor_** (n = 362) completed the program in approximately seven and a half months.[55] A large outlier skews these average findings. Examining the median completion time shows that 50% of the participants completed diversion in less than seven months and 25% of the participants took more than nine months to complete.

Participants diverted for an **_alleged felony_** (n = 187) similarly completed the program in almost eight months on average.[56] Also skewed by a large outlier, the median completion time shows that 50% of the participants completed diversion within seven months and 25% of the participants took just under 11 months to complete.

Ultimately, participants diverted for an alleged misdemeanor remained in the program for about two weeks fewer on average; however, this difference does not rise to the level of statistical significance. As a result, the evaluation team cannot conclude that these differences in completion time are not due, in part, to chance.[57]

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[53] 680 distinct formally enrolled participants completed YDD during the evaluation period. However, just 606 distinct participants had an enrollment and completion date that was either non-missing or did not contain an impossible value (i.e., enrollment date before referral date, completion date before enrollment date). These 606 participants provide the basis for the completion timeline analysis.
[54] Completion time among the 606 participants with required data (see preceding footnote) ranged from a minimum of zero months to a maximum of 19.25 months (i.e., one year and 7.25 months).
[55] Completion time among the 362 participants diverted for an alleged misdemeanor ranged from zero months to a maximum of 19.25 months (i.e., one year and 7.25 months).
[56] Completion time among the 187 participants diverted for an alleged felony ranged from about one month, to a maximum of 18.16 months (i.e., one year and 6.16 months).
[57] Statistical significance was calculated in Stata with a two-sample t-test with unequal variances. Results were not significant at the 0.05 alpha level (p = 0.09).

Rate of Substantial Program Completions

Overall, about 82% of youth completing formal diversion did so substantially (n = 557). Shown in Figure 28, this includes 85% (n = 336) of youth completing formal diversion for an alleged misdemeanor and 77% (n = 164) of youth completing formal diversion for an alleged felony. The difference in substantial completion rates between youth with alleged misdemeanors and felonies is statistically significant.[58] This finding indicates there is less than a 5% probability that the observed difference is due to chance alone.

Figure 28. Substantial Completion, by Alleged Offense Level (April 2019 – August 2022)

Legend: ■ Substantially Completed   ■ Did not Substantially Complete

	Substantially Completed	Did not Substantially Complete
Diverted for Alleged Misdemeanor	336	59
Diverted for Alleged Felony	164	49

As a note of caution when interpreting these findings, providers determine what qualifies as a substantial completion. Although providers reportedly have a shared understanding of what constitutes a substantial completion, it has not been fully standardized across provider sites throughout the duration of the program. As a result, during the evaluation period, a youth who substantially completed with one provider may not have substantially completed at a different point in time or different site. Additionally, with a large amount of missing care plan data, the evaluation team cannot independently measure whether youth achieved their care plan goals, according to YDD's definition of substantial completion.

Displayed in Figure 29, substantial completion rates also varied across provider sites, ranging from a low of 70% (n = 21) at Provider H to a high of 92% (n = 58) at Provider G. These differences in

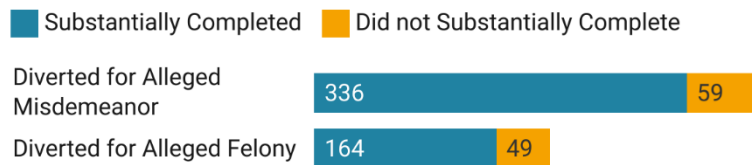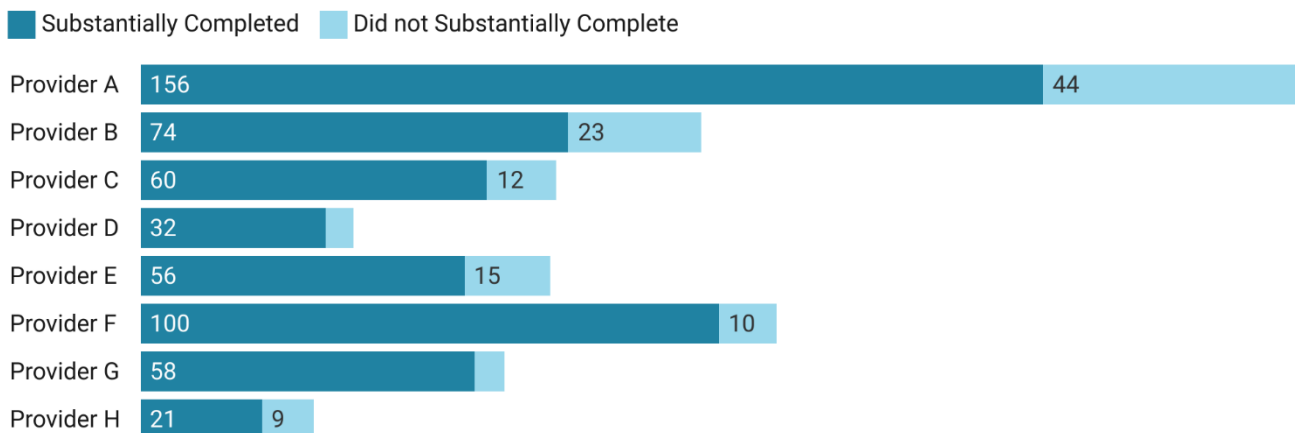### Figure 29. Substantial Completion, by Provider (April 2019 – August 2022)

Legend: ■ Substantially Completed   ■ Did not Substantially Complete

Provider	Substantially Completed	Did not Substantially Complete
Provider A	156	44
Provider B	74	23
Provider C	60	12
Provider D	32	
Provider E	56	15
Provider F	100	10
Provider G	58	
Provider H	21	9

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[58] Statistical significance was calculated in Stata with chi-squared tests of association. Results were significant at the 0.05 alpha level (p = 0.013).

substantial completions between provider sites are statistically significant.[59] This finding indicates there is less than a 5% probability that the observed difference is due to chance alone.

Of the formally enrolled youth that did not substantially complete diversion (n = 123), 37% (n = 45) did not have an available reason for not substantially completing. Of those with available data (n = 78), the largest share of youth 36% (n = 28) did not substantially complete because providers lost contact with the youth and/or their guardians. The next largest share of youth, 35% (n = 27) did not substantially complete because the youth withdrew from the program or otherwise declined services. An additional five youth (6%) did not substantially complete the program because their guardian withdrew them or declined services.[60]

Qualitative Findings

Findings from focus groups with providers—both direct service staff and leadership—indicated varied perceptions of what the appropriate length of time was for youth to complete the program. Most commonly, providers identified six months as the average amount of time youth needed to substantially complete their goals. However, providers agreed that completion timelines were youth-dependent, as purposefully designed by YDD. Providers reported having worked with youth who needed less than six months to satisfy program requirements, while others needed to extend their program involvement to 12 months to substantially achieve their goals.

> *"There are times when youth may not need six months. Other youth working with the clinical team may need six months or more. Restitution may also impact their ability to complete." ~ Provider*

> *"There's only a small percent that hang on past the six months. The goal might be a little more complicated, or they need help with it, or motivation dropped before, and we give them the extra chance." ~ Provider*

As previously indicated in the interpretation of quantitative data, providers determine what constitutes substantial completion. Not only does this differ across providers, but individual staff may rely on different metrics of youth satisfactory progress toward goal completion. Such discretion occurs in combination with the creation of unique care plans and timelines for completion for each youth, based on their individual needs and requests.

