
From:

LA County Department of Youth Development <DYD@subscriptions.lacounty.gov>

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Happy holidays from the Department of Youth Development!

As this year comes to a close, we are deeply thankful to have the opportunity to support youth in LA County and to be in community with all of you. We are looking forward to seeing many exciting things come to fruition in 2023, and we will keep you updated on new job and contract opportunities with the department as they come up.

This month, we want to shine a light on the Restorative Enhanced Diversion for Youth (REDY) program, a collaboration between our department and the District Attorney's Office. Launched in November 2021, this program extends access to diversion services to young people who often aren't extended opportunities for diversion by focusing intently on restorative justice and supportive services. We are so proud of this collaboration and the way it reflects evidence of best practices in improving community safety and youth wellbeing. You can read more below about the program and the young people who participate in it below!

We also want to call attention to some important grant opportunities available now or coming soon for community-based organizations working with young people. These opportunities range from grants starting at \$15,000 that are available now to support child care centers and home operators to grants that will be available soon for organizations providing arts programming for justice-involved youth. Please visit the County's American Rescue Plan recovery site, [linked here](#), for more details on individual opportunities and to sign up for help in applying for available funding.

DYD wishes everyone time with their loved ones this holiday season and asks you to keep in mind those who cannot be at home with their own families this season. We look forward to connecting with you all in the new year.

Best wishes,



Vincent

Vincent Holmes, Interim Director

REDY Restorative Justice Program Expands Eligibility/Access



“The unique thing about the REDY program,” says DYD Capacity Building and Innovations Program Manager Vanessa Petti, “is that it utilizes restorative justice intervention to make space for young people to take full accountability for their actions and directly engages those they harmed to have their voices heard and influence the process.”

REDY connects referrals from the District Attorney's Office to two DYD providers, Centinela Youth Services and the California Conference for Equality and Justice, who have unique expertise in restorative justice facilitation. Informed by evidence of best

practices in improving community safety and youth wellbeing, the program serves young people who were previously ineligible for diversion based on the seriousness of their cases and their more intensive service needs.

Restorative justice is “an approach to achieving justice that involves, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense or harm to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.” For more information about the approach and practices of restorative justice, please visit: <https://rjdt toolkit.impactjustice.org/establish-a-foundation/restorative-justice/>

Eligible youth, between the ages of 12-17, can agree to participate in an individualized program led by a case manager to address the underlying issues that led to their behavior, including treatment for mental health needs or substance use. The overall goal is move young people away from detention and jail and increase their opportunity for supportive resources and networks of care that will increase healthy youth development and decrease the risk of recidivism.

One recent REDY case involved a teenager violating personal boundaries in an otherwise consensual relationship. With the support of the REDY program, the youth spent six months engaged in accountability and focusing on the impact of gender violence, teen dating violence, pressures around being sexually active as a youth, boundaries, and consent.

In addition to connecting with a care coordinator to help address the underlying issues that led to his behavior, connections with mentors helped him be honest about his range of emotions (confusion, regret, anger, embarrassment, sadness, disappointment, heartbreak, bitterness, stress) and explore ways he can model healthy behavior in the future.

The teen's mother, who also took part in the program, shared that she believes this work meaningfully impacted her son and their entire family, helping to shape him into a healthy, understanding future partner and an ally to others.

Individuals who participate in REDY processes because they have been harmed by a young person also report feeling supported in a way they hadn't experienced before. While juvenile courts hearings are typically closed, REDY works to arrange restorative justice conferences between the youth and those impacted by the alleged crime. Both parties have a voice in developing the terms of an agreement for resolution, which goes beyond the details of a police report to invite a discussion of physical, emotional, environmental, financial and spiritual harm.

One 11th-grade student who participated in a REDY referral after being assaulted by a classmate told case managers, "Working with CCEJ was a great experience, not once did you make me do something I wasn't comfortable with. I feel like I got closure."

"I would recommend the restorative process to another person who has been a victim of a crime because although what we went through was hard, sometimes talking about it can help us to feel more at ease and move on," the young person shared.

DYD is working to train additional community-based providers in restorative justice facilitation to increase capacity in support of this valuable program. In 2023 and beyond, we hope to continue to deepen community capacity for restorative justice to ensure young people and individuals who have been harmed across the County have the opportunity to heal.

One young person who participated in the REDY program with Centinela Youth Services wrote about his experience completing the program in lyric form, which read in part as follows:

*Got two jobs going back to school /
getting my head together that's all I know /
that's good u would say, /
jus know that I'm sorry for all the worries and stress /
I put u threw everyday*

Watch for Grant Opportunities/American Rescue Plan Funds!

The American Rescue Plan represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address LA County's most urgent inequities. [Click here for more information on upcoming grant opportunities.](#)



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PARKS.LACOUNTY.GOV/LRT

We want to hear from the community — especially youth voices — as we shape our plans for the months and years ahead.

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