

Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) Interim Evaluation Report



Table of Contents

Executive Summary 1

Acknowledgements. 4

Introduction 5

Evaluation Methodology and Report Structure 7

Findings 9

Conclusion and Recommendations 22

Executive Summary

The Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI)¹ seeks to transform the juvenile justice system through a broad-based, multi-year effort grounded in the principles of positive youth development and focused on aligning policy and practice with young people's developmental stages. PYJI entered its third phase in early 2017, with community-based organizations in 11 counties across the state of California receiving funding to advance positive juvenile justice, working in collaboration with local coalitions to accelerate a statewide movement toward a more youth development-focused juvenile justice system. Despite having limited resources compared to the systems they are working to change, these organizations and their community partners have led the call against mass incarceration and in support of disruption of the school-to-prison pipeline and elimination of the racial disparities found throughout the system. The grantee partner organizations are listed below.

- Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (Alameda County)
- Fathers & Families of San Joaquin
- Fresno Barrios Unidos
- Resilience Orange County
- RYSE Youth Center (Contra Costa County)
- Sacramento Area Congregations Together
- San Diego Organizing Project
- Sigma Beta Xi Inc. (Riverside County)
- Silicon Valley De-Bug (Santa Clara County)
- Young Women's Freedom Center (San Francisco County)
- Youth Justice Coalition (Los Angeles County)

This interim evaluation report explores changes in the local advocacy environment, changes in community power to advocate for a healthy justice system, and lessons learned, with a focus on activities undertaken or completed by PYJI-funded partners and their coalitions between January and June 2018.

PYJI Engagement and Accomplishments

PYJI-funded partners, in collaboration with their local coalitions, are engaged in a wide range of advocacy, organizing, and youth-development activities to promote a healthy justice system. Collectively, partners in the 11 counties engaged 441 young people and 407 family members in their PYJI coalitions during this evaluation period. Youth and family members were involved in activities including organizing and advocacy, leadership



¹ PYJI is funded by Sierra Health Foundation, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation and managed by The Center at Sierra Health Foundation.

development, and research. Close to two thirds (61%) of engaged youth have current or previous juvenile justice system involvement.

During this evaluation period, PYJI-funded partners and coalition members participated in a variety of activities that impacted their local advocacy environment and contributed to changes in community power to advocate for a healthy justice system, as discussed briefly below.

Changes in the Local Advocacy Environment

Building and strengthening alliances. Multiple funded partners reported adding partners to their PYJI coalitions and increasing connections with existing partners.

Engaging with system stakeholders and elected officials. In numerous counties, PYJI-funded partners and their coalition members forged new relationships and cultivated existing ones, including convening meetings with city council members and other elected officials, establishing referral partnerships with the county public defender's office, providing training for school district staff and faculty, and participating in youth diversion efforts.

Involvement in decision-making processes. PYJI partners and their coalition members in several counties, including some PYJI youth leaders, gained 14 seats at local policymaking tables that impact decision making related to juvenile justice or education.

Building on policymaker transitions. In several counties, the recent transitions of influential roles such as chief of police or probation signaled the possibility for reform in these jurisdictions, and some PYJI partners have begun forming relationships with these newly appointed stakeholders.

Increasing organizational capacity and contributing to progressive policies. Funded partners drew on their strengthened alliances and increased organizational capacity to contribute to progressive juvenile justice policies. This included giving public testimony and supporting justice reinvestment efforts.

Changes in Community Power to Advocate for a Healthy Justice System

Knowledge building and peer learning. Most funded partners report expanding their partnerships within the statewide PYJI network, which often has facilitated learning about new approaches and exploring opportunities for working together.

Using social media to organize and network. Some partners used social networking to grow their networks and share knowledge among PYJI sites. Most funded partners were active on Twitter, and six made online connections with other PYJI partners.

Enhancing organizational capacity through technical assistance. PYJI grantees continued to work with the initiative's technical assistance (TA) providers—California Budget & Policy Center, National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, National Center for Youth Law, and W. Haywood Burns Institute—to receive TA in identified areas. In addition, many funded partners engaged in cross-site peer-to-peer learning.

Developing leadership and providing mentoring. Several counties provided leadership development, mentoring, and other forms of training and support to engage young people and their families in organizing and advocacy, including providing support with meeting facilitation, public speaking, design and implementation of research projects, data analysis, and development of policy recommendations.

Lessons Learned About Organizing for a Healthy Justice System

Drawing on input from funded partners, coalition members, and young people who participate in PYJI activities, several lessons learned about organizing for a healthy justice system surfaced during this evaluation period.

Youth are at the center of funded partners' advocacy efforts. Numerous partners described engaging with and training youth, many of whom are juvenile justice system-impacted, as central to their advocacy work. This includes developing youth leaders, supporting youth in participatory action research, providing space for young people to reflect on their experiences, and addressing challenges encountered while engaging youth in advocacy.

Collaboration and partnership strengthen advocacy efforts. Collaboration among like-minded organizations is a central aspect of organizing for a healthy justice system and a strength of this phase of PYJI. The time and resources provided through support from The Center at Sierra Health Foundation helped funded partners build and strengthen their coalitions and, in turn, mobilize to effect or inform substantial policy change at the local and state levels.