For example, some providers preferred longer care plans for most youth and promoted aftercare for all youth they served. Others abided by the recommended six-month program length, while others noted that substantial completion was determined on a case-by-case basis.

> *"I have been vocal from the beginning against the six- to nine-month timeline. Research has shown that good rapport can take six months to*

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[59] Statistical significance was calculated in Stata with chi-squared tests of association. Results were significant at the 0.05 alpha level (p = 0.01).
[60] One-quarter of formally enrolled youth (23%, n = 18) did not substantially complete for an "other" reason, such as youth moving, law enforcement requesting the case back, or non-compliance with their diversion terms.

build. I have seen folks graduating at a good pace between six- to nine-months but a healthier amount is going nine to 12 months. This is why there is the aftercare period, and we are open to kids staying in the program. I am hoping that the average length of services will be extended." ~ Provider

"Sometimes, if they meet one of the goals and we see they're doing well on another one, then we're like 'you're good.' They just have to have completed at least one goal." ~ Provider

"It depends, it's case by case. It may be that a youth did not successfully complete one goal out of the two or three, but having a conversation with what was done already, we might graduate them. But if there's a youth who keeps getting themselves in trouble, we might keep them on board longer." ~ Provider

Although the subjective nature of what constitutes youths' substantial completion of diversion may contribute to differences in time to program completion across providers, some direct service staff reported seeing positive changes within youth and identified these behavioral improvements as examples of youth making significant strides toward achieving their care plan goals.

"Completing that service plan, and you can hear it in their voice, they're following through on things, they turn into a better form of themselves while they're still growing. That's growth within a youth…along with completing those goals we set in their services plan." ~ Provider

"When [youth] complete the care plan and see growth in themselves. This is hard to measure. We do observations, talk among staff, to family, to the youth." ~ Provider

Many of the youth that participated in the focus groups were still actively participating in diversion services, but among those that had completed their respective diversion programs, there was conflicting feedback from youth on how easy or difficult it was to complete diversion. Some youth recounted it being difficult while others reflected on how their time in the program went by quickly. Although youth were happy to be done with the program, they appreciated that diversion providers continually checked-in with them and kept them on track.[61]

Providers confirmed that youth may not substantially complete diversion due to specific factors, such as parent/guardian withdrawal from the program, a move out of the area of service provision, and loss of contact with youth. However, staff provided additional context that explains how these

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[61] Importantly, youth who were still engaged in programming reported mixed perceptions toward diversion. Youth who successfully completed diversion and participated in the focus groups may be predisposed to hold positive views of diversion and their viewpoints may not be indicative of all youth who substantially completed diversion.

factors impacted youths' progress toward program completion throughout their enrollment in diversion. Although this qualitative data provides greater insight into the quantitative findings, it is important to note that providers' statements should be applied to both formally and informally referred youth.

Providers recognized that a lack of parental or familial support was the most common barrier or challenge to program completion, followed by youth motivation and accountability. Youth in the foster care system were identified as over-served while simultaneously lacking the parental or familial support that might facilitate their progress through diversion.

"I feel like, especially for foster youth moving from place to place, oftentimes if your first priority is housing, how can I tell you that you need to complete these services on the case plan? So that, as well as lack of familial support…if the family isn't supportive…I feel like there are other things prioritized over this program, and I get it." ~ Provider

"I think some finish quicker than others because they have a support system, like their parents are highly involved. Those that take a little longer – multi-charges, foster care system youth, and those that don't have a strong support system." ~ Provider

Parent/guardian support for children was recognized not only as a driver of substantial completion, but a facilitator of timely program completion. However, providers recognized that youths' internal motivation and their willingness to take accountability for their actions were important determinants of substantial program completion.

"Some people just decline off the top, some people just lose interest and would rather deal with law enforcement. They have a lot going on and they lack motivation." ~ Provider

"Sometimes they just don't care. Others, I think their life circumstances get in the way. They change, they move. Just they lose the energy to complete it or don't understand the benefit of it." ~ Provider

"Every young person has a different journey with the accountability piece. Some young folks need more time to arrive at a place of naming what they are taking accountability for, feel that they want to take accountability for." ~ Provider

Providers stated that, although it was uncommon, they have returned formal cases to referring agencies because youth did not substantially complete the program.[62] Shown in the following quotes, youth motivation was again seen as a strong determinant of program success.

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[62] This process is not required for informal referrals.

"One of the areas we are trying to find a good balance on, we try to give lots of chances, at the same time, that prolongs cases. We bring a glimmer of hope that they engage but some youth just won't engage. [We] try to figure out when this is not going to work out for them without judgment or stigma. We talk about it in case manager meetings, a lot of what can we try, but sometimes we just have to return it." ~ Provider

"But there are some kids you just can't [reach] and unfortunately…we gotta hit rock bottom. When this happens, we send the referral back. That's a small percentage." ~ Provider

Although law enforcement agencies stated that their procedural involvement in diversion ends following youth referral to services, they confirmed that their agencies receive simple updates from providers regarding youth program completion.

"Once the referral is made there is no interactions unless the youth doesn't enroll in the diversion program, or it is reported that the youth stopped attending and didn't finish." ~ Law Enforcement

It is important to note, however, that youth, parents, and family members expressed a lack of understanding about what was required for youth to substantially complete the program. YDD has trained providers to inform youth on what substantial completion looks like within their individualized care plan. Yet, when asked what the requirements were to complete diversion, several current and formerly enrolled youth indicated that they "don't know the requirements" or simply shared the expected program length (e.g., "It's 12 weeks" and "For me, requirements are based on time"). Others provided examples of what their general participation in diversion looks like, referencing these activities as a component of their involvement in diversion, as opposed to goals outlined in the development of their care plan.

It is important to consider that youth knowledge of requirements to complete diversion may vary both across program providers and by individual youth. Some youth acknowledged that their case managers explicitly communicated progress made toward their goals and what was expected of them to substantially complete diversion. At the same time, other youth receiving services from the same provider indicated that they were unaware of program requirements and felt it would benefit them to learn these conditions for program completion.

"That s**t [requirements] is a whole list." ~ Youth

"Life skills, other skills, how to talk to people and [stuff]." ~ Youth

"It's a lot of participation, communication and one-on-one with [my] caseworker." ~ Youth

"I just had to show up. I couldn't skip. I had to participate in the workshop." ~ Youth

"Show up, participate, and don't be rude to others, and try to meet your goals. Me and my case manager would have a regular meeting to meet about my goals and meeting them. She [case manager] constantly reminded me of my goals, it was kind of annoying, but it was supportive." ~ Youth

"I have to attend at least three to six prep sessions before the restorative justice circle, as well as my agreements for the circle that I would abide by or are related to the incident, revolved around it, the values exercise. If the person harmed or their family doesn't want to participate, [we] do a family restorative circle – it's really emotional. After the circle there are one to three post-circle meetings to make sure you are following through on your agreements and checking the progress made. The next meeting is my last and then at that point the program will tell the police that I completed the program without any additional information and the police will wipe it from my record." ~ Youth

Similarly, parents and family members expressed different levels of understanding based on the provider from which youth were receiving services. For example, some parents/guardians identified the same staff member as communicative and credited these staff as responsible for keeping youth on track to complete their goals. Others indicated they were unaware of specific participation requirements based on youths' care plans and/or noted that they did not receive status updates about youths' progress toward their goals.

