



May 28, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Holly Mitchell
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Preserving Funding for the 2019 Youth Reinvestment and Tribal Youth Diversion Grant Programs

Dear Governor Newsom and Chairs Mitchell and Ting,

We respectfully request the preservation of the \$15 million allocation for the Youth Reinvestment and Tribal Youth Diversion Grant programs to prevent the reversion of unspent funding back to the General Fund.

Last year, Governor Newsom ordered that the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) be moved to the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS) to "better [align] California's approach with its rehabilitative mission and core values—providing trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate

services in order to support a youth's return to their community, preventing them from entering the adult system, and further enhancing public safety."

The Governor's 2020 May Revise calls for the closure of DJJ facilities and realignment of rehabilitative services to county care. If done well, this could be an important step toward this vision for youth justice reform. However, there are elements of the proposal that will undermine this possibility. ***We believe maintaining the allocated 2019 funding for the Youth Reinvestment and Tribal Youth Diversion Grant programs will support the plan to realign DJJ.***

The proposed closure of the DJJ will lead to an additional need for community-based programming, as Probation Departments shift their focus to working with youth with higher-needs that previously would have gone to DJJ. We share the concerns of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC), who noted that the proposal outlined in the May Revise lacked collaboration, imposes a compressed timeline on counties, and would require a great deal of planning in order to be successful. The Youth Reinvestment and Tribal Youth Diversion Grant programs offer an opportunity for collaboration between law enforcement, local public health and social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribes, and provides a space where counties can begin planning for the proposed closure of DJJ.

The Youth Reinvestment and Tribal Youth Diversion Grant programs support trauma-informed, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant community diversion programs for youth as an alternative to arrest and detention of youth for low-level offenses. Youth in conflict with the law who are provided responses to their behavior that directly address their immaturity and underlying health and mental health needs see far better health and educational outcomes; they earn more money and contribute more tax revenue, and do not draw down as much public support, such as housing assistance and food stamps. This more appropriate approach can have the added benefit of reducing the disproportionate impact that the juvenile justice system has on youth of color, children with disabilities, girls, LGBTQ youth, and foster children.

Not only are these grant programs designed to help realize the State's vision for juvenile justice in this state, they are also cost effective. Placing youth in the juvenile system costs communities hundreds of millions of dollars for police services, court costs, probation, and youth detention facilities. Effective diversion with community-based services is a far more cost-effective approach. For every \$1 spent on diversion, there is a \$25 benefit to society. ***Diversion only costs \$4,500 a year per youth, while probation supervision costs more than \$20,000 per youth, and incarceration more than \$250,000.*** Research has shown that non-detention alternatives, particularly for low-level offenses, are more appropriate responses to curb troublesome behavior and avoid pushing youth deeper into the juvenile system. Most importantly, communities that have intentional diversion programs show improved outcomes for youth and public safety. Youth who go through pre-arrest diversion programs are 2.5 times less likely to reoffend than youth who are not diverted, while youth who go through post-arrest diversion are 1.5 times less likely to reoffend.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses exceptional economic challenges to the state of California, but we cannot

lose sight of the significant progress California has already made in the space of youth justice reform. We have a moral obligation to continue to uplift our youth, especially in these troubled times, and to continue to wisely invest in communities so that all youth can thrive. We urge the State to continue to take efforts to minimize the harmful impacts of COVID-19 on the health and economic well-being of our most vulnerable children. By preserving the 2019 funding for the Youth Reinvestment and Tribal Youth Diversion Grant Programs, we can prevent the entry of youth into the juvenile system and guarantee their continued success.

We respectfully ask for your continued commitment to these youth and these investments in their futures.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Boys and Men of Color
Alum Rock Counseling Center
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice (CAYCJ)
California Indian Legal Services
California Tribal Families Coalition
Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice
Centro Community Hispanic Association (Centro CHA Inc.)
Community Agency for Resources, Advocacy and Services (CARAS)
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
Community Works
ConXion to Community
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
End Child Poverty California/The GRACE Institute
Fathers & Families of San Joaquin
Fresno Barrios Unidos
Gender Justice LA
Huckleberry Youth Programs

Immigrant Legal Resource Center
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
Efrain Morales
National Center for Youth Law
National Compadres Network
Pacific Juvenile Defender Center
Prevention Institute
Public Health Advocates
Pueblo y Salud, Inc.
Resilience Orange County
Root & Rebound
Christina Elizabeth Ruiz
Safe Return Project
Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos
Self Awareness and Recovery
Sow A Seed Community Foundation
Starting Over, Inc
Urbanists Collective
W. Haywood Burns Institute
Youth Forward
Youth Justice Coalition
Youth Outreach And Learning Institute
Youth Will

CC:

Assembly Speaker Rendon

Senate President pro Tempore Atkins

Honorable Members, Assembly and Senate Budget Conference Committees

Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #5 on Public Safety

Honorable Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee #5 on Corrections, Public Safety and the Judiciary

Jennifer Kim, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #5

Christopher Francis, Consultant, Senate Budget Subcommittee #5

Daniel Seeman, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Jessica Devencenzi, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Amy Jarvis, Department of Finance

Katie Howard, Board of State and Community Corrections

Ginni Bella Navarre, Legislative Analyst's Office

Drew Soderborg, Legislative Analyst's Office

Luke Koushmaro, Legislative Analyst's Office