Funding remains a challenge. All partners described how the PYJI grant contributed to building and strengthening their local coalition, increasing their organization's capacity to organize, leveraging other funding sources for similar work, and/or culminating in substantial county-level policy change. In addition, in addressing the funding community in general, some partners and coalition members stated that continued funding for organizing and advocacy is needed, particularly due to the gradual nature of youth engagement and organizing; several also shared a critical need for flexible funding.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for The Center at Sierra Health Foundation to consider emerged from the evaluation data.

- 1. Continue to fund and support community-led advocacy and reform efforts.** As recommended in the previous interim report, ongoing funding continues to be a priority. Although PYJI partner organizations have accomplished a lot in a short amount of time, the structural inequities they are working to change are rooted in historical systems of oppression. Thus, long-term investments into the infrastructure of community-led reform efforts are necessary to see a meaningful return.
- 2. Support organizations' capacity building for organizing and advocacy in ways/formats that are most useful to individual grantees.** Allow for flexibility in spending and innovative approaches when supporting funded partners' needs for increasing capacity. In some cases, this support may take the form of TA provided under a more formal structure, and in other cases this may be best accomplished through peer-led TA or peer learning.
- 3. Continue to encourage and inspire other funding organizations/foundations to shift their practices related to supporting community organizing and advocacy.** As noted in the previous interim report, some PYJI partners continued to describe a need for some foundations to shift their approach to funding community organizing and advocacy. Partners again shared a need for funders to prioritize, respect, and uplift community voice and expertise, with a focus on youth voice, when supporting these efforts.

Acknowledgements

Sierra Health Foundation and the NCCD evaluation team would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Prince White (pictured below) for his contributions to this evaluation and to the Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) in general. In addition, we are extremely grateful for his commitment to the well-being of young people and the transformation of the youth justice system. Prince passed away in August 2018, after an impressive and impactful career as an organizer, educator, advocate, and mentor, including serving as the program and policy campaign coordinator with Urban Peace Movement in Oakland, which partners with Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice on PYJI. Prince was a visionary leader who leaves behind a vast network and community of colleagues and young people who will carry on the mission to advocate and organize for a healthy youth justice system.

As a member of the PYJI Evaluation Advisory Committee, Prince's input helped shaped the vision, plan, metrics, and mechanics of this evaluation. His connection with youth in the PYJI network and commitment to uplifting youth voice was instrumental to the organization and execution of youth focus groups at PYJI Learning Community events. Prince's leadership on the PYJI Evaluation Advisory Committee and willingness to share his expertise and critiques about research and evaluation helped set the tone for the collaborative nature of this evaluation. We would like to extend our condolences to Prince's family and express our gratitude for the opportunity to partner with and learn from him during this process.

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Introduction

The Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI)² seeks to transform the juvenile justice system through a broad-based, multi-year effort grounded in the principles of positive youth development and focused on aligning policy and practice with young people's developmental stages. PYJI entered its third phase in early 2017, with community-based organizations (CBOs) in 11 counties across the state of California receiving funding to advance positive juvenile justice, working in collaboration with local coalitions to develop and implement reform activities. The goal of the third phase of PYJI is to help communities across California transform juvenile justice practice and policy into a more just, effective system that is aligned with the developmental needs of young people.

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) was selected to evaluate this third phase of PYJI, focusing on changes in the local advocacy environment, changes in community power to advocate for a healthy justice system, and lessons learned during the grant period. Through the

evaluation, NCCD seeks to glean key lessons that the Sierra Health Foundation and its philanthropic partners can use to support communities in strengthening local infrastructure for organizing and advocacy.

PYJI Overview

PYJI is based on several core elements of juvenile justice, described briefly below, that support young people's well-being.

1. Shifting the juvenile justice field toward a positive youth development frame. Positive youth development is a strengths-based approach to working with young people that emphasizes youth's assets; development of pro-social skills; and connections with supportive, positive peers and adults.
2. Developing and implementing trauma-informed practices and policies across the juvenile justice system in order to acknowledge the deeply rooted trauma that system-involved young people have likely



² PYJI is funded by Sierra Health Foundation, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation and is managed by The Center at Sierra Health Foundation.

experienced, facilitate healing, and avoid re-traumatization.

3. Delivering wraparound services in a strengths-based, culturally responsive, and supportive manner, in the least-restrictive environment.
4. Improving operational capacity to assess and meet young people's developmental, physical, and mental health needs, and reducing racial and ethnic disparities.

The current phase of PYJI, which is the third phase of the initiative that began in 2012, launched in early 2017 and shifts the emphasis in funding from systems to nonprofit CBOs. During this phase, grassroots organizations in 11 counties across California received funding to work in collaboration with a local coalition to accelerate a statewide movement toward a more youth development-focused juvenile justice system. These organizations represent communities of color that are overly represented in and inequitably treated by the juvenile justice system.

Despite having limited resources compared to the systems they have been working to change, these organizations and their community partners are leading the call against mass incarceration and in support of disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline and eliminating racial disparities throughout the system. This phase of PYJI looks to support the communities most impacted by the juvenile justice system in utilizing their collective expertise and passion to bring about change.