"It was good because he said it helped him a lot because [his case manager] always talked to him and helped him to finish." ~ Parent/Guardian

"I think it was easy and with [case manager's] help, then he did what he was supposed to." ~ Parent/Guardian

"It was really easy for me. I think it was easy for him…In the summer he was working here for them and [his case manager] texted me the summer program finished and then they were going to start a new job and she sent me an application. [His case manager] said she would pick him up when they have something." ~ Parent/Guardian

"I just know they have to get through this and then basically they'll submit the paperwork and they're done." ~ Parent/Guardian

YDD program managers and staff recognized that this discrepancy in services and level of care offered by each provider was a known component of the model in need of improvement. YDD identified opportunities to promote youth development by incorporating an intake advocate or assessment to determine youths' needs. This advocate would then connect them with a provider who offered services that best aligned with their care plan goals. Additionally, YDD staff recognized the potential for gaps in service quality associated with individual case managers, including burnout, high caseloads, or inexperienced hires. These reflections might be contributing factors to the lack of communication and program knowledge that some youth and families expressed.

"Some youth may only be working on restorative justice, others are getting full wraparound, others are about maintaining relationships after aftercare, [there are] other providers who have a hard close on the relationships. It's not consistent." ~ YDD

"All our providers do amazing work. With that being said, to meet the needs of the young people, there are specific providers that do specific things, and yet youth are referred based on location and not on need, that's a significant issue for me, that's one part of this program that frustrates me. We are picking partners based on location, I get it, you want to make sure that providers are embedded in the community, the reality is the needs of the young people are more important from my experience or point of view…Adding an intake advocate and having them do a needs [or goals] assessment, that would help understand which provider would best serve the youth [to] align [them] with a provider who can meet their needs and wants." ~ YDD

"Sometimes, [I'm] nervous about case managers being so entry level, on the providers to give supervision/hire, have been experiencing some newly hired case managers, they have pretty serious cases and youth with high level of need and what their capacity might be and the high level of burnout if a case manager is not fully trained and getting more intensive than entry level cases." ~ YDD

Completion Assessment

Providers give youth an exit assessment and ask youth to rate their satisfaction with the YDD program at completion. Among formally enrolled youth who substantially completed, close to half (46%, n = 254) were missing some combination of intake and exit assessment questions, and 36% (n = 203) were missing program satisfaction responses. As shown in Figure 30, for the 303 youth with

complete intake and exit assessment data, scores improved with statistical significance on average, albeit slightly.[63]

Figure 30. Paired Changes in Assessment Results at Exit (April 2019 – August 2022)
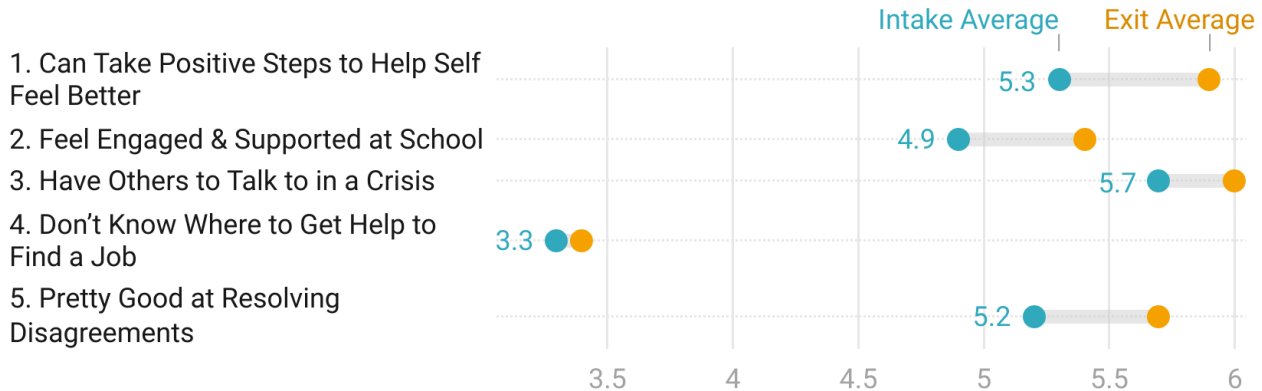
Numeric scores for these assessment questions did not increase by more than one point. The first and fifth questions, gauging social-emotional intelligence, saw the most considerable improvement, rising from average scores of 5.3 and 5.2, respectively, to 5.9 and 5.7 (i.e., improving from a "slightly agree" to a "mostly agree" rating). Average scores for the second question continued to hover around a "slightly agree" rating, improving from 4.9 to 5.4, while average scores for the third question similarly remained around a "mostly agree" rating with a scoring improvement from 5.7 to 6.

Scores for the fourth assessment question (i.e., "If I needed help finding a job, I would <u>not</u> know where to go for help.") stayed relatively stable. For this "negative" question, scores changed on average from 3.3 to 3.4 (i.e., a "slightly disagree" rating), but not with statistical significance.[64]

Providers asked youth the following question to assess their program satisfaction: "How satisfied were you with your diversion program experience?" Rated on scale of "not at all satisfied" (i.e., a score of one) to "very satisfied" (i.e., a score of seven).[65] In total, 354 youth shared their program satisfaction. On average, youth responded that they were "somewhat satisfied" (i.e., 6 on a scale of 1-7). As a note, more than half (60%, n = 205) of youth surveyed responded that they were "very satisfied" with the program. Only 2% (n = 8) of youth gave the program less than a neutral (i.e., dissatisfied) rating.

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[63] Statistical significance was calculated in Stata with a paired t-test. Results were significant at the 0.05 alpha level. P-values for each question were as follows: question one, p = 0.00; question two, p = 0.00; question three, p = 0.02; question five, p = 0.00.   The full scale is as follows: "Strongly disagree," 1; "Mostly disagree," 2; "Slightly disagree," 3; "Neutral," 4; "Slightly agree," 5; "Mostly agree," 6; "Strongly agree," 7.
[64] Statistical significance was calculated in Stata with a paired t-test. Results were not significant at the 0.05 alpha level (p = 0.19).
[65] The complete scale is as follows: "Not at all satisfied," 1; "Somewhat dissatisfied," 2; "Slightly dissatisfied," 3; "Neutral," 4; "Slightly satisfied," 5; "Somewhat Satisfied," 6; "Very satisfied," 7.

👍 Touchpoint 5: Impact

In addition to the four preceding processual touchpoints, impact is an important component of YDD's model. Diverted youth are enrolled in programming designed to address their unique needs while fostering the development of socio-emotional skills. These prosocial interventions have the potential to reduce future contact with the juvenile and/or criminal legal system(s), as well as set youth up for long-term success.[66]

Although impact is difficult to measure in a process evaluation, the subjective impacts of diversion can be considered. Feedback from youth, family members, and service providers are included in this report as informal metrics of program impact. Additional quantitative and qualitative indicators of this touchpoint will be included in a later outcome evaluation.

Touchpoint 5 – Impact

Following program completion, the overall impact of diversion is considered as a metric of success. Qualitative indicators of impact include improved socio-emotional wellbeing, relationships, attitudes, and positive behavioral changes.

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[66] Human Impact Partners. June 2019. Advancing Racial Equity in Youth Diversion: An Evaluation Framework Informed by Los Angeles County. Oakland, CA.

