



# LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## STRATEGIC PLAN DECEMBER 2024

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## **Section 1: Overview of DYD’s Strategic Direction**

### **What is Youth Development?**

DYD’s approach to youth development is grounded in youth leadership and builds on both Positive Youth Development and Social Justice Youth Development frameworks that recognizes the role of economic, social, and political context in a young person’s ability to grow into adulthood.

For DYD, Youth Development is a practice that meets young people where they are, nurtures their strengths, and improves their environment to equitably increase access to the resources they want and need.

### **What is DYD’s Theory of Change?**

DYD’s theory of change is that when we work together to make sure all young people have what they need to grow, we are making smart investments that benefit us all, both now and in the future.

In Los Angeles County, there are many government agencies and community-based organizations working tirelessly to improve the lives of young people but there are still structural barriers and gaps that exclude or harm some young people.

DYD does not intend to duplicate the many important resources that already exist for young people in Los Angeles County. Instead, DYD adds value precisely because our focus is on creating equitable solutions to address key gaps and barriers across youth-serving systems.

To do this, DYD must take an intersectional and social-ecological approach that simultaneously increases access to responsive services, supports improvements in young people’s environment and community, and seeks structural change.

### **What is DYD Working to Solve?**

DYD is uniquely positioned to be able to add capacity to support collaborative problem-solving in 3 main areas:

1. Increasing knowledge and practice of strengths-based youth development among youth-serving agencies, organizations, and community members; including opportunities and models for culturally and developmentally responsive youth engagement, leadership, and co-design.
2. Supporting young people who fall through the cracks of existing systems because their needs are complex and intersectional, both by increasing access to resources that are not tied to specific system involvement and by collaborating with others on structural and systemic responses.
3. Acknowledging and creating initiatives to account for the legacy of youth incarceration in Los Angeles County and its impact on intergenerational wellbeing and safety.

**“Policies that address structural racism and invest in youth health and social supports—instead of arresting youth—may reduce legal system involvement and improve population health by actualizing greater health equity.”**

*United States Youth Arrest and Health Across the Life Course: A Nationally Representative Longitudinal Study*

## DYD's Strategic Plan in Context:

DYD's Strategic Plan includes concrete strategies and goals through 2030, designed to include adaptable, future-oriented North Stars to guide meaningful innovation and impact. This plan will be a living guide for DYD; one the Department will return to regularly and update at least every three to five years as the work towards long-term vision progresses.

DYD's Strategic Plan is aligned with the [2024-2030 Los Angeles County Strategic Plan](#). In particular, DYD is one of two Departments created to address the County's *Care First, Jails Last* priority. DYD's Strategic Plan is also informed by and in alignment with the goals of the County's [Prevention and Promotion Systems Governing Committee](#) (PPSGC) and Prevention and Promotion Implementation Coordination Team (PPCIT).

Below is a high-level outline of DYD's connections to Los Angeles County's 2024-2030 Board-Directed Priorities.

<b>Care First, Jails Last</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•DYD is responsible for operationalizing and implementing the Youth Justice Reimagined (YJR) vision for youth justice system reform and transformation.</li><li>•The YJR vision includes a wide range of strategies that have informed DYD's Strategic Plan more broadly but overall includes intentional investment in care-first strategies that reduce youth justice system involvement.</li></ul>
<b>Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Youth justice system involvement is one of the strongest predictors of adult justice system involvement throughout a person's lifetime.</li><li>•DYD's efforts to prevent arrest, supervision, and incarceration for youth therefore directly contribute to the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Priority's Strategic Goal to Reduce Adult First-Time Felony Convictions.</li></ul>
<b>Child Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•DYD collaborates with the Office of Child Protection and Department of Children and Family Services to identify opportunities to address gaps in equitable access to solutions that improve the lives of children and families.</li><li>•This includes efforts to increase pathways to youth development and diversion services for youth involved in the Child Welfare System, work to strengthen cross-sector support for youth with complex care needs, PPSGC / PPCIT goals, and more.</li></ul>
<b>Poverty Alleviation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•DYD collaborates with the Poverty Alleviation Initiative and Department of Economic Opportunity to identify opportunities to strengthen pathways to employment and expand access to basic needs for young people.</li><li>•This includes expanding opportunities through the Youth@Work program, exploring opportunities for guaranteed income initiatives, and more.</li></ul>
<b>Homelessness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Young people who are impacted by the justice system experience increased risk for homelessness and housing instability, both short and long term.</li><li>•DYD's efforts to prevent arrest, supervision, and incarceration for youth therefore directly contribute to the County's goals to expand and enhance services for people experiencing or at risk for homelessness.</li></ul>
<b>Health Integration; Immigration; Sustainability; Environmental Justice &amp; Climate Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Evidence shows that when young people thrive, communities as a whole are healthier, safer, and more sustainable.</li><li>•DYD therefore anticipates that our work to increase equitable access to youth development resources that help Los Angeles County's young people thrive will have positive impacts across all Board Priorities in the long term.</li></ul>

DYD's Strategic Plan has been informed by DYD's first two years of implementation; research on best and promising practices in equitable youth development; and youth, community, and stakeholder engagement.

Since July 2022, the newly formed Department of Youth Development has been working to build strong, sustainable infrastructure for youth development in Los Angeles County and generate proof that investing in youth development benefits us all, both now and in the future.

Looking into the Department's third year of implementation and beyond, DYD is now moving into a season of action, building momentum to expand the scale and depth of our impact.

## **A. Population, Mission, Vision, and Values**

### **What Population Does DYD Serve?**

In alignment with the Office of Child Protection, DYD's focus population is informed by a Targeted Universalism approach to equity, which leads with those who are furthest away from a universal goal.

The Los Angeles County Code states that the purpose of DYD is to support the development of young people in Los Angeles County by coordinating and building capacity for a wide range of Youth Development services, opportunities, supports, and other efforts to the fullest extent permissible by law.

DYD's universal goal is therefore to improve wellbeing for all young people, with targeted strategies focused on prevention and equity-centered support for youth who experience the greatest barriers to accessing youth development services. This includes youth who fall under the County's expanded definition of "Opportunity Youth" because of youth justice or child welfare system involvement or disconnection from school or work and young people living in under-resourced communities.