PYJI coalitions have identified several policy themes to address through their work including but not limited to: participatory defense for youth potentially facing adult court, justice reinvestment, district attorney accountability, intersections of immigration and juvenile and criminal justice systems, probation transformation, school climate reform, and other issues identified by the young people with whom these organizations work. These collaboratives are engaged in peer-to-peer learning exchanges, youth participatory action

research, and various base-building activities. All PYJI coalitions are focusing on developing youth leadership in policy change, identifying the support they need to be impactful, and taking inventory of the assets and expertise within their coalitions. The following organizations are grantee partners.

- Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (Alameda County)
- Fathers & Families of San Joaquin
- Fresno Barrios Unidos
- Resilience Orange County
- RYSE Youth Center (Contra Costa County)
- Sacramento Area Congregations Together
- San Diego Organizing Project
- Sigma Beta Xi Inc. (Riverside County)
- Silicon Valley De-Bug (Santa Clara County)
- Young Women's Freedom Center (San Francisco County)
- Youth Justice Coalition (Los Angeles County)

This evaluation seeks to identify key themes and trends, successes, challenges, and lessons learned during the grant period with the goal of developing an understanding of how to effectively support a community-led effort to transform the youth justice system.

NCCD completed the first interim evaluation report for this phase of PYJI in March 2018; the first report presented findings for January to December 2017. This second interim report focuses primarily on activities undertaken or completed by PYJI-funded partners and their coalition members between January and June 2018. Due to the gradual nature of advocacy work, this report may sometimes discuss an activity that occurred outside of this timeframe; the evaluation team's goal is to highlight overall progress and accomplishments throughout the grant period, with an emphasis on those occurring during the first six months of 2018.

Evaluation Methodology and Report Structure

Research Questions and Advisory Committee

Three primary research questions developed by The Center at Sierra Health Foundation (The Center) guide the evaluation.

- How (if at all) does the advocacy environment/ infrastructure in the counties with funded community partners change over the grant period?
- To what extent and in what ways (if any) does community power to advocate for a healthy justice system in the counties with funded community partners change over the grant period?

- What lessons are learned by The Center and community partners about organizing for a healthy justice system?

An evaluation advisory committee, composed of several representatives of PYJI-funded partners and coalition members, provides guidance on developing data collection methods and tools and interpreting findings.

Data Sources

The evaluation draws on multiple sources of primary and secondary data and considers both quantitative and qualitative information. The evaluation design sought to minimize the data





collection burden on evaluation participants and relied mainly on existing data (such as funded partners' semi-annual progress reports, finance reports, social media posts, etc.) and using scheduled PYJI activities and other related events as data-gathering opportunities. During this evaluation period, NCCD's data collection efforts included the following.

- Co-facilitating, in collaboration with a PYJI coalition member organization, one focus group at the June 2018 PYJI Learning Community in Sacramento (a two-day gathering for all funded partners and coalition members). The purpose was to gather information from young people about what they have learned or gained through their PYJI experience, challenges experienced in advocacy and organizing, and where funders should direct resources to engage youth in this work. A total of 28 young people attended the focus group.
- Administering a survey with funded partners and coalition members about the local advocacy environment, participation in coalition building and organizing activities,

engagement of system-involved youth and other stakeholders, capacity-building efforts, and progress in and challenges of organizing activities. The survey was provided at the June 2018 Learning Community and was available online through July 2018. The survey analysis is based on 34 surveys (21 from staff of funded partners and 13 from coalition members).³

- Conducting four individual interviews with PYJI technical assistance (TA) providers in 2018 to explore the extent that PYJI sites have been engaged for TA to this point, how TA has been used by sites, and challenges of TA delivery.

Report Structure

This report explores key findings that relate to the three primary research questions, presenting relevant quantitative data and major themes drawn from the qualitative data. Due to the ongoing, long-term nature of advocacy, the findings reported here acknowledge important steps on the journey toward policy wins as well as policy victories themselves. The report concludes with several recommendations, drawing on key findings, for The Center to consider regarding this and potential future phases of PYJI.

³ In all, 41 surveys were received in June and July 2018. However, seven of those were not included in the final analysis due to having a very limited number of responses.

Findings

PYJI's community partners, in collaboration with their coalitions, are engaged in a wide range of advocacy, organizing, and youth-development activities to promote a healthy justice system. Collectively, partners in the 11 counties engaged 441 young people and 407 family members in their PYJI coalitions during the current grant period. Close to two thirds (61%) of engaged youth have current or previous juvenile justice system involvement. The most common type of participation in PYJI-related activities is in organizing and advocacy; see Table 1 for a comparison of youth and family involvement in activities in 2017 and 2018.⁴

Changes in the Local Advocacy Environment

To understand if and how the local advocacy environment in counties with funded partners changes during the grant period, the evaluation explores several key areas that broadly fall under a framework of improving conditions for advocacy.⁵ These areas include the following.

- Experiences of funded partners and coalition members in building and strengthening alliances, in their coalitions and in their larger networks.

