A RESEARCH SERIES OF THE PAT BROWN INSTITUTE AT CAL STATE LA

IN FOCUS: BOYLE HEIGHTS



Building the Next Generation Part I:
Infrastructure and Institutional Investment in Los Angeles Youth

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CAL STATE LA
PAT BROWN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Unleashing the Power of Participation

Building Healthy Communities
Boyle Heights

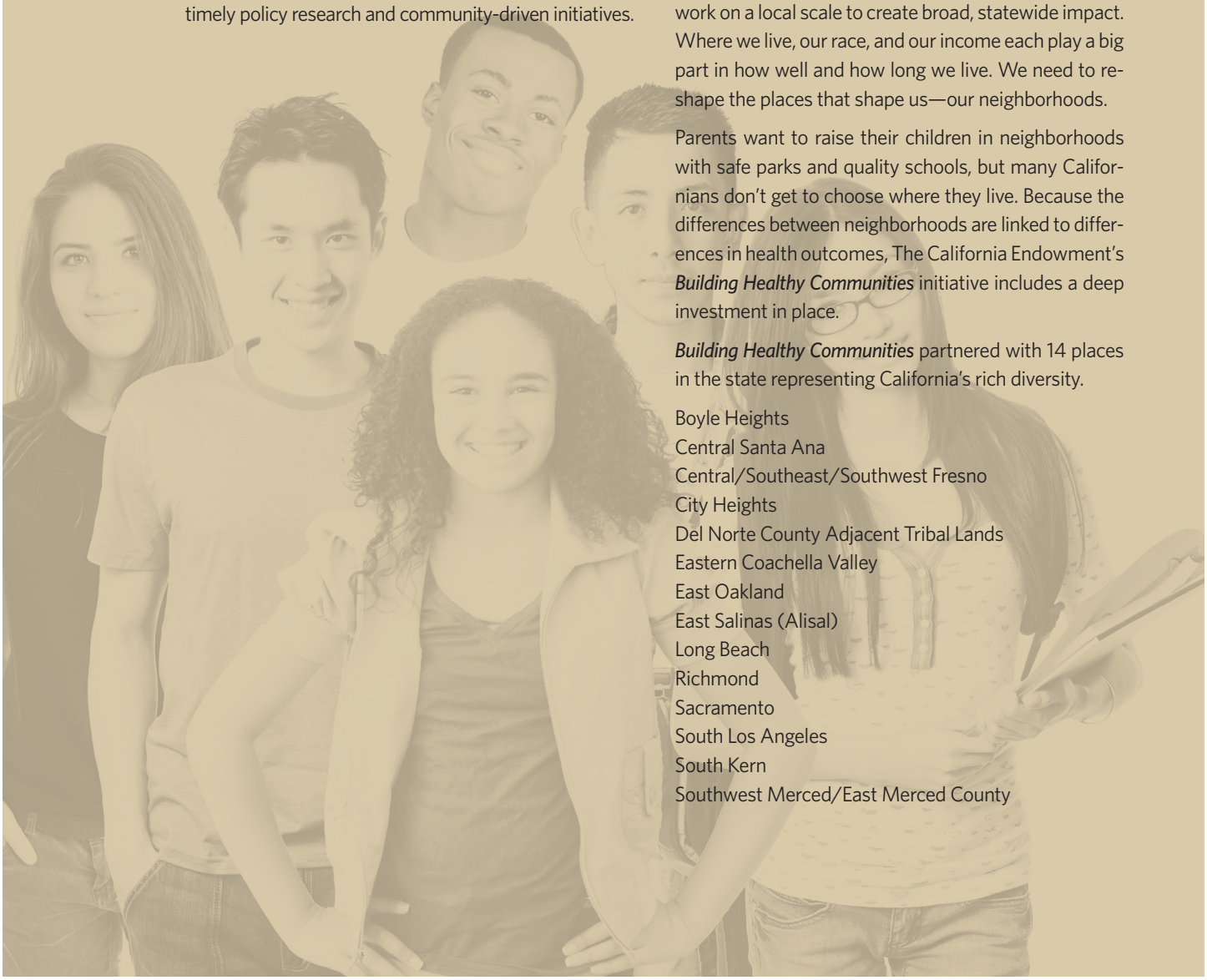
IN FOCUS

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Building Healthy Communities is The California Endowment's ten-year, $1 billion comprehensive community initiative that is creating a revolution in the way Californians think about and support health in their communities. In 14 places across California, residents are proving that they have the power to make health happen in their neighborhoods, schools and with prevention—and in doing so, they're creating a brighter future for their children and for our state.

Building Healthy Communities has a simple strategy: work on a local scale to create broad, statewide impact. Where we live, our race, and our income each play a big part in how well and how long we live. We need to reshape the places that shape us—our neighborhoods.

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Building Healthy Communities partnered with 14 places in the state representing California's rich diversity.

