



September 19, 2016

Board of State and Community Corrections
2590 Venture Oaks Way
Sacramento, California 95833

RE: Strategic Plan Process by the Board of State and Community Corrections

Dear BSCC Board Members,

We write to express our interest in and provide comments regarding the formation of the Board of State and Community Corrections' (BSCC) 3-year strategic plan. We hope our comments and recommendations will guide the efforts and priorities of the agency, including juvenile justice.

The BSCC has been entrusted with the responsibility to develop and steer criminal and juvenile justice policy, funding, and practice across the state of California to ensure fairness and justice, as well as public safety. We applaud the commitment to developing a strategic plan that fulfills the Board's various mandates by drawing from research-driven strategies and multiple areas of diverse expertise.

In order to create a successful strategic plan grounded in evidence-based practices and community engagement, we strongly encourage the BSCC to employ a stakeholder-driven process that involves community-based advocates and service providers, formerly incarcerated people, and those most affected by both the criminal and juvenile justice systems across the state.

Recommendations for Strategic Plan Development Process

We offer the following recommendations to the BSCC, as it moves forward with the development and implementation of the strategic plan:

- 1. Establish an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to develop the Strategic Plan.** Establishing an ESC would demonstrate the BSCC's commitment to creating a formal, transparent, and inclusive process, and would allow for the involvement of a broader base of expertise in developing an effective strategic plan.
- 2. Ensure that the ESC is representative of diverse stakeholders, explicitly including people who have been impacted by the criminal and juvenile justice systems.** Research has proven the importance of involving communities most affected by criminal and juvenile justice policy in order to effectively craft long-term solutions and efficiently target resources.
- 3. Create a community and stakeholder-informed process:** In addition to creating an ESC, the BSCC should solicit community involvement throughout the decision-making process and subsequent

implementation. The committee should host feedback sessions with stakeholders, including justice-involved persons, their families, and direct service providers who serve this population.

The outreach method used by BSCC staff in soliciting input about the investment of Proposition 47 funding should serve as model of a stakeholder-informed process for future BSCC endeavors, including the development of the strategic plan. The Proposition 47 community meetings allowed stakeholders from both geographically and socially diverse backgrounds to inform BSCC staff and Board members about where funding should be prioritized. Overall, this demonstration of inclusiveness was received positively by community members and advocates, and should be duplicated in the development of the BSCC's strategic plan.

4. **Encourage transparency and accessibility of information throughout the process of developing and implementing the strategic plan.** The process for developing a strategic plan must exemplify the principles and progress the BSCC hopes to promote within the justice system itself. The decisions made by BSCC have a lasting impact on individuals and communities across California, and therefore transparency and accessibility are paramount to creating a stakeholder-involved process that ultimately improves public safety and the lives of individuals.
5. **Prioritize community-based, culturally responsive alternatives to courts and incarceration, especially for youth, within the strategic plan.** In light of the long-term costs and potential harms of court involvement and incarceration, community-based alternatives that employ culturally responsive and gender specific services should be expanded in order to limit people's exposure to the justice system. Youth in particular should be diverted out of the juvenile justice system to developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed alternatives that utilize healing-centered, restorative practices wherever possible.

We recognize the challenges ahead in developing a strategic plan that is responsive to the needs of 58 local county justice systems across this diverse state, and we look forward to partnering with BSCC in this process.

Sincerely,

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice
Children's Defense Fund – California
National Center for Youth Law (NCYL)
Motivating Individual Leadership for Public Advancement (MILPA)