Findings

Although data associated with Touchpoint 5 will be more substantial in the outcome evaluation, it is included in this process evaluation to provide an opportunity for those involved and impacted to share their lived reality. It is important to give voice to youth actively participating in programming, as well as their family members and program providers. The following section will present findings related to youths' relationships with family members, as well as improvements to youths' attitudes and behaviors post-program involvement as identified by youth, family members, and program staff. Additionally, provider and family members' perspectives on diversion as an opportunity to learn and grow are discussed.

Most participants identified diversion as valuable and impactful. All family members (e.g., parents, siblings, guardians) who participated in focus groups felt the diversion program had positive impacts on their child or family member. No family focus group participant identified unintended negative impacts due to program involvement. Additionally, almost all families felt the diversion program was valuable for their child or family member. Family members most often provided examples of behavioral changes in youth as a metric of program value and impact. Specifically, youth were seen as more responsible and communicative since they participated in diversion.

> *"Before [he] came to the program, he never told me where he was going but once he started the program, he started telling me where he was going, with who, and at what time…That's why I liked the program because I saw that change." ~ Parent/Guardian*

> *"He was able to talk to people here, and the other peers because they all grew up together, some of them dealing with the same instances. They're talking amongst each other, opening. There are things that bring them together when they're here, they're all one. Made him comfortable among peers and adults." ~ Parent/Guardian*

This perceived increase in youths' self-sufficiency was frequently contextualized with corresponding improvements in school and at home.

> *"Before we started this program, [my daughter] almost had all fails. Now she's a straight A student, she's on the volleyball team, and she has more friends now. There's been a lot of impact, a lot of improvement. Not just with school, but with other things too, like family." ~ Parent/Guardian*

> *"I do feel like he's gaining a better sense of responsibility and able to plan his life a little better in a sense. Not perfectly, but [he] is able to schedule things for himself and not be late instead of me always being on him. I feel like he's built a better sense of responsibility, especially for this program. Can't be late because [provider staff] is going to be mad at him." ~ Parent/Guardian*

Other family members identified that the program itself was a wake-up call for youth to reflect on their choices, learn that their actions have consequences, and begin to take responsibility for their behaviors.

"The day they arrested my son, he was scared because he never had been through that and he thought he was going to jail and he looked at me and asked what was going to happen, but this program showed him you don't need to be perfect and you can get a second chance to do better, so that helped a lot." ~ Parent/Guardian

"I think, from my point of view, a lot of times when someone does something wrong and the approach is so punitive, it makes people continue to do the wrong things instead of taking true accountability and understanding why choices were made. This helps our son to understand that he made a mistake but [it] doesn't make him a bad person. It's something he can come back from and grow from. And continue to be aware of the situation he was in, so he doesn't repeat it." ~ Parent/Guardian

Providers further recognized these changes within youth and families, noting that diversion often provides an opportunity for parents to listen to their children and opens avenues for communication through program participation.

"Youth at first versus at the end, they feel better, and they learn something from the restitutions. [I] had a youth referred for fighting and through mediation they talked about options he could have had in the moment, and he submitted a letter talking about his fault and what he could do differently in the future. Even the parents understood things differently and were thankful." ~ Provider

"They grow more confident in their own abilities when they have that additional push from someone else…They become proud of themselves because they see it even if they didn't at the beginning." ~ Provider

Many youths stated that the program they participated in was valuable because it occurred in a non-judgmental, supportive space designed to teach them skills (e.g., "you learn stuff that sticks with you forever"). Some youth recognized that since engaging in diversion, they experienced positive impacts in their personal lives, such as gaining more freedom at home and noticing improvements in school. In fact, certain youth expressed a desire to continue participating in services at the service provider following program completion. Providers similarly identified that select youth continued to participate in provider services after completing diversion.

"We now have a kid who still comes, he graduated in March and it's July, and he's still coming to this day, participating, engaging, he doesn't wanna stop." ~ Provider

On the other hand, the youth also felt that diversion was time consuming, and their time could have been better spent elsewhere. Some youth remained ambivalent, while others recognized that diversion programming itself might not be of import compared to the value of participating in diversion overall (i.e., no formal charges).

"Yes, it for sure did [feel valuable]. It was a useful program to help me get through my decision and amend and bring back the relationships I had damaged, especially through the restorative justice circle, that was really helpful." ~ Youth

"I don't know if it's valuable to me. The time I spent here is valuable to me, I don't know about the program, they're taking away things I'd rather be doing. They're doing it for a good reason and I understand that." ~ Youth

"Honestly, it does [feel valuable] because it was a moment in my life when everything went bad, but I was able to have it go back to good because I was given an opportunity." ~ Youth

Program providers identified that youth motivation was a strong determinant of diversion's impact and value. Staff recognized the limited overall role they played in a youth's life and that not all youth will find program services beneficial.

"Sometimes we may, sometimes we may not [have an impact]. In six months, we're trying to have an impact of years of trauma. I think that's an unrealistic expectation…it's like planting a seed. I feel like that's what it is. I feel like it's not a realistic expectation to think they're gonna transform themselves…maybe their grades will improve or [they will] stop hanging around a certain group of friends." ~ Provider

"Some of the kids are getting a greater understanding of how the system works, and the impact the system can have on you. I think that's the most important. I think it's powerful, it's great. And then you have some too who are like 'I don't care.' I tell the parent, some kids have to learn [from] experience and go through it, and hopefully it's not too late." ~ Provider

In terms of program impact, youth most often identified positive impacts from participating in diversion itself. These included having a support system, learning to build up trust in oneself and others, being treated positively, the ability to participate in meaningful programming, and "not being locked up." Most youth additionally stated that they did not experience any negative program impacts. Of the youth who identified negative impacts, loss of personal time was the most

common grievance, while similarly noting that diversion was preferable to being in custody or having a formal record. Other difficulties centered around transportation to the program, the time-of-day programming occurred, and limited engagement with other peers in diversion.

"I didn't really have a support system till I got in the program. [Provider staff] always supported me and was there when I needed him or something." ~ Youth

"There's a lot, it helped with really accepting myself again, really bringing back my relationship with my parents, slowly getting my parents' trust back again, just the overall positive mentality." ~ Youth

"My time. Like I said, can't get back time…I'd rather be doing my homework assignments 'cause it's stacked up, 'cause the faster I do it, the better. I'll usually get home by 6:30 and won't get done till 9:30." ~ Youth

Most often, youth identified that participating in diversion facilitated the development of their social skills. This skill development occurred in the form of learning to (re)build trust and form connections with others. Provider staff and programs were identified as facilitators of this positive skill-building because they cultivated a safe and supportive environment that allowed youth to express themselves and learn to engage with others. Although not all youth specified this, some noted that socialization within the program was of value due to the isolating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"After my incident, it was really difficult to get out socially again. The staff helped me develop skills and identify things that weren't right, I was taking my social life in a direction that wasn't helping me." ~ Youth

"When we get into the classes, they come and have those conversations, and the challenges to their mind, you always see them leave with a little more confidence in the person they were even before they came in. It's like they have more confidence and experience." ~ Provider

"They improved my social skills. When I got here, I didn't want to talk to anybody, they didn't force us but that's what they improved. I never said a word to nobody before and now I do so that's pretty good." ~ Youth

Staff and leadership from community providers indicated that they purposefully fostered supportive environments that youth identified as valuable components of their program participation.

"For example, kids with low GPAs that wanna be in sports, we might work with them to get them a tutor. Maybe they have a special need, so working with them in those areas so they can understand there's something I have to do to make that shift." ~ Provider

Recognizing that many youths arrived at their programs having experienced negative encounters with law enforcement, personal hardships (e.g., family trauma), and/or external social pressures (e.g., gang membership), providers sought to create a safe space for youth to develop their socio-emotional wellbeing (e.g., "I can't change [a youth's] environment but I can help [them] grow as a person").