### **What is DYD's Updated Mission and Vision?**

In early 2024, DYD worked with staff and stakeholders to update the Department's mission, vision, and values. These updated statements were workshopped with DYD's public Steering Committee and the 2024 Youth Summit. They represent the Department's explicit commitments to equity and anti-racism, intersectional and integrated approaches to youth development, and a long-term vision for sustainable, structural change.

DYD's updated mission, vision, and values are as follows:

#### **MISSION**

DYD's mission is to be a catalyst for transformation by providing innovative pathways to youth development through intersectional, anti-racist, youth-centered strategies so that all young people can access resources that nurture their growth, wellbeing, and connection to community.

#### **VISION**

DYD envisions a flourishing youth development ecosystem that builds safer communities and eliminates youth incarceration by ensuring young people have the tools they need to thrive.

## VALUES

- **Youth and Community Empowerment:** Uplift and create spaces for youth and community wisdom and opportunities for co-design.
- **Restorative Accountability:** Prioritize healing and relationship-centered approaches to wrongdoing that help the wrongdoer take accountability for their actions and help those who have been harmed to heal.
- **Anti-Violence:** Preventing all forms of violence by addressing root causes.
- **Anti-Racism:** Actively identify and eliminate racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes so that power and resources are redistributed and shared equitably.
- **Collaborative Solutions:** Prioritize collaboration and collective problem-solving with partners and stakeholders.

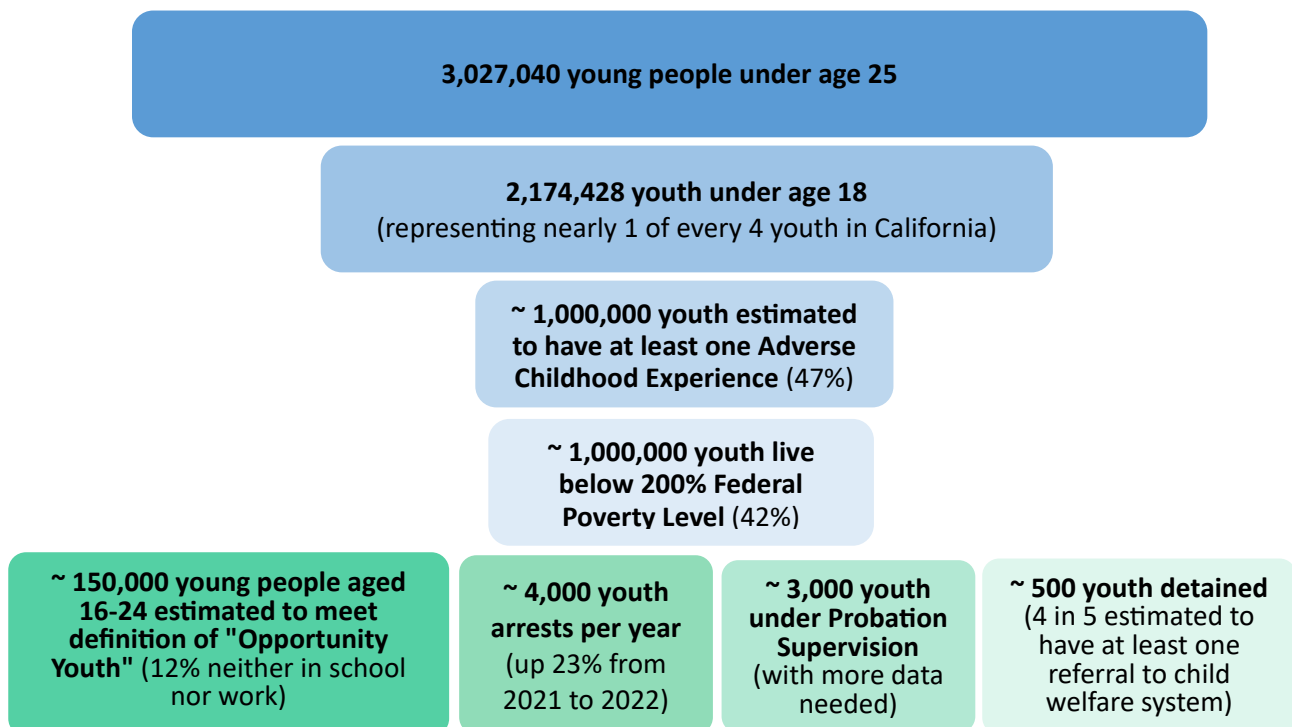
## B. Snapshot of Los Angeles County's Young People

DYD applies an equity lens and targeted universalist approach to prioritize youth development resources for young people who experience structural barriers to accessing youth development resources due to historic disinvestment and poverty, trauma, and systemic racism.

Although DYD's population generally includes all 3 million young people under the age of 25 in Los Angeles County, we know that the nearly 1 million youth who live below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are most likely to experience greater barriers and lower access to youth development activities such as culturally relevant mentorship, safe spaces for movement or mindfulness, and leadership development.

We also know that achieving our universal goal of wellbeing for all youth in Los Angeles County will take a village. DYD will continue to work collaboratively with our partners to resolve gaps in availability of and access to the youth development resources that all young people deserve.

### Visualizing Data About Young People in Los Angeles County:



### Why Include a Focus on Justice-Impacted Youth?

Los Angeles County has historically been the largest incarcerator of youth in the United States. In Los Angeles County, youth justice system involvement has had an outsized impact on equity and wellbeing that follows young people throughout their lifetime and across generations, negatively impacting communities as a whole.

Even a first-time arrest has a serious negative impact on youth development and wellbeing, reducing health, educational, employment, and other outcomes. Recent longitudinal studies have shown that this impact is long-term and leads to reduced adult economic attainment, physical mental health, and even early mortality.

This type of negative impact therefore has a long history of disproportionate harm for Black, indigenous, and other youth of color. Although Black youth represent only 7% of the total population of youth under age 18, for example, they are approximately 40% of youth impacted by the County’s youth justice system. The Children’s Data Network’s research on the intersection between the youth justice and child welfare systems shows that Black youth, and Black girls in particular, are also dramatically overrepresented in the population of “crossover youth” who are impacted by both the criminal legal system and the child welfare system.

As overall numbers of youth arrested and detained each year have decreased in recent decades, this inequitable harm for Black, indigenous, and other youth of color has become even more severe. This unintended consequence of previous reform efforts further highlights the need for new solutions that intentionally and explicitly addresses the structural drivers and root causes of system involvement.

