

## **Fostering Success:** **Building community health-based response for supporting vulnerable youth**

### **Summary**

Too many foster youth were arrested by law enforcement officers for low-level offenses in 2017. In the first half of 2017 alone, some group homes and shelters called law enforcement as many as 466, 631, and 898 times, putting California foster care facilities on track to exceed the number of calls to law enforcement in 2016.<sup>i</sup> A disproportionate number were children of color, girls, youth who identify as LGBTQ+<sup>ii</sup>, and youth with disabilities. Youth in the foster care system, particularly those placed in congregate care, are especially vulnerable to being referred to law enforcement while in placement.<sup>iii</sup> Data showing congregate care facilities too often misuse law enforcement to respond to behavior that would otherwise be handled without law enforcement intervention are part of the research base underpinning California's Continuum of Care Reform (CCR). This proposal would augment funds for a community-based infrastructure to divert foster youth away from the juvenile system and secure confinement, provide training services to staff and law enforcement working with foster youth, and deliver trauma-informed, developmentally-appropriate programs in their communities proven effective at promoting positive development, community health, permanency and public safety.

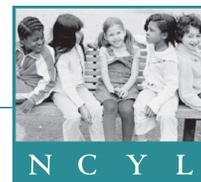
### **What This Investment Will Do**

An investment of \$9 million will provide critical support to California's nascent community-based foster youth development system. This system is both socially and fiscally responsible because it treats children accused of low-level offenses appropriately for their age, in community settings, and with an emphasis on health and wellbeing. Investments would fund nonprofits and community organizations to: (1) provide trauma-informed, culturally-relevant training to law enforcement and professionals interacting with vulnerable youth populations; (2) collaborate with public agencies to expand local youth diversion programs and deliver developmentally-appropriate services in under-served communities statewide, including expanding the capacity to serve youth in families rather than in congregate care; and (3) provide permanency services for older youth in congregate care to ensure California's foster youth transition successfully into adulthood.

- Training to professionals interacting with youth should include adolescent development principles, de-escalation techniques, culturally relevant and trauma-informed interventions, and evidence-based interventions;
- Community-based services for children and youth in out-of-home care should include, education (academic and vocational); mentoring (authentic, lived experience); extracurricular activities and supports such as art, music, civic engagement, and sports; behavioral health (Aggression Reduction Therapy and Multi Systemic Therapy); and mental health (mindfulness and self-awareness) services.
- Evidence-based permanency services to keep older youth in family-like settings should include mental health services, educational and vocation training, family support, and services tailored to populations with unique needs such as LGBTQ+ youth and youth with disabilities.

Diverting arrests of foster youth from group homes and shelters from juvenile system referrals, detention, and secure confinement. (See Appendix A, Tables A and B)

An allocation of \$9 million to communities with the facilities making the most calls to law enforcement in the state (See Appendix B) or with significant numbers of foster youth in group care crossing over to the juvenile system to (1) provide training to local law enforcement, group home, and shelter staff; (2) provide services for children placed in group homes and shelters delivered by public and private agencies, and non-law enforcement community-based organizations focused on promoting health and youth development. Additionally, the provision of specific community-based supports and services can reduce the use of group home and shelter care for this population and can allow youth to live in the least restrictive environment. The program will be overseen by the California Department of Social Services.



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#### **Problem**

Children in the foster care system, particularly those placed in group care, are especially vulnerable to crossing over to the delinquency system. Foster youth placed in group care should receive the highest level of care and supervision designed to return them immediately to a family and to their community. This level of care is not met when foster care facilities rely on law enforcement to intervene for behavior management purposes. Law enforcement intervention in congregate care is too frequently a result of facility inability to provide appropriate care and supervision, or a facility culture that relies on the law enforcement as a punishment or consequence for normal teenage behavior or behaviors related to trauma.

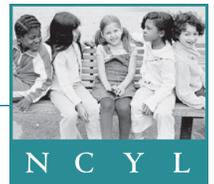
Many California group homes and shelters call law enforcement on foster youth in their care at astoundingly high rates. More than 3,000 non-mandated calls were made to law enforcement in the first half of 2017 alone. In 2016, of the 6,217 non-mandated calls statewide for youth behavior, 60% were for behavioral health emergencies, property damage, substance abuse, and theft. The calls resulted in 435 youth being cited, 527 youth being detained or arrested, and another 319 youth being booked into juvenile hall. In the 2016 annual report on dual status youth in Los Angeles, almost 40% of foster youth who crossed over into the juvenile system were residing in group care at the time of the delinquency referral.<sup>iv</sup> In the first half of 2017, 74 California facilities made over 50 calls to law enforcement, and 40 facilities made more than 100 calls to law enforcement.<sup>v</sup>

