SOUTH LOS ANGELES YOUTH OFFENDER RE-ENTRY PROGRAM
A GRANT PROPOSAL

THERE'S NO EXCUSE
for Keeping Children in Adult Jails & Prisons

It isn't SAFE
Youth are 36x more likely to commit suicide

It isn't FAIR
Youth of color are disproportionately impacted

It isn't RIGHT
The federal law requires that children be protected while in custody

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INTRODUCTION

Arrest Rates

- In the City of Los Angeles in 2012, the incarceration rate for male youth between the ages of 10-17 was 346.4 for every 1,000 male juvenile arrest (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2013).
- In the County of Los Angeles in Service Planning Area (SPA) 6, South Los Angeles, youth were more likely to be arrested than youth who lived in other geographical areas (Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, 2012).

Release Rates

- Annually in the United States the estimated number of youth who are released from correctional placements ranges from 100,000 to 200,000 (Abrams & Snyder, 2010).
- Those who are being released to SPA 6, the South Los Angeles community, are primarily of Latino (68%) and African American (29%) decent (Los Angeles County of Public Health, 2013).

Recidivism Rates

- According to Nellis and Wayman (2009) the rates of recidivism among youth who are released from correctional facilities ranges from 50% to 70%.
- The California Department of Juvenile Justice estimated that 70% of youth who are paroled from state institutions are rearrested within two years (Abrams & Snyder, 2010).
- In longer-term recidivism outcomes it has been shown that 75%-90% of incarcerated juveniles are later arrested as adults (Abrams, Terry, & Frankie, 2011).
- When adequate services are not available and there is a lack of support for proper community reentry, this greatly increases the risks for re-arrest and incarceration (James et al., 2013).

Incarceration Cost

- The average cost to incarcerate a youth in a correctional facility was estimated to be $241 dollars per day, or a cost of $80,000 per year (American Correctional Association, 2008).
In the field of social work, education and experience is used to provide services to children, youth, and families. Social workers advocate and fight for just policies for the most vulnerable and underprivileged which include youth offenders. As part of their mission, social workers seek the protection, safety, and health of children and youth. Therefore, as it relates to helping youth offenders, social workers act and follow the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (NASW, 2008) in which there is a strong commitment to service, social justice, and dignity and worth of a person. When committing to these ethics of service and in helping youth offenders, social workers commit to work for them and with them to make a change and improvement in their lives. Therefore, looking at the factors that bring youth to become juvenile offenders and what can lead them to reoffend, can help in the development and creation of a reentry program.
Juvenile offending is a problem that is present in different communities among youth from diverse ethnicities.

However, there are certain factors associated with high number of juvenile offences in communities of color.

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (2007) stated that there is an over representation of minority youth involved with the juvenile justice system.

Nationwide youth of color were 3.1 times the rate of white youth to be overrepresented in the population of detained youth and they made the majority of youth held in both public and private facilities (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2007).

Youth of color are more likely than White youth to have more contact with the juvenile justice system and they remain longer in the system (The Sentencing Project, 2010).

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of juvenile justice (2012) report that Hispanic juveniles accounted for the majority of their cases, followed by African American, and lastly Whites.

As juvenile offenders are being released back to the city of South Los Angeles, which contains a higher concentration of minorities, they reintegrate into a community that faces few job opportunities and high unemployment rates, poverty, low education attainment, and have limited resources to address these issues (Ong et al., 2008).
The target population identified for the proposed program includes male youth offenders between the ages of 14-18 years, who are being released from a Los Angeles County Juvenile Hall Facility and will be reintegrating into the community of South Los Angeles.

It is in the City of Los Angeles that in 2003, the number of juveniles arrested accounted for about one quarter of the statewide total of 223,320 (McCroskey, 2006).

Out of the total arrest, males outnumber females by three to one with youth 15-17 years old accounting for more than three quarters of all youth in the system (McCroskey, 2006).

In SPA 4 and 6, youth were more likely to be arrested and detained in juvenile halls than youth who lived in other geographic areas (McCroskey, 2006).

In SPA 6 youth were 1.6 times more likely to be arrested than youth in other service planning areas (McCroskey, 2006).

An extensive Internet search was conducted by the grant writer to identify potential grant funding sources.

- When conducting an open internet search, Yahoo.com, Google.com, and Bing.com were used as search engines.
- For funding availability at the state and federal level, the following government internet sites were accessed: grants.gov, ojjdp.gov, and ojp.gov.
- The following terms were used as keywords to search for the most appropriate and precise potential funding sources: juvenile offender reentry, juvenile justice crime prevention, youth offender reentry, grants youth crime prevention, youth rehabilitation, youth delinquency prevention, grants for low income disadvantage youth, youth reentry Los Angeles, grants for at risk youth, juvenile offender intervention, youth prevention program, and youth reduce delinquency.
- The California State University, Long Beach library resources and links, as well as the social work beach board links and resources, were also utilized.
- The grant writer also obtained additional information of possible grant funding sources by visiting the Southern California Library Foundation Center.
- Overall, the grant writer found the free Foundation Directory Online available at https://fdo.foundationcenter.org/, to be one of the most helpful resources to search for the most appropriate and potential funder.
The California Wellness Foundation (Cal Wellness) was chosen as the potential funding source. The foundation supports strategies related to gang prevention and intervention, juvenile and adult criminal justice, and re-entry programs.

