

**NCYL believes in the incredible power, agency, and wisdom of youth. Driven by their voices and experiences, we have worked for more than 50 years to fix what's broken in the education, health, immigration, foster care, and juvenile justice systems that affect – and too often misdirect – young lives.**

NCYL is unparalleled in its depth of expertise and long track record of success when it comes to the intersecting legal, policy and community systems that impact youth.

Through impact litigation, grassroots collaboration, policy advocacy and research, we pursue game-changing solutions that shift power to youth and the communities that raise them.

## YOUTH JUSTICE

NCYL's Youth Justice Team (YJT) is grounded in the lived experience of youth and families directly impacted by the justice system. Our team of attorneys, policy advocates, and community organizers come to this work from a variety of backgrounds that reflect the communities we serve: individuals who have been formerly incarcerated and system impacted, who are from low income backgrounds, and who represent diversity in race, ethnicity, and national origin.

We work at the state and local levels to create an equitable justice system that values community and is aligned with positive youth development principles. We employ grassroots organizing, leadership development, and policy reform strategies that:

- Eliminate the prosecution and incarceration of minors in the adult criminal justice system.
- Reduce reliance on youth incarceration and juvenile justice system involvement.
- End the overrepresentation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system.
- Develop and resource healthy alternatives to punitive practices.
- Build community capacity to advocate for and deliver culturally and developmentally appropriate services to support positive youth development and community health.



## OUR IMPACT: SYSTEMS REFORM IN CALIFORNIA, COLORADO & NEVADA

Since launching in 2013, YJT has been directly responsible for 25 landmark state bills and the launch of collective impact campaigns that have helped reform juvenile justice systems. These include:

- **Eliminating the prosecution and incarceration of youth** by drastically limiting the power of California and Nevada courts to prosecute youth younger than 18 as adults; abolishing life without parole sentences for youth younger than 18 in California; and expanding parole opportunities for youth serving lengthy prison sentences in California.
- **Reducing reliance on the juvenile justice system** by establishing a minimum age of juvenile jurisdiction at age 12 in California; establishing a state level task force to develop recommendations to set a minimum age of juvenile jurisdiction at age 13 in Colorado; expanding pre-arrest diversion programs for youth in the child welfare system, Native American youth, and youth of color in under-served communities in California; and Supporting Santa Clara County's Juvenile Justice Gender Responsive Task Force to address the needs of justice-involved girls, ending the incarceration of girls in the county.
- **Developing and resourcing alternatives to system involvement for youth** by legislating \$57.5 million in state funds for pre-arrest diversion programs and community-based

services across California; and securing \$6 million in state funds for Santa Clara County, California, to serve girls, gang-impacted youth, and youth in rural communities through health-centered approaches.

- **Building community capacity to advocate and serve youth** by establishing a collective impact campaign in Colorado, organizing more than 40 community organizations and public agencies to advance youth justice reforms and increase investments in youth and communities of color; and by partnering with youth justice advocacy organizations in California’s Central Valley, Inland Empire, and South Bay Area to develop local advocacy campaigns.

## MULTI-TIERED APPROACH

Our approach to reform integrates:

- research and data analysis;
- strategic communications;
- budget and legislative advocacy;
- policy development and implementation;
- technical assistance to youth service providers and systems administrators;
- youth leadership development; and
- statewide coalition and community capacity-building.

Our highly collaborative model ensures the investment of key system and community stakeholders – including youth and families impacted by the system – and strengthens existing local and state reform efforts.



## PARTNER WITH US

To learn more about our work, visit [youthlaw.org](http://youthlaw.org) or contact:

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLES



### POWER BUILDING IN DIRECTLY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

Empower low-income communities of color to serve as key allies, decision makers, advocates, and advisors in identifying and advancing campaigns and needed reforms.



### POLICY-TO-PRACTICE CYCLE

Actively advance, support, and monitor state and local policy implementation, while gaining critical insights into how to strengthen and reinforce system change through subsequent legislative cycles.



### BALANCING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE ADVOCACY

Serve as the bridge connecting youth and families with lived experience in the system to local and state leaders and system administrators to create more effective and relevant policies, practices, and investments.