### C. Keeping the Youth Justice Reimagined Vision Updated

In late 2019, the Board of Supervisors established a Youth Justice Work Group of young people, community members and advocates, and government partners charged with developing recommendations to address the negative and inequitable impact of youth justice system involvement. Citing research on the negative impact of justice system involvement and continued failures of reform efforts, the Board requested a plan to transition youth justice functions from Probation to a new care-first system that would be meaningfully different in process and outcomes than the current system.

In late 2020, the Board unanimously adopted the core vision and values of the Youth Justice Work Group’s report, titled “Youth Justice Reimagined” (YJR), but acknowledged that there were important budget, legal, and legislative analyses that would need to be completed to inform the Work Group’s phased recommendations.

The YJR vision includes a wide range of concepts to create an environment envisioned to allow Los Angeles County to safely and equitably transform its collective approach to youth justice system involvement. These concepts were intended to build on one another in phases over time and allow for flexibility as the landscape evolved. At its core, YJR is a vision for creating something new: building a transformative, care-first environment for the County’s young people that prioritizes structural investment in youth development as an effective and equitable solution to public safety.





The first of these recommendations was the July 2022 creation of a new Department of Youth Development (DYD) that would be responsible for overseeing long-term implementation of and updates to the YJR vision as the County continued to learn more about what was possible. Many of the individuals who contributed to the development of YJR continue to be close partners, have joined the DYD team, or are supporting the work as consultants to ensure continuity through the iterative process of bringing a complex vision to life.

DYD represents and manages a central investment in care-first youth development for Los Angeles County. Therefore, the Department’s goal is to create a flourishing youth development ecosystem at a countywide scale. By focusing on prevention, healing-centered intervention, and reducing harm for young people who are impacted by the justice system, we are working to address the root causes of justice system involvement for young people across the County.

Although most of the phased recommendations of YJR have moved forward with close alignment to what was envisioned in 2020, legal and legislative analysis later conducted by County Counsel revealed a legislative barrier to the transition of functions from Probation to another agency by 2025. Among other findings, this analysis found that functions under the jurisdiction of the Chief Probation Officer could not be transitioned without state legislative change pursuant to California Government Code Sections 27771 and 27773.

While this analysis impacts the timing of the specific goal to transition functions, it does not prevent the County from moving the many other elements of YJR forward.

### Summary of Progress Towards YJR Concepts Over Time:

Youth Justice Reimagined: Major Categories for Phased Implementation	Status of YJR Phase 1: Anticipated 11/20 – 7/22	Status of YJR Phase 2: Anticipated 7/22 – 1/24	Notes on YJR Phase 3: Anticipated 1/24 – 7/25
Build Youth Development Infrastructure	DYD was successfully launched in July 2022 ✓	Initial investments in Youth Development Networks complete ✓	Expand sustainable prevention infrastructure
Create Spaces for Shared Learning and Aligned Priorities	Ongoing learning focused on DYD’s contracted providers ✓	Ongoing learning focused on providers, DYD staff, and close partners ✓	Establish Youth Development Learning Collaborative to advance aligned priorities
Expand Diversion and Restorative Practices	Expansion took longer than anticipated but is now complete ✓	DYD continues to identify opportunities to increase equitable access ✓	Increase capacity to prevent school-to-prison and foster-care-to-prison pipelines
Enhance Reentry and Support for System-Involved Youth *	Collaborative planning began as planned ✓	Initial investments in reentry continuum complete ✓	Operationalize Safe Healing Centers and other alternatives to incarceration
Formalize Collaboration, Planning, & Oversight	Ongoing ✓	Ongoing ✓	Focus on sustainable countywide engagement

*\* Legislative analysis shifted the timeline of recommendations in this category related to transitioning functions under the jurisdiction of the Chief of Probation to another agency but did not impact other recommendations around establishing alternatives, increasing supportive services, and reducing the footprint of youth justice system involvement through prevention and decarceration.*

## D. Key Elements of DYD’s Strategic Plan: Four Strategic Directions Over Time

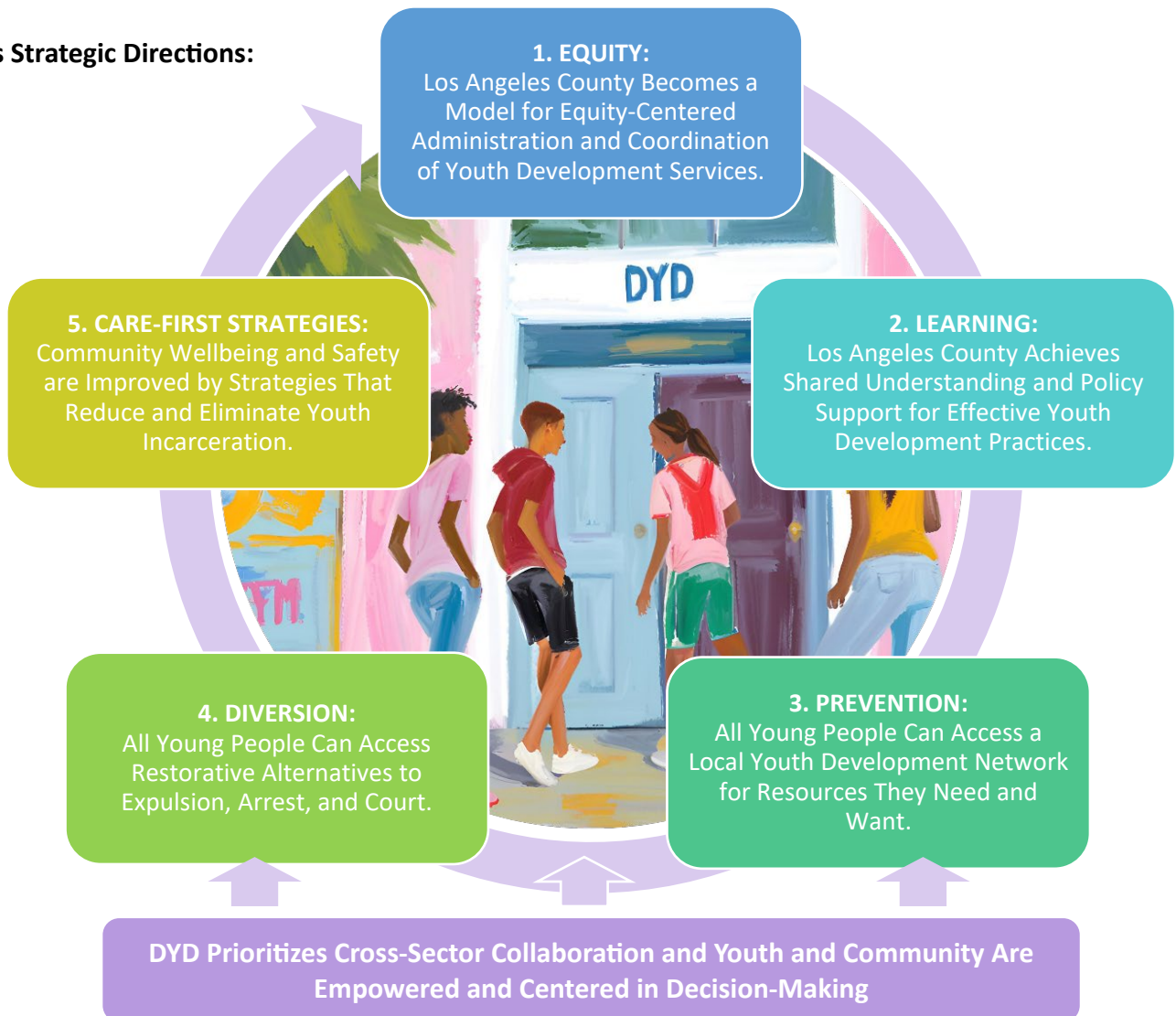
DYD’s approach to strategic planning is inspired by a [futurist model](#) that reflects a combination of both shorter-term steps and strategies as well as longer-term visioning that guides evolution over time.