Boyle Heights
Central Santa Ana
Central/Southeast/Southwest Fresno
City Heights
Del Norte County Adjacent Tribal Lands
Eastern Coachella Valley
East Oakland
East Salinas (Alisal)
Long Beach
Richmond
Sacramento
South Los Angeles
South Kern
Southwest Merced/East Merced County



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Building the Next Generation Part I: Infrastructure and Institutional Investment in Los Angeles Youth

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Goals and Objectives of This Report

- Articulate the need for better coordinated youth development strategy and service provision
- Explore what can the city do organizationally to improve focus and coordination on youth
- Identify and examine the potential benefits and potential challenges associated with several formal youth development entities
- Illuminate the process of forming a new city structure to oversee youth development

Our research questions include:

- *What are the structural obstacles to successful youth development in Los Angeles?*
- *What structural reforms would improve the youth development efforts?*
- *What is the most appropriate means for initiating, designing, and implementing structural reform*
- *How would a new youth development structure supplant or intersect with existing youth services?*

Key Findings

1. Data on youth development budgets are difficult to obtain and assess.
2. City of Los Angeles lacks a focused role regarding youth.
3. Complex multi-jurisdictional youth service system is challenging to navigate or coordinate.
4. Formal entity can improve youth development.

INTRODUCTION

This report examines how the City of Los Angeles can devise governing structures that will effectively support programs that contribute positively to youth development.

Defined more as a period of adolescence than by a particular age, youth is by definition transitional. The alternative experiences of nurture or trauma can have an outsized impact on a young person's future and, collectively, on the future of society. According to the federal Healthy People 2020 Initiative, youth are particularly sensitive to environmental influences due to their developmental transition.

A variety of social and environmental factors, including "family, peer group, school, neighborhood, policies, and societal cues,"[1] affect young people's health and well-being. Healthy People 2020 further suggests that supporting the development of young people "facilitates their adoption of healthy behaviors and helps to ensure a healthy and productive future adult population." Alternatively, failure to support healthy development of youth compromises their future health and well-being. For instance, adolescents who live in conditions of poverty, are more likely to be victims of violence, use and abuse substances, become obese, and/or engage in risky sexual behavior.[2]

Recently, several organizations have developed youth "well-being" indices, which evaluate the social determinants of health to which different populations of youth are exposed. The Global Youth Well-Being Index examines 40 indicators across six interconnected domains including: citizen participation, economic opportunity, education, health, information and communications technology, and safety and security. The Foundation for Child Development developed a similar Child Well-being Index (CWI) in 2013, which examines 28 indicators in the seven domains of family economic well-being, safe/risky behavior, social relationships, emotional/spiritual well-being, community engagement, educational attainment, and health (Land, 2013).

Positive youth development (PYD) focuses on strengths in youth in order to build "competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring and […] contribution" (Lerner et al., 2005) all towards an overall increase in youth self-efficacy (Pittman, O'Brien, & Kimball, 1993). Overall, PYD approaches have demonstrated improved outcomes for youth. Catalano (2004) conducted an evaluation of 25 PYD interventions throughout the U.S. and found that the programs demonstrated a high level of efficacy.

> *We found a wide range of positive youth development approaches that resulted in promoting positive youth behavior outcomes and preventing youth problem behaviors. Nineteen effective programs showed positive changes in youth behavior, including significant improvements in interpersonal skills, quality of peer and adult relationships, self-control, problem solving, cognitive competencies, self-efficacy, commitment to schooling, and academic achievement. Twenty-four effective programs showed significant improvements in problem behaviors, including drug and alcohol use, school misbehavior, aggressive behavior, violence, truancy, high-risk sexual behavior, and smoking.*

Lerner's (2005) longitudinal study has also tracked positive outcomes for PYD participant youth over time (Lerner et al., 2005). PYD theory is based on a person-context relationship that, when fostered, helps to integrate moral and civic identity (Lerner et al., 2003), creating more engaged members of civil society (Lerner et al., 2000). Thus, PYD-oriented policies "provide young people with the resources needed to build and to pursue healthy lives that make productive contributions to self, family, and community. Such resources include a healthy start, a safe environment,

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[1] Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2016). *Healthy People 2020*. Retrieved from: https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/leading-health-indicators/Leading-Health-Indicators-Development-and-Framework

[2] Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2016). *Healthy people 2020 – 2020 topics and objectives: Adolescent Health*. Retrieved from: https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Adolescent-Health

education for marketable skills, the opportunity to 'give back' to (to serve) the community, and freedom from prejudice and discrimination" (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003, p. 179).

CURRENT CLIMATE IN LOS ANGELES

Youth development is emerging as an important issue in Los Angeles. Following years of flagging socio-economic and educational outcomes among L.A. youth, an increasing awareness of and sensitivity to an accelerating "school to prison pipeline," and a national climate that is confronting the challenges faced by youth of color, LGBT youth, and system-involved youth, youth advocates in Los Angeles have begun to call for more focused attention to youth issues. Through needs assessments, meetings with policymakers, and direct action, L.A. youth advocates have raised the level of conversation around youth issues to formal policy discussions with local government jurisdictions such as the City and County of Los Angeles.

One of the specific and principal changes youth advocates have supported has been to create a new Youth Development Department in the City of Los Angeles. Although a youth-serving entity has been proposed in Los Angeles in the past, the idea has never before garnered as much interest as it has today. In 2015, youth advocates in Boyle Heights began meeting with Los Angeles City Councilmember Jose Huizar (CD #14), to advocate a city department that would focus specifically on youth.

In August 2016, at Councilmember Huizar's urging, the City Council directed the City Administrative Officer to survey the current status of youth services in Los Angeles. This report explores the various forms a youth development entity could take in Los Angeles, discusses the benefits and drawbacks associated with each, and presents the process for entity creation and oversight.