Many congregate care facilities rely on law enforcement as the primary behavior management response to minor incidents causing no injuries. For example, foster youth have been arrested for a food fight with cake icing and charged with inciting a riot. In another instance, a child who poked a caregiver with a candy cane was arrested for assault with a deadly weapon. In yet another case, a child was charged with battery and booked into juvenile hall after hitting someone with a package of hot dog buns. (See “Dubious Arrests, Damaged Lives” San Francisco Chronicle, May 18, 2017.) The facilities that disproportionately call law enforcement incorporate calling the police into their systems for discipline by using law enforcement as a scare tactic, juvenile hall as a time out, and the juvenile system as punishment. In one Orange County shelter, armed sheriff’s officers are stationed on-site at all hours.<sup>vi</sup> In San Joaquin County (SJC), located in California’s Central Valley, Mary Graham Children’s Shelter called police over 5,000 times in 2015 and 2016, accounting for half of shelter arrests, citations, and juvenile hall bookings statewide. On average, Mary Graham sent children to juvenile hall twice a week. These children were disproportionately Black and girls.

Relying on police to deal with foster youth behavior pushes children in care of the State into the juvenile system at the time when they most need trauma-informed, culturally-relevant care, and the State to act as a parent would to keep their child out of detention. Similarly, probation supervised foster youth residing in group homes are pushed into detention and other secure placements. Childhood trauma and juvenile detention both dramatically increase a child’s risk of adult incarceration. Foster children have experienced trauma and locking them up further harms them, increasing their chances of later juvenile system involvement. Additionally, foster youth in the juvenile system lose valuable child welfare services. Social workers, foster homes, and services for parents that could help families reunite, like drug treatment, domestic violence education, and parenting classes, are not available to foster youth in the juvenile system.

#### **Solution**

Fund community-based diversion programs and provide training to group care staff in the 70+ facilities that make excessive calls to law enforcement or counties with significant numbers of foster youth who crossover to the juvenile system while residing in group care, and provide training to local law enforcement in those areas. An investment of \$9 million dollars in California’s most vulnerable youth is both socially and fiscally responsible. Cost savings could be experienced through reductions in law enforcement responses to youth



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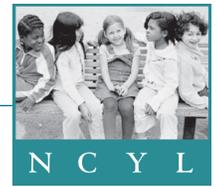
for low-level offenses, court caseloads and processing, days youth spend in detention, fewer school and placement disruptions, and facility staff turnover due to high levels of stress and conflict related to caring for traumatized youth. Furthermore, cost savings could be experienced through improvements in youths' health and wellbeing, school and community stability, educational attainment, and employment opportunities.

#### **Contact**

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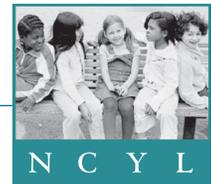
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**Appendix A: Calculations**

**Investment: \$9 million in State General Funds to reduce reliance on law enforcement for children in foster care.**

<b>Table A. Alternatives to Law Enforcement Calls for Foster Youth</b>	
Facilities in 16 counties made more than 50 calls to law enforcement Jan – Jun 2017 <sup>vii</sup>	
# Foster Care Facilities on track to make <b>over 100 law enforcement calls in 2017</b> <sup>viii</sup>	<b>74</b> <sup>ix</sup>
Costs to Train 300 staff <sup>x</sup>	\$300k <sup>xi</sup>
Estimated cost to train 74 facilities and LE	\$2.96m <sup>xii</sup>
After 75% federal match of funds for training	\$740k <sup>xiii</sup>
Cost for evaluation	\$111k <sup>xiv</sup>
<b>Total Annual State General Funds</b>	<b>\$851k</b> <sup>xv</sup>

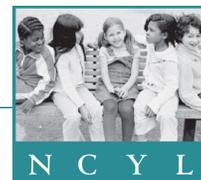
<b>Table B. Services for Foster Youth</b>	
# foster youth arrests January – June 2017	516 <sup>xvi</sup>
# foster youth arrests projected for 2017	1032
# youth in out of home placement probation	1,961 <sup>xvii</sup>
<b>Total youth</b>	<b>2,993</b>
Cost to serve 120 youth/year <sup>xviii</sup>	\$300k <sup>xix</sup>
Estimated Cost to serve ~3,000 youth in care	\$7.5m
Program Evaluation Estimate	\$562.5k <sup>xx</sup>
<b>Total Annual State General Funds for (3,000 youth)</b>	<b>\$8.0625m</b>