Youth additionally recognized that diversion supported their mental health and wellbeing, recounting how providers checked in with them about their current mood during each visit. Some youth further noted that providers presented opportunities for youth to learn about themselves and be more mindful of themselves and their self-worth.

"Yes, they always ask how we're feeling when we walk in. If you say you're not feeling good, they talk to you on the side. That's what they care about the most is your mental health. They care." ~ Youth

"You see them seeing themselves growing. They're like, 'a couple months ago, I was so mad, so angry, but now I know what I need in order to not be so upset.'" ~ Provider

"It really supported my mental health. I felt like I had ruined so many opportunities for myself and they helped me see the light at the end of the tunnel." ~ Youth

When asked if they had any recommendations to make diversion more beneficial, most youth stated that they did not have any suggestions for program improvements. Youth who identified opportunities for programmatic changes commonly reflected on aspects of their participation that they would have changed, such as engaging with the harmed party in restorative justice or learning to better process the events of their actions. Other general programmatic recommendations included more activity offerings, more locations for service providers, and receiving money or employment.

"I feel like, if there was a chance to recognize what happened and process it and how to prevent it in the future would have been beneficial." ~ Youth

"Maybe if they gave a certificate afterwards to show I completed it, and they could show what you did to get there and how you came out of it. Even though it's not a proud thing how you got there, it's still an accomplishment. Instead of going to jail, you went through with this

program and learned some stuff. If people ask for proof about this being off your record, you don't have no proof." ~ Youth

"More outdoor activities because it's mostly inside. Some people don't like reading or coloring or cooking so they should do football or other sports or show us how to move your body and stuff." ~ Youth

Reflecting on the impact diversion would have on their future, youth most frequently identified that without diversion, they would have a formal charge which would have negatively impacted their opportunities and life trajectories. Other positive impacts on youth reported included learning new things, developing a support system, having the ability to reflect on their actions, and being a better person. None of the youth felt that the program would not have an impact on their future. One youth felt that, beyond learning from their mistake, the program could "do more" and others remained uncertain about the impact on their futures given that they were still actively participating in diversion.

"Yes, a lot of people who don't get the opportunity to learn certain things in school, go off to a bad path, there's a lot of character forming to be learned. In general, it can impact your future. For me personally, I don't think it impacted my future yet, we still have a lot of classes we have to take, but I think there's definitely an opportunity for sure." ~ Youth

"I'm pretty sure it will have an impact. I don't think it will be negative 'cause I'm getting this stuff off my record. You don't wanna pull up to a job with two felonies and them not hire you, so I'm tryna get it off, so that will be the positive impact." ~ Youth

"If I have a friend who is doing something bad, I can tell them about the risks of not getting the same opportunities and that may mean their life keeps going bad." ~ Youth

Ultimately, the preliminary anecdotal impacts of diversion from youth, their family members, and providers appear to be be favorable. Although some youth found the program requirements to be burdensome, they recognized the environments at their local providers to be safe and supportive, and diversion overall as a better opportunity than formal system involvement. Family members identified the impacts of diversion on youth as positive and providers noted the positive impacts diversion can have on both youth and families.

Additional Factors Impacting Implementation of the YDD Model

Work Order Solicitation Process

The work order solicitation (WOS) process that must be completed when the Department of Youth Development (DYD) is looking for new providers to offer diversion services is a crucial component to the YDD model. This is not only a chance for YDD to expand the model across the County, but it is also an opportunity for the YDD to review the services that providers offer and their alignment with the services that are in alignment with YDD's positive youth development list of services. Additionally, it is an opportunity for YDD to review the geographical reach of providers to see if youth who are currently underserved or do not have access to a diversion program would.

At the request DYD, the RDA evaluation team reviewed the following WOS materials to provide YDD feedback and recommendations for consideration on future WOS. These materials can be found in *Appendix G.*

Materials reviewed

- Revised 2 - Exhibit A, SOW for YDS-D, December 2018
- Exhibit B, Questionnaire, December 2018
- Exhibit H, Supportive and/or Housing Services Master Agreement No. H-707626, January 2019

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- Work Order Solicitation No. SHSMA-WOS_WDS-013, YDS-D, September 2021
- Exhibit 1 - SOW for YDS-D, September 2021
- Exhibit 2 - Questionnaire, September 2021
- Exhibit 3 - List of Government Agency Contracts, September 2021
- Exhibit 4 - Pending Litigation and Judgements, September 2021
- Exhibit 5 - References, September 2021

The review of these materials, which spans two solicitation periods, 2018 and 2021, shows the growth that YDD had in the first three years of operation. While much of the material is very similar, there is a new intentionality in the latest solicitation materials that articulate the direction YDD continues to move in.

The review of materials produced findings across four areas: clarity, reach, oversight, and accuracy. The full document that was produced for YDD can be found in *Appendix H*.

Clarity. When reviewing the WOS for clarity the RDA evaluation team pointed to ambiguity in the solicitation around important terms such as principles of Youth Development and in the requirement of providers to participate in coaching and capacity building to support the

expansion of the evidence-informed practices. The first example, the principle of Youth Development, is important to define because it allows providers to understand what approach YDD is taking. In the interdisciplinary world that YDD is operating in, crossing between public health, youth justice, and childhood development, among many others, it is important to define terms and expectations for all parties.

Reach. During focus groups with current providers, the section of the WOS related to *Care Coordination* and the list of tasks and responsibilities that providers should be able to perform was a concern. When RDA reviewed the WOS, the list was extensive, and with verbiage that consists of "including but not limited to the following:" the indication is that providers should be able to go above and beyond the list in the WOS. With caseload size and staffing shortages, especially in parts of the County that are a resource desert, this may be unobtainable and create further inequity among youth based on where they happen to reside. Similarly, in the *Care Coordination* section of the SOW, YDD states that evidence-based case-management strategies and cognitive behavioral interventions should be used with youth when appropriate. It is important that YDD has identified for itself what some of those strategies and validated interventions would be should a provider seek assistance or thought partnership.

Oversight. In the SOW there is a section that has to do with what has been labeled as responsibilities of the provider. In this section, YDD states that staff should be able to demonstrate competency in certain strategies and approaches. The language used is prescriptive and places a requirement on providers that YDD has no mechanism in place to monitor or enforce.

Accuracy. In reviewing materials from YDD that include the Policy and Procedures Handbook, the SOW, and a myriad of others, RDA was able to identify instances when there were inconsistencies between materials. For example, the SOW states that programs should conduct or attempt to conduct the enrollment of referred youth within five days of the referral. However, the Police and Procedures Handbooks states that programs should attempt the first contact within 72 hours and allow at least 30 days to enroll a youth.

The SOW continues to evolve as YDD continues to grow and adapt. While there are a number of items that could be improved upon, the solicitation is a strong representation of the diversion program and what YDD hopes to provide youth across the County.