SERVICE INTEGRATION

Service integration is a growing trend among public agencies, including in Los Angeles. The integrated service model seeks to shed the constraints of the traditional categorical program model, with unique funding and eligibility requirements and few mechanisms to link services, either programmatically, strategically or financially (Konrad, 1996). While integration is unlikely to show significant short-term financial savings, program evaluations suggest long-term "dividends in the form of reduced duplication and waste, strengthened local communities, and improved client outcomes through prevention and more effective interventions" (Hasse, 1997).

Just as youth well-being is affected by social and environmental factors, fostering positive youth development (PYD) requires interventions coordinated across multiple domains. Existing PYD literature moves away from previous human services provision models that categorized individuals as "pregnant teens" or "drug users," which tend to regard youth as one dimensional and fail to understand them holistically within complex social environments (Catalano et al., 2002), or as "problem free" even when they still face considerable social barriers to success (Weissberg et al., 1997).

Instead PYD approaches include the following: 1) promote development to foster positive youth outcomes; 2) focus "non-categorically" on the whole young person; 3) focus on achievements specific to developmental tasks and stages; and 4) focus on interactions with family, school, neighborhood, societal, and cultural contexts.

In this way, PYD interventions incorporate the developmental models for how children grow, learn, and change, which allows programs to focus on interrelated social and environmental factors rather than attempting to isolate specific problems to prevent or solve. If human services providers employed strategies that promote the development of social skills, communication skills, self-awareness, family and community commitment, and civic engagement, these new skills could help improve outcomes across the board (Pittman et al., 1993). Governmental structures can best improve the prospects for positive youth development through greater coordination and focus.

METHODS

Data collection involved four principal activities for exploring the structure of the city of Los Angeles. First, we conducted a survey of Los Angeles city programs that serve youth in order to assess the current state of city services and identify gaps. This survey includes program goals, specific services, budget and organizational structure.

Second, we analyzed city documents, budget data, council and other formal city actions, as well as media coverage on the relevant youth-serving programs, their services, and other youth-related information.

Third, we conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants on youth service provision in the city of Los Angeles, including non-city affiliated providers of services for L.A. youth. Interviews focused on objectives, types of services provided, how services are administered, structural and political supports or constraints, and the process by which the services were designed and implemented. In Los Angeles, representatives of various entities were interviewed, including the Mayor's Office, Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD), HIRE LA's Youth, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), City Administrative Officer (CAO) office, Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) office, and the Children's Defense Fund.

Finally, we surveyed youth development entities in other cities. We focused on other large cities in the United States as well as several key cities that have their own youth development departments or other unique youth-serving programs. These cities include New York, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Antonio, San Diego, Dallas, San Jose, as well as Las Vegas, Richmond, CA; Canton, OH; and Chattanooga, TN. In Richmond, interviews were conducted with the City Manager, the Director of the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS), Richmond Police Department (RPD), and the Mayor's Office. In Las Vegas, interviews were conducted with the City Manager's office and the Department of Youth Development and Social Innovation (YDSI).

STATE OF YOUTH SERVICES IN LOS ANGELES

Multiple Jurisdictions

Local government in Los Angeles is highly decentralized, both vertically and horizontally, in ways that make it difficult to focus on youth development. Especially in comparison to older big cities such as New York City and Chicago, Los Angeles government is built around "reform" models of dispersed authority (Sonenshein 2006).

While most big cities now place the mayor at the center of the school governance structure, Los Angeles continues to run its schools through an elected school board. City government has no role in the schools except for running school board elections along with city elections. Indeed, governance reforms at the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education have moved the Board towards having nearly full-time board members. Youth programming that involves the schools is developed within a separate budget process from the City's and may even use completely different criteria for defining service needs.

The city and county of Los Angeles split service delivery into separate categories. Social services are largely delivered by the county, which is governed by five elected Supervisors. For working class residents of Los Angeles, the county is the government that most directly affects their lives. Los Angeles city government, led by the mayor and council, provide "property" services including police and fire, and city planning.

The Los Angeles city government is only one of 88 independent city governments that comprise Los Angeles County, mostly concentrated in the southeast corner of the county and surrounding the City of Los Angeles. In fact, there are five independent cities *within* the boundaries of the City of Los Angeles (West Hollywood, San Fernando, Beverly Hills, Culver City and Santa Monica).

Finally, power is dispersed within the city government. To a degree unusual for major cities with mayor-council systems of government, the mayor's power is balanced by a powerful and well-staffed city council.

Its 15 members, each representing roughly a quarter of a million people, are a force to be reckoned with, and the mayor must work hard to maintain positive relationships within the council.

As a result of these structural factors, service integration in Los Angeles depends both on good planning and positive diplomacy in which leaders with their own constituencies must bargain with and negotiate with other powerful players. When it comes to youth development, these structural issues have also limited the potential of service integration.

A services integration model would represent a major shift in how services are currently provided to youth in Los Angeles. There are multiple providers for youth services in Los Angeles and the city is a relatively minor player overall. Most services for youth are provided by Los Angeles County and LAUSD, with the City of Los Angeles and third party providers also playing a role. Each of these jurisdictions focuses on different aspects of the lives of youth. The County deploys state funding to provide human services, and the LAUSD is responsible for education, some afterschool activities, and student well-being during the school day. The City of Los Angeles focuses its efforts on workforce development programs for youth, as well as some varied programs that are limited in scope.