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**Appendix B: Foster Care Facilities with 50+ Calls to Law Enforcement January-June 2017**

Facilities with 50+ calls to law enforcement <b>Facilities bolded had 200+ calls to law enforcement</b> Facilities underlined had 100+ calls to law enforcement in 2016	County
<u>PRYOR CENTER</u>	Contra Costa
3 R'S GROUP HOME, INC. <u>MANUCH, INC.</u>	Fresno
<u>A. MIRIAM JAMISON CHILDREN'S CENTER</u> JAMES PENNY HOUSE INC. MENDED FENCES 1 SHERMAN GROUP HOME, SUNKIST	Kern
<u>DAVID AND MARGARET YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES</u> DREAM CATCHER #4 FIVE ACRES <u>HATHAWAY-SYCAMORES CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES</u> <b>HILLSIDES</b> HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK – INDEX HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK – PARTHENIA <u>LE ROY BOYS' HOME</u> <b>MARYVALE</b> <u>MCKINLEY CHILDREN'S CENTER, INC.</u> <u>OPTIMIST BOYS HOME &amp; RANCH</u> SHOUP GROUP HOME <u>ST. ANNE'S MATERNITY HOME</u> <u>VICTORY GROUP HOME</u> WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER	Los Angeles
<u>HARMONY HOUSE</u>	Merced
<u>CRITTENTON SVCS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</u> <u>NEW ALTERNATIVE, INC.</u> <u>ORANGEWOOD CHILDREN AND FAMILY CENTER</u>	Orange
ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN GROUP HOME COMMUNITY ACCESS NETWORK, STEPS 2 FERREE'S GROUP HOME #3 FERREE'S GROUP HOME, INC. FERREE'S GROUP HOME, INC. #5 GUIDING LIGHT HOME FOR BOYS INC. <u>OAK GROVE INSTITUTE</u> <u>PLAN-IT LIFE</u> <u>PLAN-IT LIFE TEMECULA HOUSE</u> <u>PLAN-IT LIFE, INC</u> RANCHO DAMACITAS/MESA RD. <u>SEARCH LIGHT GROUP HOME</u> <u>SOJOURNERS HAVEN GROUP HOME II</u>	Riverside
<u>ATKINSON GROUP HOME IV</u> <u>ATKINSON GROUP HOME V</u> <b>CHILDREN'S RECEIVING HOME</b> PARADISE OAKS YOUTH SERVICES – ANTELOPE PARADISE OAKS YOUTH SERVICES – MARIPOSA <u>SACRAMENTO CHILDREN'S HOME #1</u>	Sacramento
<u>BOYS REPUBLIC</u> ETTIE LEE HOME – FONTANA HOME	San Bernardino
<u>A.B &amp; JESSIE POLINSKY CHILDREN'S CENTER</u> <u>CASA DE AMPARO</u> NEW ALTERNATIVES, INC. VARSITY TEAM, INCORPORATED #1	San Diego

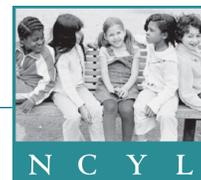


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HARRISON HOME <b>MARY GRAHAM CHILDREN'S SHELTER</b>	San Joaquin
YOUR HOUSE SOUTH	San Mateo
BILL WILSON CENTER <u>CALIFORNIA ANCHOR RESIDENTS #1</u> <u>CORBETT GROUP HOME #3</u> EE'S - HILLSDALE <b>EE'S – KOOSER</b> ODD-FELLOW REBEKAH CHILDREN'S HOME OF CALIFORNIA <b>STAR HOUSE I</b> <b>STAR HOUSE III</b> TAYLER GROUP HOME UNITY CARE #7 UNITY CARE #8	Santa Clara
<b>VALLEY OF THE MOON CHILDREN'S HOME</b>	Sonoma
CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES-DUKE COURT CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES-ARBOR HOUSE CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES-BERKELEY COTTAGE <u>EXCELL-YOUNGSTOWN</u>	Stanislaus
<u>CASA PACIFICA</u> <u>CASA PACIFICA</u> <u>FOR THE FUTURE, INC.</u> GUIDING OUR YOUTH KIDS TO KIDS – FAITH HOUSE	Ventura

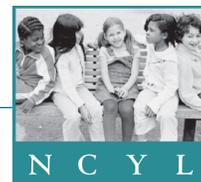
**Appendix C: Total number of calls to law enforcement by facility, January-June 2017**