DYD’s futurist Strategic Plan strives to plan for the kind of sustainable, structural innovation required to solve complex social problems. This enables planning towards long-term vision and impact while also accounting for the fact that shorter-term tactics and strategies necessarily involve more data, evidence, and certainty than long-term vision and systems-level evolution.

### DYD’s Guiding North Stars:



### DYD’s Strategic Directions:





## Summary of DYD’s Strategic Directions Over Time:

Strategic Directions:	1-2 Years: Short-Term Tactics, 2025-2026	3-5 Years: Mid-Term Strategies, 2027-2029	>5 Years: Long-Term Vision, 2030+
1. Los Angeles County Becomes a Model for Equity-Centered Administration and Coordination of Youth Development Services.	Build administrative infrastructure and collaboration for equity, efficiency, and growth.	Refine systems, policies, and processes that support improved service delivery and expanded workforce.	DYD serves as a model for best practices in equity-centered governance.
2. Los Angeles County Achieves Shared Understanding and Policy Support for Effective Youth Development Practices.	Launch a Youth Development Learning Collaborative and expand narrative strategy to uplift youth-centered evidence.	Increase knowledge and support to improve buy-in for evidence-informed youth development practices and policies across disciplines.	DYD addresses social and structural barriers to ensure youth development’s positive impact is equitable and sustainable.
3. All Young People Can Access a Local Youth Development Network for Resources They Need and Want.	Expand investments in regional Youth Development Networks and Youth Centers.	Support multiple thriving Youth Development Networks with healing-centered 24-hour crisis response.	All young people have access to a continuum of local resources they want and need.
4. All Young People Can Access Restorative Alternatives to Expulsion, Arrest, and Court.	Expand alternatives to expulsion and arrest, including restorative practices countywide.	Increase referrals so most legally eligible youth arrests are diverted and work to expand eligibility.	All young people have access to diversion and restorative practices that address root causes.
5. Community Wellbeing and Safety are Improved by Strategies that Reduce and Eliminate Youth Incarceration.	Expand strategies that reduce harm for justice-involved youth and build alternatives to incarceration.	Expand successful alternatives to youth incarceration and effectively end incarceration for girls and gender expansive youth.	All young people have access to the community-based support they need to avoid incarceration.

## Section 2: The Detailed Strategic Plan: Tactics, Strategies, and Vision for Youth Development in Los Angeles County

This section includes a more detailed description of the four strategic directions outlined above. To ensure there is enough flexibility to adjust effectively as the youth development ecosystem evolves over time, there is more concrete detail in sections that describe strategies in the next 1-4 years and less detail but more high-level vision in the strategies anticipated at the 5-year mark and beyond.

### Direction 1: Los Angeles County Becomes a Model for Equity-Centered Administration and Coordinated Youth Development Services.

#### SHORT-TERM TACTICS, 2025-2026

##### 1.1. Build efficient, effective, and sustainable independent administrative infrastructure needed for equitable contracting, human resources, information technology, and other barriers to implementing high-quality services for youth.

- 1.1.1. By December 2024, DYD’s Executive Team will develop an actionable plan to transition administrative functions from the initial shared services structure to an independent administrative structure capable of supporting a Department of DYD’s size and scope.

- 1.1.2. By January 2025, DYD’s Executive Team will explore all opportunities to bring on appropriate and sufficient administrative staff to independently manage effective contracting, human resources, and information technology responsibilities and advance a plan for streamlined, equity-centered administration.

*This approach will reflect findings and takeaways from the Equity in County Contracting initiative as well as best and promising practices in equity-centered, capacity-focused, and innovative contracting.*

- 1.1.3. By March 2025, DYD’s Administrative Branch will research and implement evidence-informed data collection tools, trainings, and templates to improve equitable contracting, hiring, and information technology that builds the capacity and coordination of high-quality services.
- 1.1.4. By June 2025, DYD’s Administrative Branch will be able to demonstrate streamlined administrative processes informed by best practices in equitable administration across the board, including:
  - 1.1.4.1. Establish a Master Services Agreement, Work Order Solicitation, and feedback survey to streamline and improve the department’s contracting process.
  - 1.1.4.2. Streamline processes and procedures to reduce delays in filling vacancies.
  - 1.1.4.3. Develop a plan to prioritize IT related projects and address excessive delays in technical issues.
  - 1.1.4.4. Develop an onboarding / orientation process to provide the growing staff comprehensive information regarding the department’s history, strategic plan, processes, policies, benefits, and other resources.
- 1.1.5. By June 2026, DYD will be able to demonstrate consistently streamlined and inclusive processes and practices, including accessible templates and tools based on lessons learned, including:
  - 1.1.5.1. Pilot a web-based invoicing system, which will allow contractors to submit their invoices and supporting documentation electronically. The system will be designed to have an approval workflow and capture timestamps. In addition, Contractors will also have the ability to monitor the status of their invoice.