Challenging to Navigate

With so many service providers, it can be challenging to provide and access services in a coordinated fashion. The system that has grown to provide services to youth is complex and has been cobbled together from many sources with different objectives over decades. As a result, different parts of the system function in silos, making communication and coordination difficult and leading to inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and gaps where youth can fall out of the system altogether.

This lack of integration creates a burden for families, who must fill out duplicative application paperwork and navigate multiple bureaucracies, often not even knowing the difference between or among agencies or jurisdictions. This can present an even greater barrier in limited English proficiency households. Families may not know where to turn for help and ultimately be unable to access all of the services for which they are eligible.

The challenge of navigating youth services is further exacerbated by targeted funding measures. In the city and county of Los Angeles, large proportions of service revenues are designated for specific purposes or targeted to specific populations. This is especially the case with external funding. For instance, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding has become increasingly focused on "disconnected youth," youth who are neither in school nor working.

Since 2012, the proportion of Los Angeles' youth clientele being served who are "disconnected" has increased from 20% to over 70%.[3] Disconnected youth are at increased risk for a multitude of negative outcomes; thus, focusing on the acute needs of the disconnected youth population is a high-reward strategy. However, this narrowing of the target population effectively reduces the number of other youths who can be served. Hyper-targeting of service funds can silo youth, linking them with specific services and isolating them from others. This approach can constrain the city in determining the ideal balance of funds and investments among the acute and broad needs of youth in Los Angeles.

Lack of Focus on Youth

In addition to the complexity of the youth service delivery system, many of these service programs are designed for adults. Rather than having a comprehensive strategy for youth, youth services are carved out as a sub-section of services designed for adults or as a subcategory of a broader social problem: for example, youth unemployment as a sub-section of overall unemployment, or youth mental illness as a

[3] Hire LA's Youth (personal communication, May 12, 2016)

sub-focus of mental illness. While a specific focus on youth would allow service providers to account for co-occurring conditions that affect youth in particular and use service models specifically designed for youth, such as PYD, a lack of focus on youth allows for these essential considerations to fall through the cracks. As a result, the services available to youth are ill-fitting and ill-targeted.

Lack of Clear Role for City

The lack of an overarching policy framework in the city makes it easy for the city to fall captive to targeted and time-limited funding opportunities, while making it more challenging to establish sustainable long-term goals and coordinate programs to achieve them. Given that the City of Los Angeles provides youth services on a much smaller scale than the county and LAUSD, this instability fosters confusion regarding the role of the city in youth development. The city's mission with regard to youth remains ill-defined.

This lack of an overarching youth policy framework also makes it challenging for youth to weigh in on issues and policies that may affect them. As primary stakeholders, youth are an essential source of feedback on both the goals and the implementation processes of youth services. The absence of youth voices leaves the city vulnerable to the possibility of inadequate service design, and also precludes the buy-in that comes with stakeholder inclusion.

FINDINGS

Data on Youth Development Budgets are Difficult to Obtain and Assess

One of the most serious challenges in assessing youth services is the difficulty of obtaining and evaluating reliable data on youth development. "Youth" is an ambiguous term that is often defined differently in different contexts. Different services have different eligibility requirements, and in some cases, youth participants are aggregated with non-youth. For instance, some services are for children (0-17 years) and adults (18-64 years). In this case, youth do not fit neatly within either group. This creates challenges for obtaining or assessing youth outcomes or budgetary data for youth development services, particularly since definitions of youth and eligibility criteria for services that they may access vary from service to service, department to department, and jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

Different cities provide services to youth differently. For instance, San Francisco is both a city and a county, meaning that comparing its youth services to the City of Los Angeles is complicated. The Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families in San Francisco provides child care services and family supportive services; the Department of Youth and Community Development in New York City provides immigrant integration and homeless services; and the Department of Youth Development and Social Innovation in Las Vegas operates a charter school. All of these services would fall outside the scope of work of the City of Los Angeles and in most cases would be provided as social services by the county of Los Angeles.

The reporting of youth services is inconsistent across cities. Of the top 100 largest cities in the US, five reported youth development departments as part of their city structure. However, only three of the five had city budget documents that specified departmental appropriations. In some cases departments are cobbled together from other sources; however, this reinforces how difficult it is to assess dedicated youth funding.

Whether or not the City of Los Angeles City is spending enough or not enough money on youth services will require a deep dive into the city's own data and significant additional work on budgets of other cities.

The City of Los Angeles Lacks a Focused Role Regarding Youth

Regardless of how much money is spent on youth, the City of Los Angeles does not have a well-defined role regarding youth services. Currently, such services are provided primarily by Los Angeles County

and LAUSD, not the City of Los Angeles. Those youth services that the City of Los Angeles does provide are scattered among offices and departments, including the Economic and Workforce Development Department, Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development, Department of Recreation and Parks, and Department of Cultural Affairs. In each of these government entities, youth are a subpopulation of their primary stakeholders: homeless, unemployed, visitor/patron, or client.

Without a focused role regarding youth, there is no entity or central point of contact to coordinate policy or develop a long-term strategic plan. As the largest stakeholder in the region, the City of Los Angeles could take a leadership role and have a greater impact on policy, research and evaluation, and coordination of services across jurisdictions. But it first must develop an internal focus on youth programming.