Facility Name	County	Total Law Enforcement Contacts
3 R's Group Home, Inc.	Fresno	65
A. Miriam Jamison Children's Center	Kern	78
A.B & Jessie Polinsky Children's Center	San Diego	197
All Of God's Children Group Home	Riverside	64
Atkinson Group Home IV	Sacramento	66
Atkinson Group Home V	Sacramento	81
Bill Wilson Center	Santa Clara	58
Boy's Republic	San Bernardino	135
California Anchor Residents #1	Santa Clara	142
Casa de Amparo	San Diego	170
Casa Pacifica	Ventura	80
Casa Pacifica	Ventura	74
Children's Receiving Home	Sacramento	898
Community Access Network, Steps 2	Riverside	69
Corbett Group Homes, Inc. #1	Santa Clara	57
Creative Alternatives-Duke Court	Stanislaus	60
Creative Alternatives-Arbor House	Stanislaus	115



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Creative Alternatives-Berkeley Cottage	Stanislaus	67
Crittenton Svcs for Children and Families	Orange	137
David And Margaret Youth And Family Services	Los Angeles	170
Dream Catcher #4	Los Angeles	59
EE's – Hillsdale	Santa Clara	181
EE's – Kooser	Santa Clara	354
Ettie Lee Home – Fontana Home	San Bernardino	58
Excell – Youngstown	Stanislaus	129
Ferree's Group Home #3	Riverside	64
Ferree's Group Home, Inc.	Riverside	52
Ferree's Group Home, Inc. #5	Riverside	62
Five Acres	Los Angeles	102
For the Future, Inc.	Ventura	182
Guiding Light Home for Boys Inc.	Riverside	62
Guiding Our Youth	Ventura	91
Harmony House	Merced	65
Harrison Home	San Joaquin	58
Hathaway – Sycamores Child and Family Services	Los Angeles	96
Hillsides	Los Angeles	259
Human Services Network – Index	Los Angeles	52
Human Services Network – Parthenia	Los Angeles	68
James Penny House Inc.	Kern	118
Kids to Kids – Faith House	Ventura	50
Le Roy Boys' Home	Los Angeles	153
Manuch, Inc.	Fresno	90
Mary Graham Children's Shelter	San Joaquin	466
Maryvale	Los Angeles	631
McKinley Children's Center, Inc.	Los Angeles	53
Mended Fences 1	Kern	60
New Alternative, Inc.	Orange	74
New Alternatives, Inc.	San Diego	100
Oak Grove Institute	Riverside	134
Odd-Fellow Rebekah Children's Home of California	Santa Clara	52
Optimist Boys Home & Ranch	Los Angeles	80
Orangewood Children and Family Center	Orange	182
Paradise Oaks Youth Services – Antelope	Sacramento	97
Paradise Oaks Youth Services – Mariposa	Sacramento	83
Plan It Life	Riverside	51
Plan-It Life Temecula House	Riverside	60
Pryor Center	Contra Costa	62
Rancho Damacitas/Mesa Rd.	Riverside	135



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Sacramento Children's Home #1	Sacramento	161
Search Light Group Home	Riverside	107
Sherman Group Home, Sunkist	Kern	64
Shoup Group Home	Los Angeles	81
Sojourners Haven Group Home II	Riverside	70
St. Anne's Maternity Home	Los Angeles	187
Star House I	Santa Clara	297
Star House III	Santa Clara	284
Taylor Group Home	Santa Clara	57
Unity Care #7	Santa Clara	136
Unity Care #8	Santa Clara	106
Valley of the Moon Children's Home	Sonoma	282
Varsity Team, Incorporated #1	San Diego	75
Victory Group Home	Los Angeles	52
Wallis Annenberg Center	Los Angeles	89
Your House South	San Mateo	60

<sup>i</sup> **Assembly Bill 388 Report of Law Enforcement Contacts with Children's Facilities**, Jan. – Jun. 2017. Group home incident data by facility tab, Retrieved from: <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch/DownloadABLEData>

<sup>ii</sup> De Sá, K, Palomino, J, & Dizikes, C. (2017). Dubious Arrests, Damaged Lives. *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from: <http://projects.sfchronicle.com/2017/fostering-failure/>

<sup>iii</sup> Data showing congregate care facilities too often misuse law enforcement to respond to behavior that would otherwise be handled without law enforcement intervention are part of the research base underpinning for California's Continuum of Care Reform (CCR). CCR is based on overwhelming national evidence that for vulnerable youth, congregate care is not only less effective at achieving safety, permanency, and wellbeing outcomes than other less restrictive settings, but is also more costly in providing that care. Instead, the best outcomes result when supports, including intensive mental health and positive youth development activities, are delivered by community-based organizations to youth living in family settings.