The target population identified in their Supporting Violence Prevention Program area includes: low income youth who are in or have been in the juvenile justice system; are between the ages of 14 to 26; current or former foster youth; currently homeless or runaway youth; formerly incarcerated adults; military veterans’ and women and girls.

In order to conduct a needs assessment, the grant writer utilized different methods of data collection. An extensive review of available literature was conducted to determine reentry needs of youth offenders who reintegrate back into the community of South Los Angeles.

Databases that were used include: The Los Angeles County Health Survey, Kids Count Data Book, Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, Los Angeles County Probation, U.S. Census Bureau, and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)- Division of Juvenile.

The South Los Angeles youth reentry program will request $349,982 for year one, $341,919 for year two, totaling $691,901 for two years. The total budget will be $904,969 which includes the In Kind total added to the total project cost but not to the total requested amount.

Funding will cover personnel/ staff cost and direct operation cost (office supplies and materials; office furniture; printing, copying, telephone, fax, postage & shipping; travel and millage; educational and program activity materials; transportation for participation; cellular phones; and incentives).
The purpose is to develop a program to provide relevant reentry services for male youth offenders ages 14 to 18 in South Los Angeles, that will support and help them to reintegrate into their community once released from a Los Angeles County juvenile hall facility. By providing appropriate services and necessary resources, the overall goal is to reduce youth criminal behavior, reduce recidivism rates, and promote positive youth development so that these young people can become productive members of society. The program that is being proposed, seeks to achieve its goals by providing youth with multiple services once they are released from a juvenile detention center. Such services will include: intensive strength based case management, both individual and family counseling, job skills training and employment assistance, referrals to education services/academic support, mentoring, substance use treatment services, health care services, and links/ referrals to extracurricular activities, and other relevant services.
Overall the goal of the proposed project is to reduce recidivism rates of youth offenders coming back to the community of South Los Angeles. Through relevant reentry services, the program also expects to achieve the reduction of youth offender criminal behavior and to promote positive youth development.

- Objective 1: Increase positive youth development during their participation in the program and up to six months after treatment is completed.
- Objective 2: Reduce recidivism rates of youth participating in the program by providing intensive strengths base case management.
- Objective 3: Improve their problem solving skills and develop pro-social patterns of reasoning.
- Objective 4: Increase re-enrollment and school attendance among youth in the program through education services/ academic support.
- Objective 5: Youth will obtain employment or a paid internship opportunity through job skills training and employment assistance.

The following are steps that will be taken to measure the program objectives and to evaluate the achievement of the overall goal of the proposed project:

- Positive youth development will be evaluated based on enrolment in extra-curricular activities, self-reported surveys at beginning, middle, and end of program participation as well as 6 months after program completion. Enrollment in health services and reports of stable housing will also be documented.
- Recidivism will be evaluated based on probation/ parole records that indicate re-arrest for probation/ parole violations or sentencing to juvenile detention or prison for new convictions.
- Problem solving skills and pro-social patterns of reasoning will be evaluated using TCU Adolescent Thinking Forms-assessment to measure criminal thinking (TCU Institute of Behavioral Research, 2010).
- Enrollment and school attendance will be evaluated through school re-enrollment and attendance records and academic achievement through school report cards.
- Employment or paid internship status will be evaluated by requiring proof of employment attainment and maintenance.
While completing this grant writing assignment, the grant writer became familiarized with different organizations that advocate for just policies and needed reentry services for youth offenders. These agencies include: the Youth Justice Coalition, L.A. for Youth, and the Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership. These organizations also fight against the inequalities of race, gender, and class present in the Los Angeles County Juvenile Justice. Through these agencies the grant writer was able identified and learn more about the need of reentry services in the county of Los Angeles.

Through the review of the literature, empirically based programs and promising interventions were suggested for effective successful reentry and the prevention and reduction of youth recidivism.

First the program type has to match the needs of the offender, therefore the literature emphasizes the importance of recognizing that every youth has individualized specific needs, challenges, and strengths.

Overall, the examination of a full body of research suggest that promising successful reentry programs should include programmatic components and characteristics that include: individualized case services; multiple coordinated services; partnership and collaboration with other systems; connection with relevant community agencies and support networks; and the use of generic types of counseling as no notable significant effects were found in brand name program models.

Through the reviewed literature it was found that presently there are few reentry programs that offer the necessary and needed reentry services for youth to successfully reintegrate back into their community.

The lack of proper services is what has led many youth to recidivated and in longer term recidivism outcomes, the reviewed literature showed that a high number of youth later go into the adult prison system.

It is imperative that social workers advocate and fight for just policies and practices for the most vulnerable and underprivileged which include youth offenders.

Not intervening has shown to have long term consequences in the life of these youth which are at risk for becoming chronic adult offenders.

Grant writing experience and skills is an important tool for social workers that can help secure funding for needed program development for reentry services which can give youth a second chance to make a positive change and improvement in their life’s.
REFERENCES