Table 1: PYJI Participation (2017–2018)

Type of PYJI Activity	2017 N	2018 N
Number of Youth Engaged in:		
Organizing/advocacy	444	436
Leadership development	150	246
Research	95	116
Number of Family Members Engaged in:		
Organizing/advocacy	280	387
Leadership development	273	392
Research	49	36

Source: PYJI-funded partners' progress reports (2017 and 2018)

⁴ Some funded partners engage youth in organizing and advocacy activities outside of their formal coalition membership.

⁵ Findings reported for research questions 1 and 2 may overlap, as many funded partners' activities, steps toward change, and policy victories could be viewed through a lens of either changing the advocacy environment or of building community power.



- Willingness of system stakeholders (such as probation, police, education, etc.) and elected officials to engage in meaningful conversations or partnerships with advocates.
- Active involvement of advocates in decision-making processes that can impact juvenile justice reform, such as gaining seats on state- or county-level policymaking tables.
- Policymaker transitions that can signal a new appetite for reforming juvenile justice policies and practices. This may also be seen in adoption of new stances or platforms by existing leadership.

Activities and Accomplishments

During this grant period, PYJI-funded partners and coalition members engaged in a variety of activities, including expanding their coalitions, engaging stakeholders including system actors, focusing their coalition's work, and establishing

and pushing policy agendas. Notably, many sites continued or built upon work from the previous evaluation period in areas including improving school climate, ending voluntary probation, and implementing participatory defense.

Building and Strengthening Alliances

Multiple funded partners reported adding new partners to their PYJI coalitions and increasing connections with existing partners. The Young Women's Freedom Center (YWFC) engaged legal aid organizations, the San Francisco Youth Commission, parents, youth, and others in YWFC's San Francisco Reimagine Justice Coalition. Organizations joining the PYJI coalition of Resilience Orange County (Resilience OC) include Latino Health Access and the Korean Resource Center.

The growth of the Riverside County Alliance propelled Sigma Beta Xi, Inc., and another alliance

member to file a class action lawsuit in July 2018, in partnership with PYJI TA provider National Youth Law Center, against the county probation department's Youth Accountability Team (YAT). The lawsuit alleges that YAT brings young people who are not court-involved into the juvenile justice system, leading to violations of due process, privacy, and free speech and having disparate effects on black and Latino youth.⁶

In Los Angeles, the Big Probation Change Coalition, led by the Youth Justice Coalition (YJC) and other core partners, expanded from four to 15 groups, contributing to policy wins including the probation department's formal dismantling of its "voluntary probation" program using Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC 236).

Willingness of Systems and Elected Officials to Engage With Advocates

In numerous counties, PYJI-funded partners and their coalition members forged new relationships and cultivated existing ones with system stakeholders. Sacramento has developed a strong relationship with the county probation department; one byproduct of this relationship is the facilitation of referrals of youth held in detention to the Sacramento Area Congregations Together (ACT) organizer for support with reentry.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a plan in late 2017 to establish an office of youth diversion and development as part of the county Department of Health Services. This approval followed development of a plan to divert up to 11,000 youth annually from arrest and link them with community-based services. Youth from YJC were the only system-impacted youth with consistent involvement in the planning. In 2018, at a Youth Diversion and Development Summit, YJC members shared their experiences of being the youth voice on the planning workgroup.

Some counties are strengthening their partnership with their public defender's office. Orange County established a formal youth referral partnership with this office; through this agreement, Resilience OC is involved in plea negotiations and negotiations about conditions for youth to abide by for alternatives to detention, signaling the trust the organization has built with system actors. Similarly, Santa Clara County strengthened its relationships with both the probation department and the public defender's office, leading to creation of a process in which the public defender and similar entities⁷ will direct families to De-Bug and its partner, CARAS, when their attorneys meet with youth, particularly those facing transfer to the adult court system. "All players [involved in developing this process] are excited at this new evolution of our relationship," reported De-Bug.

San Joaquin County has forged a relationship with the juvenile justice district attorney, which in turn has strengthened their relationship with juvenile probation. "We continue to cultivate and harness [this relationship], and we are now looked upon as experts and leaders in the community around juvenile justice issues," reported Fathers & Families of San Joaquin. San Joaquin County is also partnering with the state's Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to provide culturally rooted healing services, including Fathers & Families' El Joven Noble and Sacred Fatherhood curricula, and reentry support at two DJJ facilities.

In Contra Costa County, RYSE has experienced increased interest from the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) in response to both the Positive School Climate Resolution that RYSE was instrumental in passing in the district in 2017 and RYSE's approach for addressing and supporting trauma and healing. At the district's

⁶ <https://youthlaw.org/case/sigma-beta-xi-v-county-of-riverside/>

⁷ The Alternate Defender and Independent Defense Office

request, RYSE is providing “Listening to Heal” sessions for community safety officers in WCCUSD schools and training for WCCUSD faculty.

PYJI youth in various counties met with their city council members and other elected officials during the evaluation period. In Orange County, PYJI youth justice fellows developed a youth-focused budget platform, which they presented at city budget hearings. “Their efforts were highly successful and translated into \$2.6 million in budgetary allocations towards youth-informed priorities,” reported Resilience OC. In Sacramento County, youth leaders held a research meeting with a city council member about summer jobs, summer camps, and transportation. In Contra Costa County, PYJI youth held a roundtable with a congress member and county supervisor to discuss the impacts of violence and overall devastation brought about in the community by mass incarceration.

