MARCH 23, 2021

TO: Timothy J. Polasik, Field Representative
            BOARD OF STATE AND COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

FROM: Sandy Bonilla, Founder, Urban Conservation Corps of the Inland Empire
            Southern California Mountains Foundation

RE: DATA TO SUPPORT SACJJDDP PUBLIC INPUT

As a practitioner for over 25 years in the field of juvenile justice, I make it a habit to collect as much data as possible on the young people we served. I also make it a habit to get young people's opinions as to what they see works in the field. I do this because conditions in communities change, as well as factors that influence young people's behaviors and needs. So, as part of the Title II Program, I held two large focus groups with young people involved in our programs, especially as it relates to Title II programming. This data I believe can support public input into the SACJJDDP.

Native American Youth Focus Groups

Young people in this focus group was comprised of several Native American Tribal Youth

Gender	Race	Location	Age	System Involved
Male	Native American	Riverside County	21	Past
Male	Native American	Riverside County	20	Past
Male	Native American	Riverside County	19	Past
Male	Native American	Riverside County	19	Past
Female	Native American	Riverside County	17	Not system involved
Female	Native American	Riverside County	21	Past
Female	Native American	Riverside County	19	past

Latino Youth Focus Group

Gender	Race	Location	Age	System Involved
Male	Latino	Riverside County	19	Present
Male	Latino	Riverside County	19	Present
Male	Latino	Riverside County	18	Past
Male	Latino	Riverside County	18	Past
Male	Latino	Riverside County	20	Past

Female	Latino	Riverside County	19	Past
Female	Latino	Riverside County	21	Past
Female	Latino	Riverside County	18	Non system involved

During the Month of November 2020, two focus groups were conducted. The first was an all Native American Youth Focus Group. The second was an all Latino Youth Focus Group. The data collected was on the needs of young people as it relates to the juvenile justice system. The same questions were asked in each group.   In addition, a zoom meeting was held with a mix group of youth people from the UCC in the Coachella Valley to discuss effective programs for communities of color.   The most significant findings are listed.

Question 1: What causes young people to enter the juvenile justice system?

Most significant findings:

➢ 100% of focus group participants in both focus groups reported mental health such as depression, anxiety, stress and feelings of not being understood leads to juvenile crime.

➢ 80% of focus group participants in both focus groups reported that young people from poor neighborhoods of color are perceived as delinquent and stupid no matter what they do – so why even try? Note: the majority of youth in both focus groups described how their parents, relatives, probation officers, cops or others in authority see them as thoughtless young people with no feelings. Several of the youth mentioned that probation officers can't even call them by their first names – which translates to a young person that you are just another bad kid and no one is going to take the time to know your name.

➢ 90% of focus group participants in both focus groups reported substance abuse as a leading cause of young people entering the juvenile justice system.

Question 2: What type of program have you seen or believe will keep young people of the justice system?

Most significant findings:

➢ 100% of the focus group participants in both focus groups reported that community- based programs with caring adults – the emphasis was on caring adults that help them learn to become healthy adults with healthy skills to cope with life problems – Note: the participants had an array of programs but the

underlining need was caring adults that taught them to become healthy and productive adults – many said sports, counseling, and addressing trauma – but the common denominator was caring adults that can teach young adults skills development to enter into adulthood
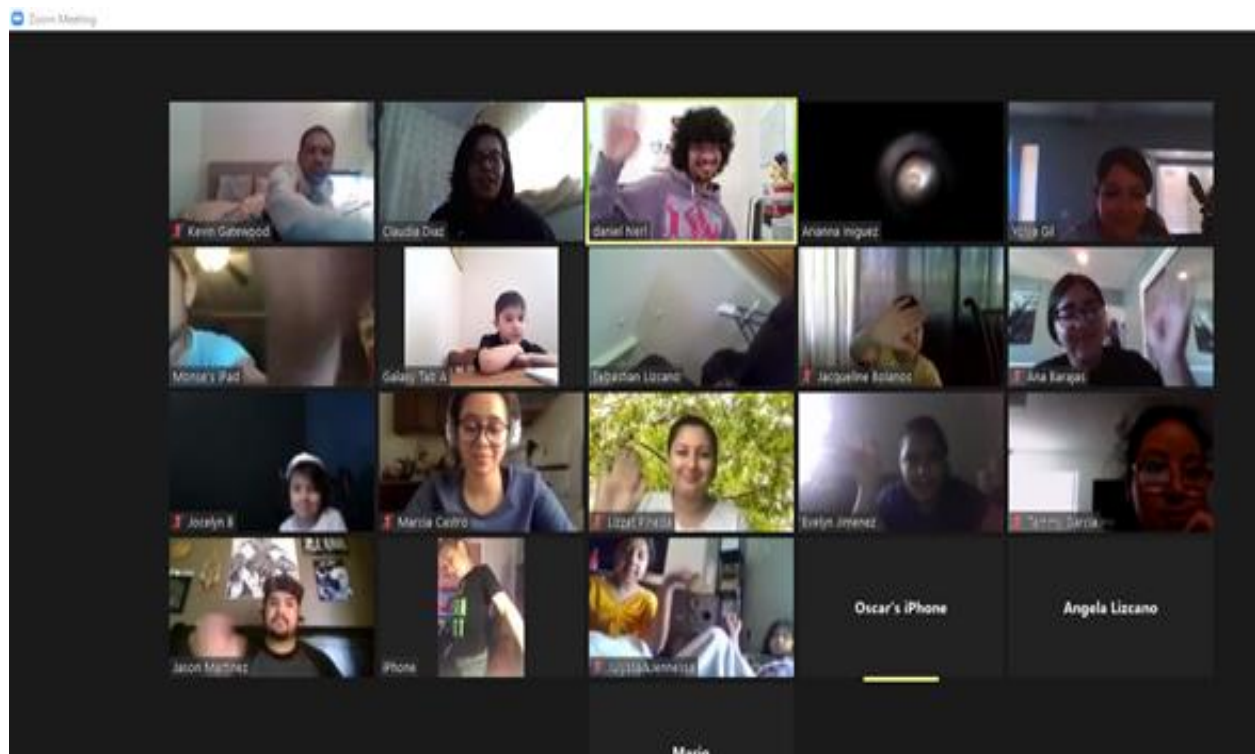
➢ 100% of the focus group participants in both focus groups reported that programs that help young people feel connected to their community, culture and self-- this could be through job training, sports, counseling, skills development – but it must connect them to their community, culture and self – this permeated throughout the discussions as a theme.

Focus Group Meeting via Zoom (virtual) to discuss program needs:

In November 2020, a virtual meeting was held with young adults at the Urban Conservation Corps regarding effective programs in communities of color. Below are the most significant findings:

➢ Programs that make young people thrive and grow

➢ Programs that honored culture and diversity and saw this as qualities in young people that can help build them up and not tear them down

➢ Programs that teach young people skills that they can use to become adults that can pursue education, careers or just being positive in their communities

Based on the Data Collected – below are the Program Purpose Areas Priorities:

➢ Positive Youth Development (with caring adults that teach skills development)

➢ After-School Programs (with caring adults that teach skills development)

➢ Mentoring, Counseling and Training Programs (with caring adult that teach skills development)

➢ Mental Health Services (with caring adults especially caring adults that look like the youth that are receiving services)

➢ Job Training (with caring adults that each skills development)