Net Widening

A legitimate critique of diversion centers around the phenomenon of "net widening."[67] The net-widening effect results from an overreliance on diversionary interventions for youth who engaged in minor delinquency who would not have been cited and/or arrested without the existence of such programs. [68] Diversion can broaden the scope of local and state control of

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[67] Decker, S. H. (1985). A systematic analysis of diversion: Net widening and beyond. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *13*(3), 207-216; Mears, D. P., Kuch, J. J., Lindsey, A. M., Siennick, S. E., Pesta, G. B., Greenwald, M. A., & Blomberg, T. G. (2016). Juvenile court and contemporary diversion: Helpful, harmful, or both? *Criminology & Public Policy*, *15*(3), 953-981; Rasmussen, A. (2004). Teen court referral, sentencing, and subsequent recidivism: Two proportional hazards models and a little speculation. *Crime & Delinquency*, *50*(4), 615-635.

[68] Developmental scholars have identified that youth engagement in delinquency is a normative adolescent behavior that declines in early adulthood (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Moffitt, 1993; Sampson & Laub, 2003). The implications of

youth through the creation of "low risk" profiles, translating into a one-step-removed process for youth involvement with the formal legal system. For example, young people who previously would not have been processed through the juvenile justice system might participate in a diversion program with supervisory conditions or lengthy programmatic requirements. If youth violate or fail their program's requirements, they might be rerouted to the formal system or reclassified as fitting a "higher risk" profile.[69] This has potentially harmful implications for youth who may experience future system contact. Further, diversion allows a larger number of youth to be placed under some level of supervision, which is associated with the increased likelihood for program failure simply due to the fact that, by monitoring a greater number of youth, it will be possible to "catch" more youth violating or not conforming to program requirements.[70] In this way, the "net" is widened by both expanding the justice system's reach and diverting a greater number of youth into a form of systemic intervention.

YDD was mindful of the implications of net widening when developing their countywide model of diversion: "To help counter net widening, YDD has created a pathway for informal youth development referrals, which are used for alleged offenses that would not rise to the level of an arrest or referral to probation" (YDD Policy and Procedure Handbook, p. 11).[71] While this is a positive step in the development of diversionary interventions, youth may still be overburdened with services and experience negative contacts with law enforcement, which have ongoing complications that might impact youths' future engagement in delinquency.

YDD explicitly acknowledges these concerns, noting the short- and intermediate-term requirements of program implementation necessitate collaboration between law enforcement agencies, providers, and YDD themselves. As currently implemented, YDD's model of diversion predominantly relies on police-initiated referrals to a local network provider in lieu of arrest. Police-initiated diversion has been critiqued because it can 1) be discretionarily applied on an individual-officer basis, 2) be overly relied on as a middle-ground option between "doing nothing" (e.g., a verbal warning) and arrest, and 3) be coercive, particularly if youth are "threatened" with arrest if they do not consent to diversion.[72]

Although the countywide model is largely reliant on police-initiated referrals to diversion, YDD has designed their model with consideration to these issues by instituting practices and procedures reducing individual officer discretion in the field. For example, a key component of partnership agreements between law enforcement agencies and providers is the determination of eligibility and suitability criteria for youth diversion.[73] YDD encourages the careful consideration of suitability requirements and exclusion of criteria that may disproportionately

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diversionary interventions targeting adolescent behaviors that may naturally decline with age are beyond the scope of this report.

[69] Decker, S. H. (1985). A systematic analysis of diversion: Net widening and beyond. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *13*(3), 207-216; Rasmussen, A. (2004). Teen court referral, sentencing, and subsequent recidivism: Two proportional hazards models and a little speculation. *Crime & Delinquency*, *50*(4), 615-635.

[70] Mears, D. P., Kuch, J. J., Lindsey, A. M., Siennick, S. E., Pesta, G. B., Greenwald, M. A., & Blomberg, T. G. (2016). Juvenile court and contemporary diversion: Helpful, harmful, or both? *Criminology & Public Policy*, *15*(3), 953-981.

[71] Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development. 2022. *Policies and Procedures Handbook*.

[72] Mears, D. P., Kuch, J. J., Lindsey, A. M., Siennick, S. E., Pesta, G. B., Greenwald, M. A., & Blomberg, T. G. (2016). Juvenile court and contemporary diversion: Helpful, harmful, or both? *Criminology & Public Policy*, *15*(3), 953-981.

[73] YDD Handbook, 17.

impact certain youth (e.g., those involved in the child welfare system, youth of color). Additionally, by incorporating an informal referral option, issues associated with coerciveness and overreliance on diversion may be lessened, but this is difficult to measure in the short-term.

Complete data for all stops made by law enforcement agencies is required to assess net-widening, measured as an increase in total law enforcement stops along with diverted youth. While some stop data is publicly available online, YDD largely relies on partner agencies sharing stop data to capture a complete picture of all stops made. Even among agencies sharing more complete data with YDD, discussed in the first touchpoint of this report, data collection and reporting has changed over time. As a result, it is not currently possible in the short term to determine the extent to which any net widening has occurred during YDD's diversion program. Additionally, with major shocks during YDD's implementation such as the COVID-19 pandemic, short-term trends in youth stops may be misleading even with complete data.

Anecdotally, qualitative data from provider focus groups highlights these problems. Providers noted that youth may not complete the program because they realized it was not mandatory and families felt that their child improved and no longer benefitted from the lengthy programmatic intervention. Providers also explained that police officers failed to communicate that informal referrals did not equate to mandatory program involvement, resulting in a period of stress for youth and families who were uncertain what was required of them to ensure youth would not be formally charged. This reliance on law enforcement contact to refer youth to diversion may be considered an unnecessary interaction with an authoritative figure, which has the potential to negatively impact youth.[74] This may be identified as an area for improvement in the current model.

> *"I had a referral, I read through the incident, and everyone a part of the incident was referred, including the victim in the incident. I was like okay, I understand, but also, it's like the victim had good grades, a job going on, XYZ going on, but like it was a formal [referral] anyway and he had to go to the program...and now he's got to change up the whole work week…he said he's a good kid and doesn't know why he has to do it when he was the victim." ~ Provider*

Youth have been found to hold more negative attitudes toward police compared to adults.[75] In fact, just one negative interaction with law enforcement can increase a young person's distrust toward law enforcement.[76] Poor communication between officers and youth and families, resulting in their belief that they were compelled to participate in diversion, may also lead to

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[74] Jackson, D. B., Testa, A., & Vaughn, M. G. (2020). Low self-control and legal cynicism among at-risk youth: An investigation into direct and vicarious police contact. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, *57*(6), 741-783.
[75] Brown, B., & Benedict, W. R. (2002). Perceptions of the police: Past findings, methodological issues, conceptual issues and policy implications. *Policing: an international journal of police strategies & management*; Sanden, M., & Wentz, E. (2017). Kids and cops: Juveniles' perceptions of the police and police services. *Journal of contemporary criminal justice*, *33*(4), 411-430.
[76] Jackson, D. B., Testa, A., & Vaughn, M. G. (2020). Low self-control and legal cynicism among at-risk youth: An investigation into direct and vicarious police contact. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, *57*(6), 741-783.

greater distrust in police or perceived unfair treatment, thereby reducing confidence in the law and legal system.[77]

> *"That has an effect on the kids because they feel like they're on the right path, and then they get referred and they're like 'why?'…and then when we start going through the program, they feel like they're being punished, and then they don't have time for their extracurriculars, and it demotivates them." ~ Provider*

In practice, it may be better to avoid law enforcement interactions altogether for low-level delinquency, particularly incidents that occur in school, rather than utilizing police-initiated diversion to get youth into beneficial services. YDD appears to recognize this, noting "in the long-term, YDD envisions a world where the community no longer relies on law enforcement agencies or the traditional justice system to generate referrals to supportive services."[78]

YDD's Case Management System

Something that has appeared multiple times throughout this report are issues that YDD is facing with data collection. The evaluation has discussed both the impacts related to law enforcement partners not sharing data as well as providers not reporting data in compliance with program requirements. For YDD to be able to monitor adherence to the model, youth outcomes, inequities within the systems, and any other number of contractual and partnership agreements, complete data reporting is necessary. At the same time, there is a careful balance that must be maintained so that the County is not collecting more information on youth than is necessary.