<sup>iv</sup> A Summary of Findings for the Los Angeles County 241.1 Multidisciplinary Team, Report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Denise Herz (September 2016) , p. 10  
<http://juvenilejusticeresearch.com/sites/default/files/2016-12/2016%20Enhancing%20Services%20to%20Strengthen%20241.1%20Project%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> **Assembly Bill 388 Report of Law Enforcement Contacts with Children's Facilities**, Jan. – Jun. 2017. Group home incident data by facility tab, Retrieved from: <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch/DownloadABLEData>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://projects.sfchronicle.com/2017/fostering-failure/>.

<sup>vii</sup> According to the data cited above, the 51 homes in Appendix E, located in 16 counties, made over 100 calls to law enforcement in 2016. Homes bolded made over 500 calls to law enforcement. Some of the homes, while they have unique licenses, are part of the same parent organization (~43 organizations).

<sup>viii</sup> Number of Group Homes and Shelters with over 500 total law enforcement contacts (excessively above average for the 1061 facilities in the state) = 5

<sup>ix</sup> **Assembly Bill 388 Report of Law Enforcement Contacts with Children's Facilities**, Jan. – Jun. 2017. Group home incident data by facility tab, Retrieved from: <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch/DownloadABLEData>

<sup>x</sup> Training for staff involves experiential based learning of the practice of council or restorative justice strategies as alternatives to calling law enforcement. Staff will learn the pedagogy, background and use of council for restorative justice purposes. Staff will learn ways to use these approaches in their work with children and youth for the purposes of community building, self-care, rehabilitation, stress management, and de-escalation. Staff will participate in training such that they will be able train their colleagues upon conclusion of the program.

<sup>xi</sup> Center for Council, a project of Community Partners, CalVIP Grant Submission Budget Table, page 11. PDF received by email from Jared Seide of Center for Council on February 17, 2018.



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<sup>xii</sup> The estimated cost of training 15 organizations (300 staff) is \$600,000. Multiplying that estimate by 4.9333 would estimate the cost for training the staff of 74 organizations with over 50 calls to law enforcement in the first half of 2017, which includes the 8 facilities with over 250 calls to law enforcement January - June 2017.

<sup>xiii</sup> The state can draw down a federal match of funds to provide training related to child welfare involvement.  $\$2.96m \times .25 = \$740K$

<sup>xiv</sup> The estimated cost for evaluation of the training program for Center for Council was \$22,500 for 15 organizations. Multiplying that cost by 4.9333 provides the estimate for evaluation of the training program for 74 organizations, approximately \$111,000. Outcome measures include 1) number and percent of youth referred to the program, 2) general and violent recidivism rate, 3) employment obtainment rate (where appropriate by age), 4) employment retention rate, 5) school attendance rate, 6) school completion rate (where appropriate by age), 7) housing stability, 8) reduction in anger, aggression, and problematic thinking patterns, 9) improvements in empathy, resilience, and communication

<sup>xv</sup> State General Fund portion of training costs + cost of evaluation

<sup>xvi</sup> **Assembly Bill 388 Report of Law Enforcement Contacts with Children's Facilities**, Jan. – Jun. 2017. Group home incident data by facility tab, Retrieved from: <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch/DownloadABLEData>

<sup>xvii</sup> Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Chambers, J., Min, S., Randhawa, P., Hammond, I., Sandoval, A., Yee, H., Benton, C., White, J., Lee, H., & Morris, N. (2019). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved 2/20/2019, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare)

<sup>xviii</sup> Center for Council, a project of Community Partners, CalVIP Grant Submission Budget Table, page 6. PDF received by email from Jared Seide of Center for Council on February 17, 2018. C4C's weekly circles have been evaluated by the University of California and RAND corporation for effectiveness. Circles focus on four factors anti-social friends, anti-social attitudes, impulsive behavior, and lack of empathy.

<sup>xix</sup> To provide ~ 3,000 youth with restorative, rehabilitative council services above and beyond school and mental health-based interventions we take  $3,000 \text{ (youth in need)} / 120 \text{ (youth served by one program in a year)} = 25$  (Community programs needed to serve the population). We then multiple the estimated annual cost of running a community-based program of \$300,000 \* 25 = \$7,500,000 total. This is a very high estimate that assumes every youth in this population is not in a county that already has a diversion and rehabilitation program and would need a community-based intervention. Additionally, research shows many behaviors can be resolved without formal interventions, rather through existing resources from home, school, and community service providers.

<sup>xx</sup> Estimated from cost of program evaluation for 25 programs, based upon cost of evaluating a program serving 120 youth at \$22,500. ( $\$22,500 \times 25 = \$562,500$ )