A Formal Entity Can Improve Youth Development

Creating an entity focused on youth would provide stability around which a long-term service strategy can be formed. A centralized formal youth development entity can be the city's point of contact for creating more sustainable relationships with other youth-serving agencies, allowing for better coordination and collaboration of services while also minimizing duplicative or ineffective programs. Additionally, a youth development entity could serve as a venue for the inclusion of youth in system design and implementation. As the primary stakeholder in these services, youth can provide substantive input on what the programming should be, how it can best be implemented, and how it can then advocate for their needs.

We use the term "entity" rather than "department" to indicate that there are an array of structures that can help create the focus we are recommending. In some cases, these structures may provide a pathway to such larger entities as a department. As described below, all require some action by elected officials and voters. Each of these structures come with a role in the history of Los Angeles government, and fit within the complex system of governing this city.

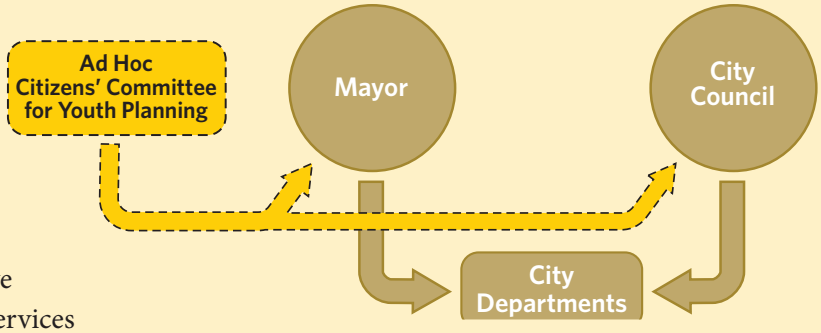
As appealing as it is to design City of Los Angeles programs to match those of other cities, it may be more valuable to unearth and analyze existing models within the city's own governmental history through which previously unfocused efforts were redirected in a more coherent and effective manner.

The four main structures that we present in this paper are: 1) the ad hoc commission; 2) an office; 3) a commission; and 4) a department. Each requires action by the city's elected officials. In most cases, these entities are created by an ordinance passed by the city council, and signed by the mayor, or passed with a supermajority of two thirds over the mayor's veto. In other cases, though, the voters may create such entities at the ballot box, through a measure placed on the ballot by the city council, or through an initiative based on signature gathering.

POSSIBLE REFORMS

ENTITY 1:

AD HOC CITIZENS' COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE FOR YOUTH PROGRAMMING



One possible proposal to improve delivery of youth development services in Los Angeles is the formation of a Citizen Committee for Youth Programming. The commission would be established by ordinance or resolution. The members of ad hoc citizen committees are appointed by the mayor and/or other elected officials (as specified in the ordinance or resolution) to foster and encourage cooperation between the public and city departments. Citizen committees allow the city to mobilize the experience, local knowledge, and civic interest of community members to better inform the delivery of services by city departments. Citizen committees usually begin after a problem has emerged as critical, and make proposals for further structural changes that outlast the ad hoc committee's life. The committees do not have authority over departmental operations.

Features of Ad Hoc Citizens' Committee for Youth Development

- Fosters conversation about youth issues
- Provides a venue for existing stakeholders in youth services to work with the city
- Helps to identify issues regarding youth services coordination/navigation
- Limited initial cost to form, operate
- Can design more permanent organizational structures
- Limited attention/support from the city
- Varying organizational capacities of groups at the table
- No formal assurances that its recommendations will be adopted and implemented

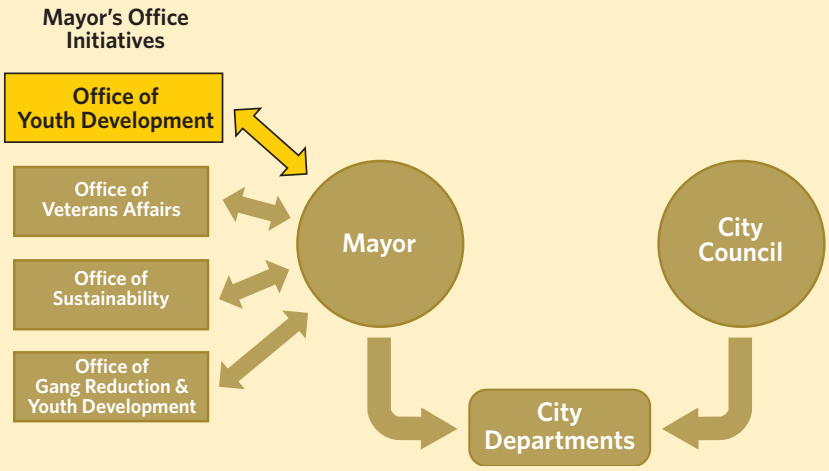
Likely costs: ***Limited***

- Committee members:
  - *Time volunteered in-kind*
- Space in city building:
  - *In-kind*
- Staff support by city

POSSIBLE REFORMS

ENTITY 2:

OFFICE OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



An Office of Youth Development would build on the benefits of a Citizen Committee and formalize them within the city organization. In the City of Los Angeles, an office typically carries a narrow scope of work towards a specific mandate. In this case, the Office of Youth Development would be dedicated to raising the profile of youth and youth programming within Los Angeles. It would work closely with city departments to evaluate and increase their commitment to youth services.