Table 2 provides a snapshot over time of funded partners’ survey responses regarding relationship building with a range of key stakeholders.

Advocates’ Involvement in Decision-Making Processes

During the evaluation period, PYJI partners and their coalition members in several counties gained 14 seats at policymaking tables that impact decision making related to juvenile justice or education, including the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) in Los Angeles County, Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission, Reentry Council of the City & County of San Francisco, San Francisco Mayor’s Policy Transition Team, West Contra Costa Unified School District Local Control Accountability Plan community committee, and a committee in Santa Clara County that provides input on selecting a deputy chief for juvenile probation. Some of these seats are held by young people, including the appointment of a youth leader from YJC to the JJCC and the swearing in of the first youth of color on the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission.

Table 2: Who is Your Coalition Building Relationships With?
(funded partners only)

Type of Stakeholder	2017 Percent “Yes”	2018 Percent “Yes”
System stakeholders related to law enforcement	100%	81%
Other CBOs engaged in these issues	93%	90%
Local elected officials	85%	76%
System stakeholders related to education	85%	76%

Note: Sample size for Table 2 varies by item and ranges from 13 to 14 (2017 data) and 21 (2018 data).

In Los Angeles County, the appointment to the JJCC of several CBO representatives and at-large community members stemmed from advocacy efforts led by YJC and its coalition members that found the county was not in compliance with state law in its operation of the JJCC and allocation of county funds, leading to a mandate that community members sit on the JJCC.

In other counties, while not becoming formal members of policymaking tables, PYJI-funded partners and coalitions advocated for reform at these tables and in similar spaces. In San Diego County, a youth leader with the San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP) provided feedback to the state Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board on how to address police racial profiling and implement AB953 (Racial and Identity Profiling). In Fresno County, a noticeable uptick in community involvement at school board meetings and candidate forums helped increase community awareness of and participation in discussions related to local funding allocations for school resource officers and other policy matters impacting juvenile justice reform.

Policymaker Transitions

The recent transitions of influential roles in several counties signaled the possibility of reform in these jurisdictions. The 2017 appointment of Chief Daniel Hahn to the Sacramento Police Department is considered a victory in the local advocacy community. Chief Hahn is seen by advocates as bringing a more progressive approach to the department.

SDOP describes building a “powerful relationship” with San Diego County’s chief of probation, who was named to this position in 2016 and is supportive of SDOP’s vision to transform the county’s juvenile halls. SDOP reports having multiple meetings with the chief and that “[the chief] has already done our initial asks: reducing use of pepper spray, reducing use of solitary confinement, improving food, and expanding visiting hours.”

A new police chief was appointed in San Diego in 2018, following advocacy by SDOP and other CBOs for an open and transparent search process for this position. As part of the Coalition for Police Accountability and Transparency, SDOP is now involved in helping to shape the agenda of the recently selected chief.

Similarly, in San Francisco County, YWFC reports progress in the juvenile justice system administration, stating, “Our efforts to organize and to demand the conversation around ending the incarceration of young women in San Francisco have sparked action around ensuring protections for young women and more open dialogue.”

In Santa Clara County, De-Bug noticed increased visibility by the public defender’s office in various ways including the office’s defense of juvenile justice reforms to tough-on-crime proponents and reorganization of its staffing to match some of its most seasoned public defenders with young clients, thus “dispelling the notion that juvenile court is ‘training ground’ for defenders.”

Contributing to Progressive Policies Through Increased Organizational Capacity

Funded partners drew on their strengthened alliances and increased organizational capacity to inform and contribute to more progressive juvenile justice policies. During the evaluation period, De-Bug and its coalition secured full implementation of SB 395 (Miranda Rights for Youth) in Santa Clara County. Members of Sacramento County’s ACT youth organizing team went to the state capitol in support of SB 439 (Setting a Minimum Age for Juvenile Court Prosecution) including giving public testimony. Fathers & Families of San Joaquin conducted advocacy efforts for AB 2605, designed to prevent group homes from contacting law enforcement about non-emergency situations/offenses of youth in their care. Fathers & Families’ efforts included traveling to the state capitol to testify on this issue multiple times; since the passage of this legislation, the organization now



participates in the Child Welfare Policy Roundtable and continues to provide guidance on foster care issues. Fresno Barrios Unidos mobilized PYJI youth and families to participate in Equity on the Mall, an annual Central Valley-led day of action at the state capitol that provides an opportunity to meet with policymakers and discuss health, education, immigration, and other issues.⁸

Several counties have contributed to justice reinvestment efforts in which state corrections dollars are redirected to community-based youth programs. In Contra Costa County, RYSE co-hosted a share-out of a report, authored by the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, examining how

counties use millions in state funding provided by the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act and the Youthful Offender Block Grant. Contra Costa is one of the counties featured in this report. The new composition of the JJCC in Los Angeles, with the appointment of several CBO representatives and at-large community members (as noted earlier in this report), informed reallocation of funds from probation to youth development CBOs. PYJI youth from Fathers & Families of San Joaquin spoke at the state capitol in support of the Youth Reinvestment Fund, which the governor signed into the 2018–19 state budget (for \$37 million).