Of the eight providers and seven law enforcement agencies that the evaluation team spoke with, only one provider had positive comments about the case management system, as depicted in a statement below. Most of the comments made about the case management system came from law enforcement agencies. When considering why this may be, the evaluation team speculates that there may be some limited experience with the case management system by law enforcement since they are only able to access the system to refer youth to diversion programs.

> *"[The referral process] It's easy because of the [case management] system." ~ Law Enforcement*

> *"No, I think the [case management] system is working well." ~ Law Enforcement*

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[77] Tyler, T. R., & Trinkner, R. (2017). *Why children follow rules: Legal socialization and the development of legitimacy.* Oxford University Press.
[78] Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development. 2022. *Policies and Procedures Handbook.*

"Navigating through [the case management system] has been easy,
they've been very available for us." ~ Provider

On the other hand, their diversion partners are using the system to receive referrals and record case management data, often alongside their existing case management software system that was in use prior to YDD's adoption of the new system. Responses collected from focus groups and interviewees expressed frustration with a system that feels antiquated. Respondents have also shared issues needing assistance from YDD around issues that concern system configurations and require additional time-consuming steps to involve DYD Information Technology (IT). Finally, several law enforcement partners discussed the frustration of not being able to save their progress when entering a referral. For many smaller agencies, calls for service may dictate whether they are able to stay at their desk long enough to enter a referral in the case management system.

"I don't consider [the case management system] user friendly at all…the
system is not built to navigate and cannot be used to its full potential [due
to the inability to run needed reports], so we have to maintain two case
management programs which causes double data entry." ~ Provider

"Main reason for delays in enrollments? The [case management] system is
not great…" ~ Provider

"Get logged out and not be able to get back in. Once we are locked
out, getting tech support through [the case management system],
through the support system, you must send all this info. I contact YDD and I
would just be put in contact with some higher ups. The discouraging thing
was that we had to talk to one lead person to get in touch with another
lead person to get back into the system." ~ Law Enforcement

"My wish list would be – being able to save your progress. Not a big thing
to ask but very practical." ~ Law Enforcement

An additional barrier that the case management system creates between YDD, and its partners is the limited capacity for running reports and how this creates a lack of transparency. For example, the case management system does not send law enforcement partners confirmation that the provider received the referral or if the referral has been seen. This limitation of the case management system is one factor in certain law enforcement partners' decision to not adopt the case management system; instead, they continue to complete the referral process through email. This deviation creates a lack of consistency in the referral process that could create errors in data collection, a provider missing a referral, etc. Additionally, providers have expressed frustrations that they cannot run reports on their own.

"The limited capability of [the case management system] is preventing us
from using it. It cannot provide us with the information that we need for

reporting and that we can only have one officer at a time that has a login, which doesn't work for us then because we need multiple people to access." ~ Law Enforcement

"[Case management system] cannot be used to its full potential [due to the inability to run needed reports]." ~ Provider

"A big thing for me for someone overseeing the program is that I can't pull my own reports from [the case management system] or extract my own data. If I want to see certain cases, I can't pull my own report. We need to ask for permission. If I want to know specific schools or offenses on campus, I cannot answer those questions, I must ask YDD, which is something I should not be doing. If I search things in [the system], you also can't lock a search feature, it takes a long time to move through it and readjust settings. Design with consent forms, there's lock features [user accessibility concerns, cumbersome]." ~ Provider

Finally, the RDA evaluation team would like to share several observations that were collected while navigating the case management system for the evaluation project. All program parties have a role to play in data collection issues with the system. For example, providers have not had the capacity to enter data following all data reporting requirements in the system, and YDD has not had consistent capacity to monitor data reporting. YDD would benefit from evaluating what data fields are currently being collected from providers. Then, outline, in collaboration with partners, a three to five-year data collection plan that allows providers to understand the need for additional data that may not seem to be relevant for current contract fulfillment requirements now but is crucial for understanding program impact in the years to come. Simultaneously, YDD needs to increase its capacity for data monitoring and accountability.

Interagency Communication

Over the course of the current evaluation there was recognition among all partners--YDD, law enforcement agencies, and providers--that interagency communication was both a strength and a barrier.

YDD and Providers

YDD has made a concerted effort to create open communication and thought partnership with providers. During focus groups, many providers were able to recall the listening sessions that they were a part of in 2017 to help provide input into what would eventually become the YDD diversion model. YDD has continued this investment in providers through bimonthly calls between YDD program managers and providers to discuss program issues, case management system troubleshooting, and general thought partnership. Finally, YDD has placed considerable time and effort into providing training that is topical and relevant to challenges that providers are facing. For example, topics that have been covered include how to support youth who

have run away from home and their families, how to serve a young person who is re-arrested while in diversion, addressing sexual harm, timely enrollment, and referral partnerships with schools. For additional examples of topics covered by YDD, please see **Appendix I.** Providers did discuss their appreciation for these training opportunities and for the opportunity to connect with one another during training courses.

One area of concern is that providers identified centers around the future of the diversion program in the County. A few providers expressed distress that they were being engaged less in conversation about the direction of diversion, policy, and decisions regarding how/what data is collected.

YDD and Law Enforcement

There is room for growth as YDD and law enforcement continue to build the foundations of their relationship. Both partners recognize that there are systematic barriers to effective communication. These barriers include an agency structure that requires a top-down approach to information sharing. This could impact the timeliness of the information reaching those that are interacting with youth and making referrals to diversion, as well as the information that is being shared if the messaging is edited for any reason. Finally, sharing information first-hand as an advocate and subject matter expert allows for audience members to ask questions and to engage with advocates directly impacting the chances for buy-in.

Another challenge that is facing these two partners is the lack of communication. The infrequency of meetings, held once a quarter, is hindering the ability for relationship building. Another issue is the frequency of communicating data. Law enforcement reported being under the impression that they were supposed to receive reports quarterly but that is inconsistent.

"I think I am supposed to get quarterly reports and they don't always happen." ~ Law Enforcement

An additional barrier to communication reported by law enforcement agencies is a language barrier that exists between themselves and YDD. When asked to expand on what was meant by that, most respondents discussed how YDD could get better buy-in through talking about the data and giving more examples of success stories.

"We need numbers. We need statistics. That's the immediate buy-in you'd get from a law enforcement officer doing the communication." ~ Law Enforcement

"Buy-in is most important. Facts and data are important. It doesn't tell the whole story because you can skew that for whatever you're trying to do. But buying in is important. You get it through impact statements. There's going to be hesitancy with anything new." ~ Law Enforcement

Several respondents in the law enforcement focus groups stated that it is difficult to carry the YDD policies because it does not seem like YDD creates policy and procedure for real world settings.