## **1.2. Increase partnerships with other youth-serving Government Agencies.**

- 1.2.1. By January 2025, DYD’s Executive Team will be able to demonstrate concrete collaborative partnerships or projects with the following youth-serving agencies:

<b>Collaborator</b>	<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Level of Collaboration</b>
Youth Commission	Youth engagement and youth leadership as well as special projects	Regular monthly meetings with leadership; Pursuing ongoing opportunities to partner
Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department	Coordinated services, policies, and support for Transition Aged Youth between the ages of 18 and 25	Regular monthly meetings with leadership
Department of Children and Family Services	Coordinated strategies for preventing justice system involvement for youth with child welfare involvement and complex care needs	Regular monthly meetings with leadership

Collaborator	Focus Area	Level of Collaboration
Office of Child Protection	Coordinated strategies for preventing justice system involvement for youth with child welfare involvement and complex care needs	Regular quarterly meetings
Prevention and Promotion Systems Governance Committee and Implementation Coordination Team	Participation in PPSGC and PPCIT meetings and developing plans to provide operational support for key recommendations to improve cross-sector support for priority populations	Regular monthly meetings with plans to co-convene a Youth Development Learning Collaborative in early 2025
Department of Economic Opportunity	Youth employment and economic stability, including collaboration on the PLACE pipeline program and coordinated preparation for the 2028 Olympics	Pursuing ongoing opportunities to partner
Department of Parks and Recreation	Safe spaces for recreation and youth engagement, including collaboration for Parks After Dark activities and coordinated preparation for the 2028 Olympics	Pursuing ongoing opportunities to partner
Department of Arts and Culture	Healing-centered engagement and access to arts, including support for providers in Probation facilities and coordinated preparation for the 2028 Olympics	Collaboration with providers; Pursuing ongoing opportunities to partner
Department of Public Health	Coordinated strategies with Office of Violence Prevention for youth violence prevention and with Substance Abuse Prevention and Control team	Pursuing ongoing opportunities to partner
Department of Mental Health & Department of Health Services	Multi-disciplinary approaches to support care plans for justice-involved youth, including CalAIM opportunities	Regular weekly team meetings
Probation Department	Expanding existing programming, reentry support, and supportive alternatives for justice-involved youth	Regular monthly meetings with leadership
District Attorney's Office and Sheriff's Department	Expanding existing pathways to youth diversion and restorative justice	Existing MOU and regular monthly meetings with Special Counsel to the DA leadership
Public Defender's Office and Alternate Public Defender's Office	Expanding referrals and pathways for reentry support, and supportive alternatives for justice-involved youth	Monthly Roundtable
Superior Court	Expanding pathways for reentry support, and supportive alternatives for justice-involved youth	Monthly Roundtable
Los Angeles County Office of Education	Improving access to school-based restorative practices	Meetings with leadership
Los Angeles City Youth Development Department	Continued coordination between County and City youth development strategies	Regular monthly meeting with leadership
Los Angeles City Gang Reduction and Youth Development Office	Coordinated support for gang-involved young people countywide	Pursuing ongoing opportunities to partner
California Office of Youth and Community Restoration	Continued shared learning, including coordinated opportunities for research and narrative strategy on less-restrictive placements and promising practices.	Regular monthly meetings with leadership

**1.3. Increase pathways for youth engagement and employment, especially for those impacted by systemic poverty, oppression, violence and abuse who face structural barriers to access.**

- 1.3.1. By June 2025, DYD’s Executive Team will develop and gather stakeholder input on a sustainable plan for youth engagement and employment, including a clear timeline for implementing the plan and increasing pathways to youth engagement, leadership, and employment countywide.
- 1.3.2. By June 2026, DYD’s Executive Team will be able to demonstrate an increase in youth engagement and employment by at least doubling the current level of engagement and establishing a youth employment pathway.
- 1.3.3. By June 2026, DYD’s Executive Team will begin to build a Youth Engagement team dedicated to long-term implementation and management of youth engagement and leadership strategies.

*This plan will build on DYD’s existing practices, which includes partnering with the Center for Strategic Partnerships for youth compensation and co-facilitating a “Heart of YJR” youth engagement structure, as well as ongoing research on this topic, which includes collaboration with the Youth Commission, Office of Child Protection, Department of Health Services, and Department of Economic Opportunities.*

- 1.3.4. By June 2027, DYD’s Executive Team will begin to build a Youth Employment team dedicated to long-term implementation and management of youth employment strategies.

## **MID-TERM STRATEGIES, 2027-2029**

### **1.4. Refine systems, policies, and processes that support improved service delivery and expanded workforce.**

- 1.4.1. By June 2027, DYD’s Administrative Branch will implement an internal contracting database to allow the department to address modifications of contracts, requests, maintain contractor information, and better estimate the timeline of execution dates.
- 1.4.2. By June 2027, DYD’s Administrative Branch will implement a system that will streamline the hiring and promotion process.
- 1.4.3. By June 2027, DYD’s Administrative Branch will create and implement a DYD platform and/or utilize an existing platform for prospective contractors to receive information about upcoming contracting opportunities and/or submit proposals as part of the request for proposal process.
- 1.4.4. By June 2029, DYD will serve as a model in the County for equitable administration, continuing to implement best practices and update templates and tools based on lessons learned.

## **LONG-TERM VISION, 2030+**

### **1.5. Made possible by serving as a model for equitable administration, DYD contributes to shared knowledge and improvement across disciplines.**

*Equity-centered contracting and hiring are especially important to demonstrate that DYD's commitment to investing in youth development and supporting communities is matched by a long-term commitment to reducing burdens and barriers that have historically excluded young people and communities from accessing County resources.*

## **1.6. Sustainable and coordinated investment in youth wellbeing and development continues to reflect long-term positive outcomes for youth, families, and communities.**

*In DYD's long-term vision for systems-level evolution, we anticipate that improved outcomes will correspond with sustained and well-coordinated investment in youth development.*

## **1.7. Los Angeles County sees multi-generational impact of investment in youth development and youth employment.**

*If DYD has been successful, another area of long-term impact will be multi-generational benefits of the County's investment in youth. DYD envisions a time when the child of a young person who first connected with DYD through a Youth Diversion or Transformative Mentorship program will join the DYD team and continue to grow their own generational wealth and wellbeing.*