⁸ Equity on the Mall is organized by the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund, The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, and community partners.

Changes in Community Power to Advocate for a Healthy Justice System

This phase of PYJI seeks to build community power to advocate for a healthy justice system across California. This evaluation seeks to understand to what extent and in what ways, if any, this power changes over the grant period in funded partners' counties. A few major areas fall under a framework of increasing the capacity of PYJI-funded partners, their coalition members, and other community members to affect the distribution of resources, including the following.

- TA and knowledge building that enhances partners' and community capacity for organizing, including learning from peers and PYJI TA providers and providing leadership development, research training, and mentoring to youth and their families.
- Funded partners' use of social media to grow connections in the statewide PYJI network.
- Funded partners' efforts to strengthen their internal financial infrastructure for juvenile justice reform.

Activities and Accomplishments

Knowledge Building and Peer Learning

Knowledge building and peer learning have been actively embraced by PYJI participants. Most funded partners report expanding their partnerships within the statewide PYJI network, which oftentimes has facilitated new approaches and projects. RYSE and YWFC are building a relationship to explore steps that could end incarceration for young women in Contra Costa County; the organizations are also exploring the potential for conducting youth participatory action

research projects and holding joint sister circles. YWFC and Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ) are partnering to host freedom circles in Oakland.

Multiple counties reported learning how to apply De-Bug's participatory defense model to their local contexts and needs. Participatory defense is De-Bug's organizing model for families and communities to impact the outcome of cases in the court system, as well as transform the landscape of power in the criminal justice system. De-Bug began developing this model approximately 10 years ago, and De-Bug co-founder Raj Jayadev recently received a MacArthur Foundation fellowship recognizing his community organizing work.⁹

De-Bug has partnered with most other funded partners to assist them in including participatory defense in their work; some of these organizations are now participatory defense hubs, while others are in a planning phase before full implementation. In some funded counties, De-Bug has provided support on individual cases. Building on training from De-Bug earlier in the grant period, Resilience OC implemented several successful participatory defense efforts in their county, including diverting young people both from juvenile hall and adult court transfers.

Using Social Media to Organize and Network

Some partners used social media to grow their networks and share knowledge among PYJI sites. Drawing from social network analysis, which provides a framework to investigate the social structures and relationships that exist within networks, NCCD examined active Twitter accounts for the 11 funded partners in order to explore PYJI-related connections made via social media.¹⁰

⁹ MacArthur Foundation, MacArthur Fellows program, <https://www.macfound.org/fellows/1014/>

¹⁰ An "active" Twitter account is operationalized as a public Twitter account that is associated with a funded partner and that produced at least one tweet from June 1, 2017, to April 30, 2018. The analysis examined the number of times a funded partner tagged another partner, or mentioned them without tagging them, in a tweet. The majority of funded partners maintain an active Twitter presence; of those partners who are active on Twitter, some directly referenced other PYJI-funded organizations, and some did not.

As shown in Figure 1, six of the 11 funded partners made online connections with other PYJI partners through their Twitter activity; in addition, most of the six made at least one connection with another funded partner outside of their regional geographic area (i.e., Northern California, Southern California, or Central California).

Some funded partners were more active on Twitter than others. De-Bug was the most active in making connections to other PYJI sites and served as a catalyst of social networking within the PYJI community. Most organizations in Figure 1 also reached out to De-Bug via Twitter at some point during the evaluation period. Twitter provided a

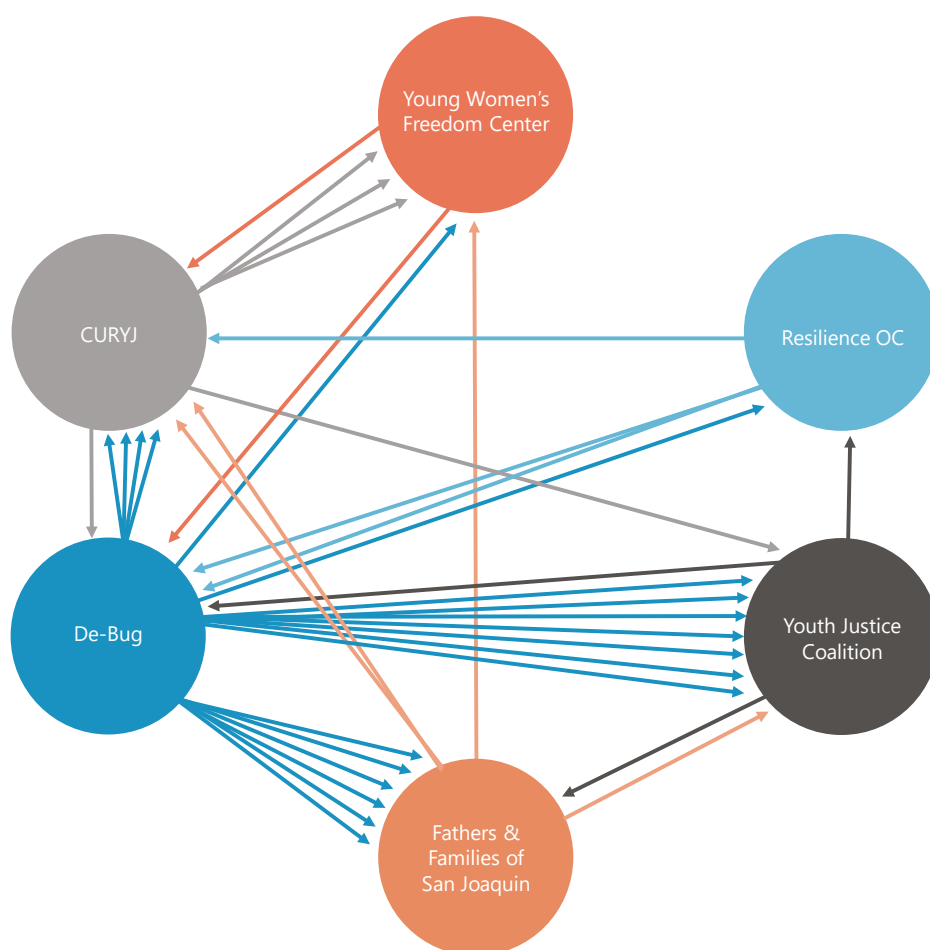
tool for partners to create and maintain networks within the PYJI community that extended beyond their local area.

