

YOUTH DIVERSION & DEVELOPMENT IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY:


Advancing Evidence-Informed Policy to Improve Youth Outcomes

BEYOND THE BENCH
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WHAT IS YOUTH DIVERSION?

Youth diversion is broadly defined as an intervention that redirects system responses in order to prevent a young person's involvement or further involvement in the justice system.



The diagram illustrates the justice system process as a horizontal flow from left to right, with four main stages and several diversion points:

- Prevention & Risk Reduction:** Youth receives appropriate services in their home, school, or community with no justice system involvement.
- Opportunity to Counsel, Refer, Release:** Youth comes into contact with law enforcement.
- Opportunities for Pre-Adjudication Diversion:** This stage includes Pre-Arrest, Post-Arrest, Probation, and District Attorney. A yellow arrow points from this stage back to the "Opportunity to Counsel, Refer, Release" stage, indicating a diversion point.
- Post-Adjudication Decision-Making & Reentry:** Youth is processed in court, halls, and/or camps.

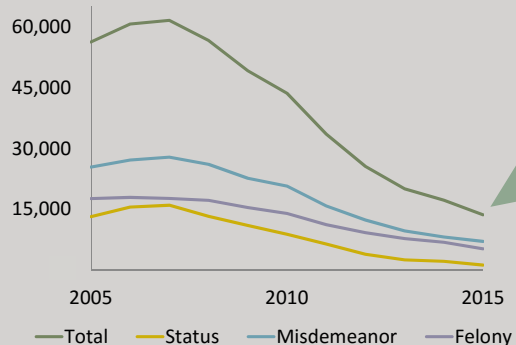
Icons representing each stage include a school, a police car, a police station, a court building, and a jail/camp building. A starburst icon labeled "Event/Trigger for Justice system involvement" is positioned between the school and the police car.

WHY DOES DIVERSION MATTER?

- Justice system involvement itself operates as a negative health exposure.
- The odds of high school dropout are nearly doubled by first-time arrest and nearly quadrupled by first-time court appearance.
- EXAMPLE: Youth in pre-arrest diversion programs have been shown to be 2.5 times less likely to re-offend than similar youth who were not diverted; youth in post-arrest were 1.5 times less likely to re-offend.

WHAT IMPACT COULD WE HAVE?

Total Number of Youth Arrests in Los Angeles County by Offense Level, 2005-2015



13,655

total youth arrests or citations reported in 2015:

91%

14 years or older,

75%

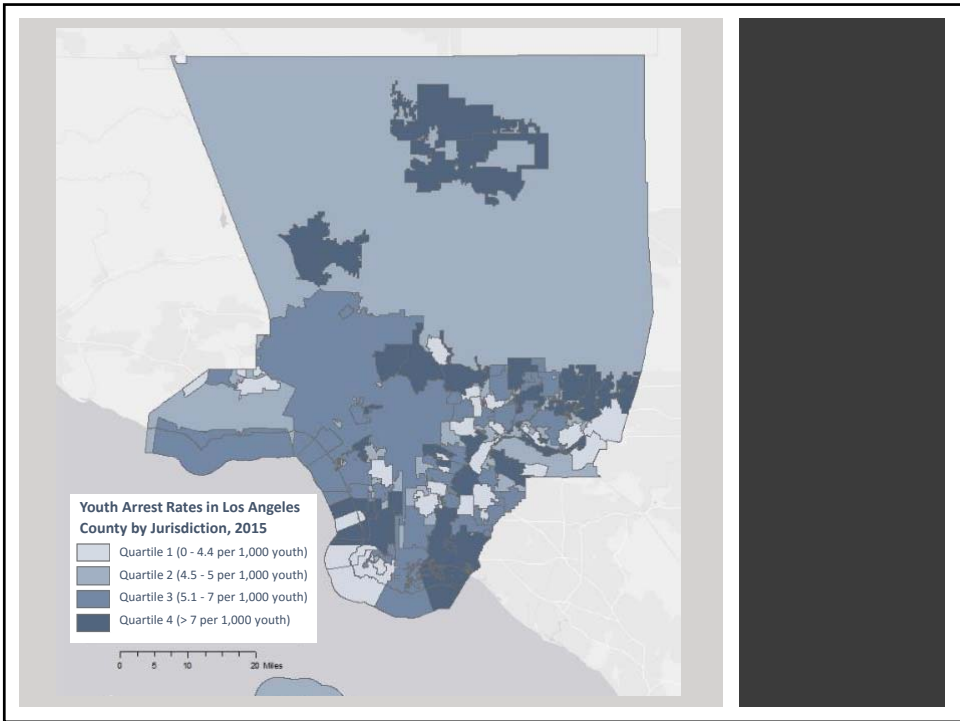
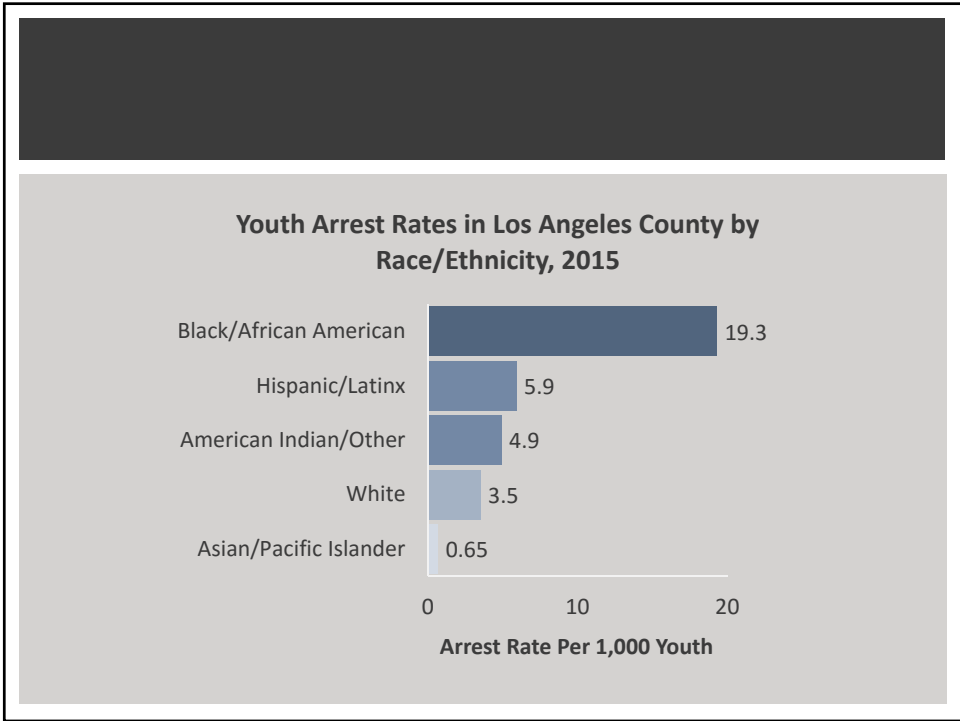
Male,