"If there's an advocate from the sheriff's department, that might help because they know the job. I know in our meetings with YDD that's always been some confusion – why can't you just divert them before they're arrested? We can't exactly divert them before they're in the back of a patrol call. For example, we get a call for service, burglary, a witness is saying they're male, wearing XYZ clothing. We stop that person because he matches the description. During that, they're detained, searched, and put in the back of the car. Avoiding that is not necessarily an option – we have got to be safe and go back to our families. Just because they're a juvenile doesn't mean they're not dangerous. Sometimes we have people who are very uncooperative and won't even give us their name so we'll have to take them back to the station and fingerprint them and then we would learn they're juveniles. So having that field experience is important to know how this works." ~ Law Enforcement

YDD has acknowledged the communication difficulties with one focus group respondent stating that there are philosophical differences between YDD and law enforcement. However, YDD continues to look for innovative ways to reach out to law enforcement whether that be through training opportunities, asking for representatives from one agency to visit another on their behalf, or to continue to have those hard conversations about access and data.

Rights of Persons Harmed

Throughout RDA's conversations with law enforcement and with some providers, the rights of persons harmed was raised as an important topic. For law enforcement, this topic arose as a barrier to complete buy-in of the model.

"Victims aren't happy when we offer juveniles YDD. They're like, 'who pays for that?' We tell them it's a civil issue, if they complete the program, you'd have to take them to court. When it comes to the public it's not something they really want to hear. Our deputies are like, 'this is ridiculous, you're victimizing the victim twice.' If someone gets their house broken into, what happens to the victim? They don't feel safe in their home anymore. We understand some kids do need help and the program can benefit some of those kids, but when you have a child that's continuously gone through the law enforcement system, I don't know how much counseling is really going to help." ~ Law Enforcement

Providers discussed this topic because they see an opportunity, as discussed above, for YDD to embrace restorative justice. As YDD and the diversion program grow it should be expected that there be additional focus on how diversion impacts harmed individuals. It is a careful balance to not lose sight of the harm the justice system can cause youth and alternative ways to heal communities that do not create greater inequities within communities that are over policed and overrepresented in the diversion population.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided for both ways to improve fidelity to the YDD diversion model and ways to address factors that are impacting the implementation of the model. Additionally, these recommendations are separated by short term, or those that can be achieved with potentially low effort or are pressing (these should be addressed within the next year to two year) and long term (implementation to be planned over the next three to five years). The long-term recommendations may require additional thought partnership and include interagency collaboration. Finally, when developing the focus group protocols, RDA was purposeful in asking the various stakeholder groups how they thought the challenges they have faced with diversion could be addressed. Their recommendations are highlighted here.

YDD Diversion Model

Referral

- Short Term
    - YPAR Team Recommendation - Adopt and adapt the YPAR referral business cards and pamphlets that provide youth and families an easily understandable explanation of what diversion is, the fact that it is a choice, and information about the diversion provider that will be contacting them to enroll them in diversion.
    - Collaborate with providers to create provider-specific web pages that will provide information found in the pamphlet, as well as additional information, with links to the provider's website.
    - Respondent Recommendation – Create training opportunities for law enforcement that include diversion service providers explaining the services that are offered to diversion youth and provide attendees the opportunity to ask relevant questions.
    - Review the template in the YDD Policy and Procedure Handbook and update alignment with referral timeline goals and data collection policies. An example of this can be seen in the Partnership Agreement Template.

- Long Term
    - YPAR Team Recommendation – Rather than have an officer complete a referral to diversion, have a representative of the diversion provider, or another trained civilian complete the referral to reduce barriers for youth and parents/guardians.

Enrollment

- Short Term
    - In collaboration with providers, develop standardized language to be used during the enrollment process to ensure that youth and families are fully informed

of their choices before enrolling in diversion without the use of language that could be perceived as coercive.

- o Consult with a subject matter expert on the YDD portion of the intake packet being used by providers with the goal of replacing the assessment tool with a strengths-based assessment that has a pre-posttest and would assist providers in care planning. This assessment tool should also assess the needs of each youth, or a separate needs assessment tool should be secured. These tools should be open source and require self-guided training to allow providers who experience staff turnover a way to train new staff at no extra cost.

Care Plan & Service Delivery

- Short Term
    - o Respondent Recommendation – Additional trainings in the upcoming year to be considered: working with youth living with disabilities and their parents and guardians, providing additional restorative justice training and coaching, exploration of nonmonetary restitution.
    - o Investigate the possibility of creating a transportation fund that is geared specifically at assisting youth and providers for transportation needs.
    - o When determining whether formal and informal youth should be offered different services that allow for formally referred youth to receive more intensive services and for informally referred youth less intensive and shorter-term services. Additionally, formally referred group treatments should be offered separately from informally referred youth.

- Long Term
    - o Respondent Recommendation – Expand services to the whole family to get to issues that may be underlying behavior. This involves partnering with other County agencies or additional funding to establish family services for youth.
    - o Provide interested providers formal training from a restorative justice (RJ) subject matter expert that can also provide Technical Assistance (TA), or coaching, on how to incorporate RJ into their current service delivery structure.
    - o Investigate the possibility of securing contracts with organizations and providers throughout the County that can be a referral source for diversion youth in need of more intensive services in the areas of mental health care, substance use, or behavioral health. By securing this contract with providers the goal will be to help secure resources for youth on diversion, especially in those areas that are in a resource desert.
    - o To support diversion service providers and to support the sustainability and replicability of the model, engage with/hire subject matter experts to identify the strategies and validated interventions that contracted providers should be engaging in with youth referred for diversion services. This would allow YDD to engage in CQI practices with providers, provide targeted training opportunities, and thought partnership.

Completion

- Short Term
  - Collaborate with providers on how they can share with youth and their parent/guardians what the anticipated length of the diversion program will be. Emphasize how it is important to have monthly updates on progress toward care plan goals and update the anticipated completion date so that youth are never left with ambiguity about where they are at in the program.

Additional Recommendations

Data

- Short Term
  - Work with a vendor to create a more user-friendly interface for referral and case management that is easy for partners to navigate.
  - Increase the functionality of the case management system to allow providers to use the system to its full potential (e.g., ability to query reports and perform data searches on youth in their diversion program), eliminating the need for multiple case management systems.
  - Working with a vendor, evaluate whether it is possible to increase referral system permissions during the referral for law enforcement. These permissions should include saving a referral and being able to return to it, submitting a referral and receiving confirmation that it was successfully delivered to the provider, and being able to search for the referral to ensure it was entered and sent.
  - Review the current data collection and management policy. Examine data that is collected, collecting only data that is necessary to monitor the implementation of the diversion program and youth outcomes. If additional analyses are planned with data not currently being analyzed, engage partners in discussion for what those future plans with the data are.
  - With partners, revisit the current data reporting requirements and engage in a thoughtful partnership on how to improve data entry and reduce the amount of missing data.
  - Create an internal ongoing systematic data monitoring procedure that corresponds with data entry policy created with partners to ensure that data issues are addressed immediately.

Interagency Communication

- Short Term
  - With law enforcement partners, establish a regular monthly or every-other-month meeting to increase communication and facilitate building a stronger relationship between the two partners.

- Long Term

o On a quarterly basis, bring together a provider and their law enforcement partner to discuss trends in diversion, data issues and challenges, resources for diversion youth, upcoming changes within each partners agency or programs, etc.

Rights of Persons Harmed

- Short Term
    o Create a community awareness campaign that shares with the larger community what diversion is, who diversion serves, how diversion seeks to heal communities without creating greater harm to youth, and the vision moving forward.

- Long Term
    o As the YDD diversion program continues to grow, engage with rights of persons harmed organizations that commonly interact with or are educated on youth criminal and legal systems and the harm system involvement can have on young people.