## **Direction 2: Los Angeles County Achieves Shared Understanding and Policy Support for Effective Youth Development Practices.**

### **SHORT-TERM TACTICS, 2025-2026**

#### **2.1 Expand effective research and narrative strategies to cultivate buy-in and address fears and beliefs that limit best practices in youth development.**

- 2.1.1 By October 2024, DYD's Innovation Branch will partner with a Communications Firm capable of advancing a countywide, community-centered, multi-media narrative strategy campaign to increase awareness and understanding of best practices in youth development, address fears and beliefs about safety, and promote anti-racism.
- 2.1.2 By June 2025, DYD's Innovation Branch will develop actionable recommendations based on stakeholder engagement in the first phase of the department's narrative strategy campaign about priorities for additional communication and storytelling as well as concrete opportunities to leverage narrative strategy for program and policy priorities.
- 2.1.3 By June 2025, DYD's Innovation Branch will develop a web-based data system to support streamlined referrals, case management, and evaluation to promote a streamlined infrastructure for continuity of care, transparency across programmatic initiatives, and data-informed storytelling about the impact of DYD's continuum of services.

- 2.1.4 By June 2026, DYD’s Innovation Branch will be able to demonstrate the reach and impact of this narrative strategy campaign, including countywide increase in awareness and knowledge of best practices in youth development and increased interest in youth development priorities.

## **2.2 Expand Youth Development Learning Collaborative activities to increase knowledge of best practices in youth development among youth-serving agencies countywide and set shared priorities in support of a countywide evidence-informed Youth Development Framework.**

- 2.2.1 By December 2024, DYD’s Innovation Branch will have brought on staff dedicated to shared learning to increase the department’s capacity to facilitate cross-sector learning activities.
- 2.2.2 By January 2025, DYD’s Innovation Branch will have developed and gathered stakeholder input on an actionable plan to convene a Youth Development Learning Collaborative, including a timeline of the Collaborative’s activities and milestones throughout 2025.

*This Collaborative will build on previous leadership of the Department of Parks and Recreation, Probation Department, and Department of Public Health’s Office of Violence Prevention, who convened a Countywide Youth Networking Group with the goal of improving coordination and shared learning among youth-serving County Departments.*

- 2.2.3 By January 2026, DYD’s Innovation Branch will be able to share the Youth Development Learning Collaborative’s shared priorities and collaboratively developed Youth Development Framework.

## **2.3 Create additional spaces for strategic engagement to connect youth, community, and county partners to DYD and support collaborative innovation.**

- 2.3.1 By June 2025, DYD’s Innovation Branch will expand strategic partnerships and engagement activities, including convening annual Youth Summits and identifying opportunities for innovative projects with the Los Angeles County Youth Commission, other youth-serving departments, and more.
- 2.3.2 By June 2025, DYD’s existing public Steering Committee will expand to include more youth leadership and broader partnership with community and county stakeholders. Youth leaders will actively engage in decision-making processes and collaborate with community and county partners to contribute innovative ideas.
- 2.3.3 By December 2025, DYD will finalize an updated research and evaluation framework to ensure the Department is assessing impact and opportunities to improve across program and policy areas.



## MID-TERM STRATEGIES, 2027-2029

### **2.4 Implement a countywide Youth Development Training Series for local youth-serving agencies to advance integration of best practices in assets-based, culturally relevant youth development and therefore improve youth services across sectors.**

- 2.4.1 By January 2027, DYD's Innovation Branch will have fully socialized collaborative countywide Youth Development Priorities and Framework and built a team of local and national experts to inform a countywide Youth Development Training Series.
- 2.4.2 By June 2027, DYD's Innovation Branch will develop a Youth Development Training Series.
- 2.4.3 By June 2028, DYD's Innovation Branch will have coordinated at least one cohort of participants who receive a Youth Development Certificate from this Training Series.

### **2.5 Present and publish data and narratives to demonstrate youth development's impact on safety and wellbeing and help shape evidence-informed policy.**

- 2.5.1 By June 2027, DYD's Innovation Branch will have published at least 5 reports, articles, and/or peer-reviewed studies to share analyses of youth development's impact on safety and wellbeing and inform directions for future research.
- 2.5.2 By January 2028, DYD's Innovation Branch will establish partnerships needed for the next phase of the Department's narrative strategy.
- 2.5.3 By January 2028, DYD's Innovation Branch will finalize an updated plan for evidence-informed legislative strategy.

## LONG-TERM VISION, 2030+

### **2.6 Made possible by the combination of improvement in administrative efficiency and equity along with effective narrative strategy; youth, families, and partners know DYD exists and adds value to their lives.**

*Because DYD is charged with something that has not been done in Los Angeles County before (i.e., advancing an innovative, intersectional approach to youth development at a countywide scale), intentional and consistent trust-building and communication will be required for the County's over three million young people and their families to fully understand its place and added value.*

### **2.7 Made possible by DYD's role as trusted facilitator and convener, all youth-serving agencies in Los Angeles County understand and implement evidence-informed Youth Development practices.**

*In 5+ years, DYD will have built the capacity required to serve as an effective convener and facilitator of shared learning more broadly. This will help ensure young people have access to high-quality youth development approaches no matter which youth-serving county department they are engaging with and help inform each of the other strategic directions in kind.*

*In 10+ years, DYD envisions Los Angeles County as a place where all youth-serving agencies are consistently well-trained in best practices for youth development.*

## **2.8 Made possible by successful narrative strategy and sustained high-quality proof of concept, local and state policy reflect a structural shift to intersectional, care-first youth development approaches informed by the County’s Framework.**

*Similarly, DYD recognizes that policy change is often a long-term task that requires public awareness and buy-in in addition to a strong foundation of sustainable and effective solutions. Policy change at both the local and state level is incredibly important to the County’s ability to maintain equity with long-term sustainability.*

## **Direction 3: All Young People Can Access a Local Youth Development Network for Resources They Need.**

### **SHORT-TERM TACTICS, 2025-2026**

#### **3.1 Initial investments in Youth Development Networks and Youth Centers.**

- 3.1.1 By July 2024, DYD’s Youth Development Branch will distribute initial investments in regional Youth Development Networks and convene organizations receiving this initial funding to strengthen youth development resources in areas prioritized for geographic equity.
- 3.1.2 By January 2025, DYD’s Youth Development Branch will resource additional investments in capacity building and training for small and emergent community-based organizations to continue growing the Youth Development Networks.
- 3.1.3 By January 2025, DYD’s Youth Development Branch will establish new partnerships with community-based organizations (CBO’s) that provide wraparound services, including but not limited to experience addressing attendance and de-escalation issues. This expanded strategy will continue to build the ecosystem of supports for young people on school campuses and compliments DYD's \$2.5M annual investment in the BLOOM Alliance strategy.
- 3.1.4 By June 2025, DYD’s Youth Development Branch will develop an implementation plan and establish partnerships to launch 24-hour Youth Centers as envisioned by the Youth Justice Reimagined report.