62%

Hispanic/Latinx,

81%

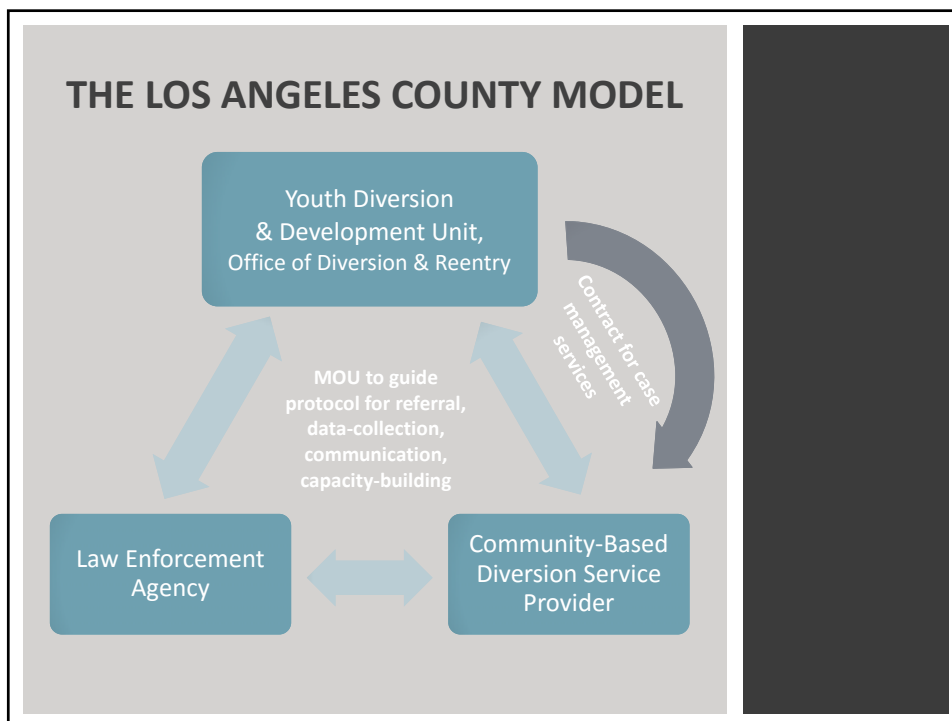
Arrested for status, misdemeanor, or non-707(b) felony offenses that would be legally eligible for arrest diversion.



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- Strong history of community advocacy and youth organizing
- Multi-sector collaboration supported by juvenile court leadership
- Movement towards data-driven decision-making and a health approach to justice reform
- Building on momentum from recent successes
- Action at the policy-level

- **JANUARY 2017:** the Board of Supervisors established a multi-sector Youth Diversion Subcommittee tasked with developing a plan to advance effective programming countywide.
- **NOVEMBER 2017:** the Board unanimously approved the Subcommittee's implementation and funding plan, establishing a new Youth Diversion & Development Unit within the Health Agency's Office of Diversion & Reentry.



WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

1. Increase and improve collaboration between law enforcement, community-based organizations, and other youth-serving agencies
2. Reduce the overall number of youth arrests, referrals to probation, and petitions filed
3. Reduce racial and ethnic disparities in youth arrests, referrals to probation, and petitions filed
4. Increase the number of youth who are connected to services that address their underlying needs without acquiring an arrest or criminal record
5. Improve health, academic, economic, and other outcomes for youth