Features of an Office of Youth Development

- Provides a cabinet level seat, high level advocacy in policy making settings
- Conveys to the public that youth are a priority
- Can generate research that is policy-relevant
- Provides high profile proponent/advocate for youth issues
- Provides a clear point of contact for youth development stakeholders
- Can facilitate coordination among agencies at executive management level
- Relatively limited cost to start/operate
- Minimal increase in person-power, limited practical impact
- Limited intervention on programmatic level
- Only has power to make recommendations unless other powers specified

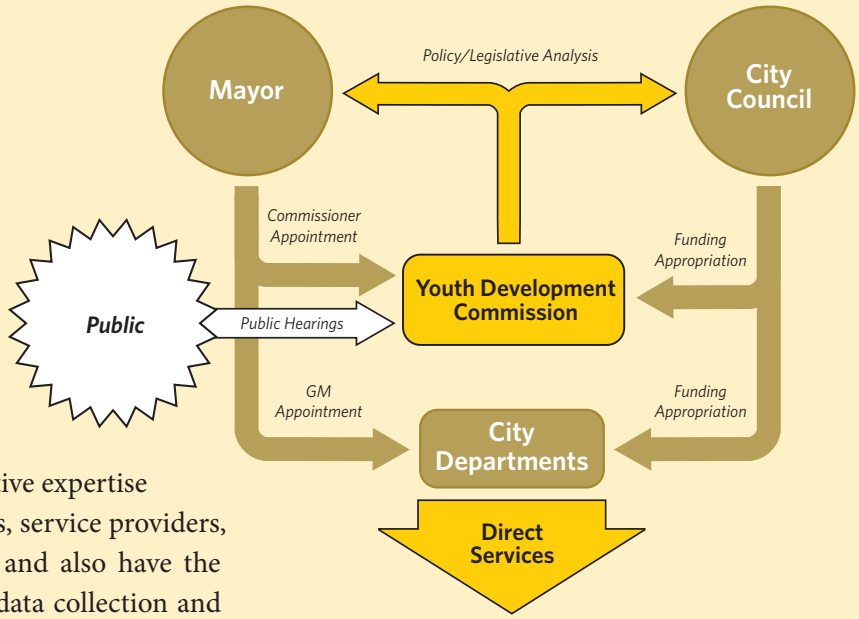
Likely costs: ***Modest***

- $450,000-$750,000
  - *Executive Director: $150,000-$200,000*
  - *3-5 supporting staff: $300,000-$500,000*
- Space in Mayor's Office or other city site
  - *In-kind*

POSSIBLE REFORMS

ENTITY 3:

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



A Youth Development Commission would build upon many of the benefits offered by an Office of Youth Development. Additionally, a staffed commission would be able to both draw from the collective expertise of a board of youth advocates, service providers, scholars, and policymakers, and also have the staffing capacity to conduct data collection and analysis, design new initiatives, write grants, and release regular reports. Additionally, a commission (whether ad hoc or ongoing) is subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act requiring decisions to be made in public, and can hold public hearings on youth issues. The commission would likely not operate youth programs itself, but rather work with departments that already provide youth development services.

Features of a Youth Development Commission

- Provides a department/commission level of leadership, including an executive director, high level advocacy in policy making settings
- Conveys to the public that youth are a priority
- Provides a clear point of contact for youth development stakeholders
- Can facilitate coordination among agencies at the departmental level
- Provides a greater capacity to execute work
  - i. *Can conduct data collection and analysis*
  - ii. *Can design new initiatives*
  - iii. *Can raise external funding*
  - iv. *Can release reports on youth services and youth outcomes in the City of Los Angeles*
- Requires City Council action or ballot initiative to create, appropriate funds
- Only has power to make recommendations to departments

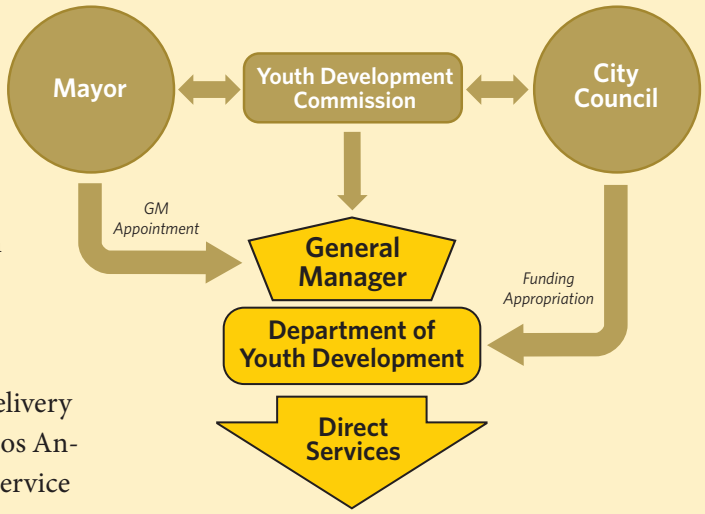
Likely costs: ***Moderate***

- $1,200,000–$1,500,000
  - *Executive Director: $150,000–$200,000*
  - *Staff of 8–10: $750,000-$1,000,000*
  - *Expenses: $300,000*
- Office space in City Hall or off-site

POSSIBLE REFORMS

ENTITY 4:

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



A Youth Development Department would involve a substantial reorganization of existing city programs, as well as augmentation to create the departmental administrative structure. The mission of a department would be to oversee the delivery of youth services provided by the City of Los Angeles and to coordinate with external service providers. Additionally, a Youth Development Department would establish a strategic framework for the long-term improvement of outcomes among L.A. youth, engage in program evaluation, research and analysis, and make policy recommendations to the City Council regarding youth services. Political support will be necessary for a Youth Development Department to function in a collaborative and coordinating role. The most feasible process for creating a functioning Youth Development Department would be to acquire the necessary support to establish it by council action or by charter amendment.