Technical Assistance to Enhance Capacity

During this evaluation period, PYJI grantees continued to receive TA from the initiative's designated TA providers, described below.

- California Budget & Policy Center: Provides expertise on state fiscal and economic policy issues with the goal of improving the economic and social well-being of low- and middle-income Californians.

Figure 1



Note: Each arrow indicates a mention or tag on Twitter from one PYJI organization to the other.

- National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform: Provides TA, consulting, research, and organizational development in the fields of juvenile and criminal justice, youth development, and violence prevention for government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropic foundations.
- National Center for Youth Law: Leads high-impact campaigns that weave together litigation, research, public awareness, policy development, and TA, with a goal to transform the multiple public systems serving vulnerable children.
- W. Haywood Burns Institute: Works to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities by building a community-centered response to youthful misbehavior that is equitable and restorative, working with decision makers at the local level to effect change that transforms juvenile justice systems.

PYJI's TA structure allows funded partners and coalition members to access the expertise of TA providers to build their capacity to engage in local advocacy and organizing-related activities. Each TA provider is accessible to each of the funded partners, and funded partners are encouraged to seek out the TA that is most pertinent to their work. TA providers share their expertise with funded partners through direct/one-on-one engagement, online webinars, PYJI learning convenings, and informal conversations and interactions. In addition, recognizing the tremendous expertise within the funded partner and coalition member organizations themselves, The Center has encouraged and invited funded partners to engage in peer-to-peer learning activities with each other.

During this evaluation period, one example of how TA helped bolster advocacy efforts within the PYJI network was in Riverside County, where Sigma Beta Xi sought TA from the California Budget &

Policy Center (CBPC) and the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL). Sigma Beta Xi reached out to CBPC to better understand the Riverside County budget and to identify what resources were being allocated for programs related to youth justice reform. They determined that they wanted to advocate for allocating more resources to CBOs to operate diversion programming within the county. Sigma Beta Xi then received support from NCYL in accessing data regarding local racial and ethnic disparities and in drafting a letter to the Board of Supervisors requesting reallocation of county funds. Although the county's Board of Supervisors provisionally approved Sigma Beta Xi's request for reallocation, it was not approved in the final county budget. Despite not getting the result they ultimately wanted, this process was a significant milestone in Sigma Beta Xi's nascent efforts to advocate for a healthy youth justice system. Moreover, Sigma Beta Xi's leadership found PYJI's TA providers to be "a valuable resource" in the county budget advocacy process and mentioned that "if it wasn't for PYJI, we wouldn't have had the confidence to engage in the process."

A critical element of successful TA delivery identified by both TA providers and funded partners is relationship building. While TA providers acknowledged the need to make themselves available and their scope of services and expertise known to funded partners, they also recognize that an investment in building relationships is critical to developing and sustaining productive TA provider-TA receiver relationships. TA providers discussed how through relationship building with sites, they can gain a better understanding of the local dynamics and challenges the sites must navigate and provide more tailored and specific guidance and information. Moreover, funded partners and coalition members develop a better understanding of the TA providers' scope of expertise and how the assistance they can offer aligns with their needs.

Although more relationship building between PYJI sites and TA providers could lead to more overall engagement of TA and improved capacity to engage in system reform efforts, TA providers and funded partners understand that time and resources limit the amount of relationship building that can take place during a grant period. Some TA providers suggested that learning convenings feature workshops from each TA provider as a sample of the TA they can provide through deeper engagement.

Table 3 highlights types of learning opportunities that funded partners reported engaging in, based on survey data from 2017 and 2018.

Leadership Development and Mentoring

Several counties provided leadership development, mentoring, and other forms of training to engage and support young people and their families in organizing and advocacy. In counties including Orange, San Joaquin, and Santa Clara, family members actively engaged in participatory defense work for loved ones. Fresno Barrios

Unidos partnered with Focus Forward, which provides services at the Fresno County Juvenile Justice Campus, to develop and present a series of workshops for parents of incarcerated young people. Workshop topics included youth organizing, state policy advocacy, and storytelling and messaging.