- 3.1.5 By December 2025, DYD’s Youth Development Branch will expand Youth Development Networks to provide each District with greater depth of services and more widespread population coverage in high needs areas.
- 3.1.6 By January 2026, DYD’s Youth Development Branch will create a phased plan to expand initial investments in regional Youth Development Networks and Youth Centers to other priority geographic locations, informed by evaluation and stakeholder input.

### **3.2 Design and implement other community-centered strategies for youth development and prevention.**

- 3.2.1 By June 2025, DYD’s Youth Development Branch will demonstrate progress towards expanding Los Angeles County’s continuum of community-centered strategies for youth development and prevention, including:
  - 3.2.1.1 Partnerships with school districts and school sites to improve access to youth development models, including mentorship, diversion, and restorative practices in and around school campuses.
  - 3.2.1.2 Partnerships with child welfare system partners to improve access to youth development models, including mentorship, diversion, and restorative practices in congregate care and other child welfare settings.
  - 3.2.1.3 Partnerships with justice system partners, survivors of crime, and other stakeholders to improve access to youth diversion and restorative practices for young people with more complex, intersectional needs (e.g., gang involvement, violence, etc.).
  - 3.2.1.4 Coordination with the Los Angeles City Youth Development Department and youth development initiatives in the cities of Long Beach and Pasadena.
  - 3.2.1.5 Learning exchanges and collaboration with Youth Development Departments and initiatives in other jurisdictions.
  - 3.2.1.6 Implementing sustainable structures and partnerships to offer service providers capacity-building coaching/training.

## **MID-TERM STRATEGIES, 2027-2029**

### **3.3 Support multiple thriving Youth Development Networks, including a growing range of prevention resources and Youth Centers with 24-hour crisis response available to young people across the County, to fill gaps in continuity of care for young people.**

- 3.3.1 By June 2026, DYD's Youth Development Branch will be supporting a second cohort of regional Youth Development Networks.
- 3.3.2 By June 2026, DYD will establish one (1) flagship 24-Hour Youth Centers.
- 3.3.3 By June 2027, DYD's Youth Development and Diversion Branch will be able to demonstrate that referral partners are referring at least 70% of legally eligible youth to community-based diversion.
- 3.3.4 By June 2028, DYD's Youth Development Branch will expand school district and school sites supports from the initial launch.

## **LONG-TERM VISION, 2030+**

### **3.4 Achieve equitable investment in a full youth development continuum.**

*DYD's 5+ year vision therefore relies on equitable and sustainable investment in a full continuum of youth development services across the County.*

### **3.5 All young people in Los Angeles County have meaningful access to robust youth development services that are responsive to their individual strengths and needs through local Youth Centers and other integrated hubs.**

*If DYD has been successful, in 10+ years no young person will be excluded from youth development services because of where they live or what their needs are.*

## **Direction 4: All Young People Can Access Alternatives to Arrest and Court Involvement.**

## **SHORT-TERM TACTICS, 2025-2026**

### **4.1 Ensure record sealing protocols are developed and implemented by all law enforcement diversion partners by June 2025.**

- 4.1.1 By June 2025, establish DYD's involvement with Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) training, onboarding, and continuous education.
- 4.1.2 By June 2025, increase education for community-based organization (CBO) providers on their roles to: inform LEAs of program completion; receive verifications of record sealing from LEAs; and develop of administrative processes to fill these roles effectively.
- 4.1.3 By June 2025, increase education for youth and guardians regarding their rights and the petitioning process.

## **4.2 Increase the percentage of eligible arrests diverted from 20% to 35%.**

4.2.1 By June, 2025, strengthen data driven and success plan focused conversations with LEAs.

4.2.2 By June 2025, leverage existing relationships and structures to capture hard to reach LEAs.

## **MID-TERM STRATEGIES, 2027-2029**

### **4.3 Expand the number of Diversion service providers and increase the scope of services and supports offered to youth in diversion.**

4.3.1 By June 2027, connect the school-based youth development and diversion strategy and partners with other CBO's to create a larger network of providers of different strengths and geographic reach.

4.3.2 By June 2027, understanding that all diversion cases do not require high-level of care (i.e., restorative justice), establish a referral system with YDN's and other DYD CBO partnerships to provide youth development for youth with lesser needs (i.e., tutoring, safe space to learn/play, a consistent caring adult).

### **4.4 Develop a strategy for diverting offenses that are not currently eligible for diversion by law enforcement agencies.**

4.4.1 By June 2028, convene system impacted youth, community stakeholders, law enforcement leadership, leaders in violence intervention, and experts in the field of restorative and transformative justice to establish consensus and a set of recommendations.

4.4.2 By June 2029, draft an implementation plan for detailing the breadth of supports and services needed for an alternative to system involvement for youth accused of committing offenses not currently legally eligible to be diverted by law enforcement agencies.

4.4.3 By June 2029, develop a legislative strategy for making the necessary changes to state law to allow for such a system to be implemented.

## **LONG-TERM VISION, 2030+**

### **4.5 Increase the percentage of eligible arrests diverted 10% year over year.**

### **4.6 Draft a plan for implementation for Diversion of currently ineligible charge types by June 2030.**

## Direction 5. Community Wellbeing and Safety are Improved by Strategies That Reduce and Eliminate Youth Incarceration.

### SHORT-TERM TACTICS, 2025-2026

#### 5.1 Create and resource services and strategies that are proven to reduce youth incarceration and reduce harm for justice-involved youth.