Features of a Youth Development Department

- Provides a clearinghouse for youth programming
- Provides a departmental level of leadership, and a general manager
- Accountable to both the Mayor and the City Council, has a broad base of stakeholders
- A fully integrated part of the city family that works with both council and mayor
- Much more robust service provision capacity
- Can coordinate youth programming more effectively internally and will lead to transfers from other departments to a youth-oriented entity
- Requires more initial and more on-going commitment for support from city council
- Could foster resentment among existing department heads who might see a new department as a threat to programming

Likely costs: ***Substantial***

- New
  - *General Manager: $150,000–$200,000*
  - *New support staff—financial, administrative, HR, training*
- Re-allocations–Considerable
  - *Existing programmatic appropriations*
  - *Redeployed staff*
- Service: $44,000,000
  - *Administration at 5%: $2,200,000*

PATH TO FOCUS: FOUR HISTORICAL CASES

Department of Disability (DoD)

The Department of Disability illustrates a case in which public attention led to the creation of an office, which later became a commission, which was ultimately established as a city department. In 1975, the city of Los Angeles created an Office of Disability in response to the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which banned employment discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The mandate of the office began as advising on and enforcing federally-mandated accessibility and accommodations to public facilities. In 1989 the office became a commission, enabling it to expand its mandate to conduct research and explore new dimensions of access and discrimination. In 1998, the commission became a department and the city's lead agency on compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Now the Department of Disability provides job training to individuals with disabilities, and works with the Department of Public Works to ensure proper access throughout the city (Sonenshein, 2006).

Commission on Children, Youth, and Their Families (CCYF)

There is a useful example of a youth development commission right in Los Angeles. In 1995, the Commission on Children, Youth, and Their Families (CCYF) was formed to overcome the very problems identified in this report.

CCYF Mission:

> *[To serve] as an advocate and mechanism that facilitates and fosters internal coordination among city departments on policy, budgeting and programming issues relating to children, youth, and families […] promote intergovernmental coordination and advocacy with federal, state, and county governments, school districts, and other cities [… and to advise] the mayor and City Council on policy and legislative issues related to children, youth, and families.*[4]

CCYF gathered data, issued reports, and convened meetings of city departments to discuss the impact of city services on youth. The issues on which CCYF focused included public health, a youth council, public education advocacy and research, child care, and a multi-jurisdictional collaborative called Network4Kids.

One of the greatest achievements of the commission was the "CCYF Budget and Data Report." This document was compiled using data from both the city and county of Los Angeles, and provided a detailed assessment by council district of needs, service provision capacity, service disparities, outcomes, and specific recommendations for improvement. Some of the recommendations included upgrading data sharing capabilities and establishing CCYF as a youth data clearinghouse to better inform policy decisions regarding youth services.

In 2009, in the midst of the city budget crisis following the economic downturn that led to the restructuring of several city offices and departments,[5] CCYF was restructured into the Commission on Community and Family Services with a renewed focus on community development, and with few of its recommendations having been implemented since. It no longer had the same focus on youth that the previous commission had.

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (EmpowerLA)

Empower LA, originally known as the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), was created by a charter amendment in 1999. The context for the creation of a charter department, which is a very high bar for structural change, was the secession

[4] http://www.ccyf.org

[5] The Community Development Department (CDD), in which CCYF was housed, and the Housing Department (HD) became the Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) and the Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID), where CCFS is now housed, as part of the dissolution of the Community Redevelopment Agency.

movement by the San Fernando Valley and parts of the Harbor area in the mid 1990s. The city took up charter reform to head off the threat of secession. In a sense, the two charter commissions that created the department functioned in the role of an "ad hoc commission" that researched the feasibility of the new structure.[6] Public sentiment for greater participation led to the push for neighborhood councils, and distrust of the city government generated demands for the new system to be implemented by a department listed in the city charter. As such it can only be changed by the voters.

Performance Pilot Partnership (P3)

The Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) is a city department that is tasked with helping Los Angeles residents become employed. This is a multilateral effort, since employment requires education, skills training, professionalism, access to jobs, and often other supports. The Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) is a federal program that loosens restrictions on grant funds in order to increase the flexibility of local jurisdictions to form inter-agency partnerships and better serve youth with high barriers to services.

In Los Angeles the P3 collaborative includes the EWDD, L.A. County Department of Mental Health, L.A. County Probation Department, LAUSD, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and Department of Community and Senior Services (DCSS). Not only do these programs identify opportunities to work together by locating services in the same offices in order to create one-stop-shops and multiple points of entry, but the P3 also demonstrates its commitment to the collaboration by holding regular meetings with the executive leadership of each of these agencies.

Although the collaboration has been bumpy—with the different organizational cultures undergoing a process of "storming, norming, and forming"—it has seen positive results. Paul Harrington of the Drexel University's Center for Labor Markets and Policy has tracked youth education and employment in major population centers over the past 20 years. Harrington's (2016) findings suggest that the increased flexibility and communication of P3 has corresponded with a significant drop in disconnected youth—those who are neither in school nor working. In 2008, approximately 21% of the youth population in Los Angeles were disconnected, while by 2014, this number had dropped to about 16%, defying national trends that otherwise showed an increase in this population. In light of the successes of the P3 collaborative, Los Angeles should be considered a national leader in serving disconnected youth.[7]

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

In an effort to discover how widespread the use of youth development entities is throughout the United States, we conducted a survey of the top 100 most populous cities. Of the top 100 cities, only five claim to have a youth development department, four have a professional youth development commission, and two have a youth development office. Seven cities have a youth commission, a commission made up of youth to advise on policy issues affecting youth.

An additional three cities outside of the top 100 have youth development departments. This indicates that apart from a few exceptions, creating youth focused entities as a means to enhance youth development services has not caught on as a preferred approach. Unlike New York and San Francisco, which are merged city/county jurisdictions, Los Angeles—like many of the other cities on this list—is an independent city with residents who live within multiple service jurisdictions. Los Angeles has the opportunity to provide

[6] Raphael J. Sonenshein, 2006. *The City at Stake: Secession, Reform and the Battle for Los Angeles.* Princeton U. Press, chapter 9.

[7] Harrington, P. E. (2016) Declining youth disconnection in Los Angeles [Powerpoint]. Retrieved from http://www.wiblacity.org/index.php/about-the-wdb/press-room/211-the-state-of-disconnected-youth-in-los-angeles-may-2016-town-hall-meeting

leadership in developing a new youth service delivery model suitable for multijurisdictional contexts.

New York, NY

New York has a large Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). DYCD provides direct services to New York youth and families, and also administers public grants to youth-serving community-based organizations on behalf of the city, state, and federal funders. DYCD has a broad array of direct service programs and its annual report documents a high degree of participation: in 2015, 54,263 participants in the Summer Youth Employment Program at over 9,000 different sites. An estimated 106,000 middle school students were estimated to participate in the DYCD afterschool program in 2015-2016.

Although there are some programmatic differences, the most noteworthy difference between youth services in Los Angeles and New York is that New York's DYCD functions mainly as a coordinating agency, directing funds and maintaining collaborations among the various jurisdictions and service providers. DYCD reports awarding over $500 million in contracts in 2015, indicating that it funds services through its network of non-profit providers rather than provides services directly. DYCD has a general administrative budget of approximately $40 million.

Las Vegas, NV

Las Vegas created a Department of Youth Development and Social Innovation in January of 2016. Over the last few years, city leaders have been looking for ways to improve outcomes of students at underperforming schools. Until recently, youth development programs were scattered among multiple departments, with the onus of collaboration and new initiatives placed on individual departmental managers.

In summer 2015, the consolidation of all youth programs into a single department was proposed with the intent to create a comprehensive support system for youth surrounding education. Ultimately, the fiscal impact of the new department was minimal. The biggest difference since the department's creation in spring 2016 is that the city's role in youth development has been clarified, and is no longer secondary to the missions of the various departments in which the programs were previously scattered.

The department has already reported positive signs with the transition. Programs that previously had limited lines of communication are now under one roof and better able to coordinate their efforts. Additionally, the programs are able to plan new initiatives together. Finally, the department also has signaled its commitment to new efforts by including "social innovation" in its name. YDSI plans to continue examining the best practices of other cities, to apply for external funding, and to invest in new pilot programs towards improving outcomes of Las Vegas youth. Having a department dedicated to this effort brings research, evaluation, fundraising, and implementation under one roof.

GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND ACTION

The objectives of this study were to: 1) articulate the need for better coordinated youth development strategy and service provision; 2) identify and explore the potential benefits and potential challenges associated with a youth development department and other configurations of city structure; and 3) illuminate the process of forming a new city entity to oversee youth development. This study has focused on the City of Los Angeles, and what role the city plays or should play in the regional youth development system.

This report is the first step in determining what the City of Los Angeles can do to improve outcomes for youth. Additional steps must be taken to craft a comprehensive strategy for youth development.

CONCLUSION

The current system of youth development services, a collection of different types of services at different jurisdictional levels, is full of gaps that make it difficult to serve the most at-risk youth. Additionally, without

structural reform, there is little indication that the existing system will be able to direct more youth towards prosperity than struggle. As such, the current youth service structure in Los Angeles is unsustainable and does not meet the current or future needs of Los Angeles youth.

While Los Angeles can learn from successful models in other cities, reform is more likely to come from local models of structural change. This report examines four different entities with the potential to improve youth development through structural reform. Any of these entities is possible, and while there are advantages and disadvantages to each, the creation of an office does not preclude the creation of a commission, nor does the creation of a commission preclude the creation of a department. The common thread among all of the successful models is the prioritization of youth, coordination of services under a youth framework, a focus on policy and innovation, and inclusion of youth perspectives.

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