- 5.1.1 By January 2025, DYD's Reentry Branch will establish an initial cohort of reentry navigators and referral system in collaboration with system partners to facilitate access of youth released from juvenile camps and SYTFs, as well as youth under court jurisdiction in the community, to coordinated community-based reentry services.
- 5.1.2 By June 2025, DYD's Reentry Branch will expand DYD's Transformative Mentorship approaches and access to programming and reentry planning, with a focus on expanding to serve justice-involved boys in juvenile hall.
- 5.1.3 By December 2025, DYD's Reentry Branch will establish initial demonstration projects and opportunities for proof of concept for the Safe Healing Center concept envisioned by the Youth Justice Reimagined report and other less-restrictive placements as alternatives to incarceration and part of a continuum of care for justice-involved youth.
- 5.1.4 By December 2025, DYD's Reentry Branch will demonstrate progress towards expanding collaborative youth and community-centered decision-making models, including Multi-Disciplinary Teams in juvenile facilities and the Youth Empowerment and Support team concept.
- 5.1.5 By January 2026, DYD's Reentry Branch will have developed and gathered input on a plan to expand effective resources in reentry services, housing and less-restrictive placements, and opportunities for employment and economic stability, and implement strategies to further reduce youth incarceration.

### MID-TERM STRATEGIES, 2027-2029

#### 5.2 Expand successful early implementation and demonstration projects to inform Los Angeles County's approach to young people who experience the strongest structural barriers for youth development pathways to healthy adulthood.

- 5.2.1 By January 2027, DYD's Reentry Branch will expand and fully integrate DYD's Transformative Mentorship and programming and care coordination for justice-involved youth across all facilities such that they are working collaboratively and effectively with key facility staffing, including Probation, Department of Mental Health and Los Angeles County Office of Education.
- 5.2.2 By January 2027, DYD's Reentry Branch will expand collaborative youth and community-centered decision-making models, including ensuring all youth released from facilities have a reentry plan



through a multi-disciplinary team process and supporting the expansion of Youth Empowerment and Support teams.

- 5.2.3 By January 2027, DYD will expand a community-based reentry system of services and other support for justice-involved youth, including the expansion of education and employment pathways, and collection of data on reach and initial outcomes.
- 5.2.4 By June 2027, DYD's Reentry Branch will have clear data to improve and show the impact of Safe Healing Center approaches on decreasing youth incarceration and improving youth outcomes, and establish and support a second cohort of Safe Healing Centers.

### **5.3 Implement key priorities of the Decarceration of Girls Implementation Plan and effectively end incarceration for girls and gender expansive youth.**

- 5.3.1 By June 2026, DYD's Reentry Branch will implement additional strategies from the Decarceration of Girls Implementation Plan in collaboration with justice system and community partners.
- 5.3.2 By December 2027, DYD's Reentry Branch will apply lessons learned from Decarceration Demonstration Projects to additional populations of justice-involved youth.
- 5.3.3 By June 2029, DYD's Reentry Branch and partners will achieve zero girls and gender expansive youth incarcerated in Juvenile Hall or Camp settings, including through an expanded and well-resourced YES team practice and infrastructure.

## **LONG-TERM VISION, 2030+**

### **5.4 Incarceration is reduced and a last resort, and resultant cost-savings are reinvested into care-first youth development approaches and alternatives to incarceration and surveillance to address disproportionate barriers to education, employment, and wellbeing for youth of color.**

*In DYD's 5+ year vision, we anticipate being able to demonstrate reduced incarceration and cost savings, including continued demonstration of the initial Cost Benefit Analysis completed for DYD's Youth Diversion and Development model in 2024. These cost savings should inform decision-making to reinvest in the smartest, most effective investment in youth wellbeing and public safety.*

### **5.5 Effective investments in alternatives to incarceration create an environment where any young person removed from their home temporarily for safety reasons has access to therapeutic housing and resources that effectively improves their lifetime wellbeing and safety.**

*When we imagine what would need to exist in Los Angeles County to make safe and just communities possible without arresting or incarcerating young people, much of the answer lies in the above-described investment in prevention and a coordinated continuum of youth development*

services. This future would not be possible, however, without enough high-quality alternatives to detention to support young people who are truly not able to return home for safety reasons.

### **Section 3: Assessment of What Comes Next**

#### **A. Strengths, Ways to Improve, Opportunities, Threats, and Priorities for Inclusion and Equity**

*This SWOT(IE) analysis, which adds an inclusion and equity lens, will be more fully explored in the final Strategic Plan but is included to provide an example of barriers and opportunities most likely to impact the success of DYD’s goals.*

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Ways to Grow</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>	<b>Inclusion and Equity Priorities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core values are aligned with evidence of promising practices and help the Department build meaningful trust with youth and partners</li> <li>• DYD’s team and partnerships are strong and growing</li> <li>• Quantitative and qualitative program results show that the Department’s youth development models are effective, equitable, replicable and cost saving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build sufficient administrative infrastructure along with limited overall staff capacity delays implementation</li> <li>• Need for strategic education and training for staff and partners to deepen knowledge of best practices and equity</li> <li>• Statutory barriers, including accessing multi-disciplinary team information</li> <li>• Partner buy-in to lead efforts to support justice-involved youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen pathways for youth engagement, employment, and leadership</li> <li>• Strengthen partnerships with allies at community, City, County, State, and National levels</li> <li>• Advance narrative strategy and shared learning</li> <li>• Continue to equitably shrink the footprint of youth justice system involvement</li> <li>• Advance sustainable investment in communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of sufficient administrative infrastructure and limited staff capacity</li> <li>• Lack of sustainable funding</li> <li>• Lack of clarity and awareness of DYD’s role, vision, and added value</li> <li>• Shifting priorities and scope creep</li> <li>• Lack of connection to and acceptance by existing agencies and initiatives</li> <li>• Shift in political will away from evidence-informed alternatives to youth justice system involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen structures and processes for youth and community participation and meaningful co-design</li> <li>• Continue to improve and prioritize equity and inclusion based on regular and transparent data</li> <li>• Continue to focus on structural and systemic equity</li> </ul>

#### **B. Next Steps**

- A. Finalize an evidence-informed definition of “youth” for Los Angeles County, including a framework to identify priority populations for equity, that will be included in the Strategic Plan.
- B. This strategic plan is a living document. DYD will remain connected with the strategic plan and provide updates as needed by implementing the following feedback loop:
  1. Quarterly strategy check-in meetings between DYD’s Leadership Team and Branch Management,
  2. Youth, Community, and County Listening Sessions
  3. Other opportunities to engage during annual Youth Summits or public meetings.