In Contra Costa County, RYSE led and supported various efforts to develop young people's organizing capacity. This included launching WeRYSE, a biweekly program for juvenile justice system-impacted youth to practice facilitation, public speaking, and managing groups and space, and appointing four RYSE fellows to the WCCUSD Local Control Accountability Plan community committee in the spring of 2018. Fellows analyzed WCCUSD spending on educational services for high-need students, developed policy recommendations to present to the school board, and successfully advocated for the district to stop using a specific funding source for campus police and security.

Table 3: Participation in PYJI Learning Opportunities (2017 and 2018)
(funded partners only)

Type of Learning Opportunity	2017 Percent "Yes"	2018 Percent "Yes"
Participated in other types of formal or informal learning/information exchange with other PYJI partners or coalition members	69%	60%
Participated in one or more PYJI webinars presented by PYJI TA providers	69%	60%*
Participated in one or more monthly calls for PYJI partners and coalition members	69%	N/A
Participated in TA with a PYJI TA provider	47%	33%

* Webinars and calls were combined on the 2018 survey.

Note: Sample size for Table 3 ranged from 13 to 15 (2017 data) and from 20 to 21 (2018 data).

Several counties supported youth participatory action research (YPAR) projects to build young people’s research capacity. In Alameda County, the Dream Beyond Bars Fellows, all of whom are formerly incarcerated, participated in a nine-month YPAR process to design a research project, develop and implement surveys and focus groups, analyze and code data, and publish their research findings that highlight the harm of being incarcerated as a young person and the critical need for healing-centered alternatives to incarceration. San Joaquin County led a Summer of Love and Liberation Academy for juvenile justice system-impacted youth, engaging them in learning about the criminal justice system, civic engagement, policy, and other topics. They also conducted a YPAR project that examines the true cost of youth incarceration. In San Francisco, six young women received YPAR training and conducted a research project on system-involved women.

The Riverside County Alliance identified and trained six youth leaders who are committed to advocate for reform in the county juvenile justice system.

The youth leaders participated in various activities including organizing a community town hall.

Table 4 provides a snapshot of funded partners’ survey responses about the engagement of system-involved youth in PYJI activities.

How Partners Use and Leverage PYJI Funding

During the grant period as a whole, funded partners engaged in various activities to financially support and build their organizing efforts. The average PYJI grant for the 18-month period was approximately \$116,000 (grant awards varied based on county population size). An analysis of funded partners’ financial reports for the entire grant period to date (January 1, 2017, – June 30, 2018) shows that most partners used a portion of their PYJI funds to provide stipends, scholarships, or other support to youth working on PYJI-related projects. This ranged from less than 1% to 20% of sites’ overall PYJI budgets. In addition, most partners dedicated some of their PYJI funds to consultants, ranging from 2% to 56% of their overall PYJI budget.

Table 4: Type of Coalition Engagement by System-Involved Youth
(funded partners only)

Type of Engagement	2017 Percent “Yes”	2018 Percent “Yes”
Received training, coaching, and/or mentoring in youth leadership, research, etc.	100%	100%
Provided input and feedback on organizing and advocacy work	100%	90%
Led or helped to lead organizing and advocacy work	93%	90%

Note: Sample size for Table 4 varies by item and ranges from 14 to 15 (2017 data) and 19 to 21 (2018 data).

Most funded partners reported seeking funding from sources outside of The Center for work related to partners' PYJI efforts. Altogether, seven funded partners report leveraging their PYJI funding to request approximately \$1 million from other funding sources. Of this amount, partners have collectively received about 40% of the total funds requested.¹¹

Lessons Learned About Organizing for a Healthy Justice System

In their January to June 2018 progress report, funded partners were asked to describe major reflections, learnings, and recommendations that emerged from their agency's and partners' involvement in PYJI. In addition, they were asked to describe what the PYJI grant enabled them to do that they otherwise could not have. In addition, through either surveys or focus groups, funded partners, coalition members, and young people were asked what they would like funders and policymakers to know about organizing for a healthy justice system. Several key themes, which together are the basis for some of the lessons learned from this phase of PYJI, surfaced from this data.

Youth Are at the Center of Funded Partners' Advocacy Efforts

Youth are the focal point of funded partners' efforts to organize for a healthy justice system. Numerous partners described engaging with and training youth, many of whom are system impacted, as central to their advocacy work. This includes developing youth leaders, supporting youth fellows in participatory action research, and providing space for young people to reflect on their experiences. Some partners also discussed challenges they have encountered while engaging youth in advocacy, including helping youth address

trauma and meet their basic needs in order to facilitate their consistent involvement in PYJI efforts. Young people voiced a similar need for funding to participate regularly in PYJI work; often, youth must decide between working a wage-earning job or taking part in PYJI activities that may include a stipend or be uncompensated. One youth said, "We need incentives for youth. I'm the only provider for my family and I take time from my [paying] job to do PYJI work."

Collaboration and Partnership Strengthen Advocacy Efforts

Collaboration among like-minded organizations is a central aspect of organizing for a healthy justice system and is clearly a strength of this phase of PYJI. Multiple funded partners described the usefulness of partnering with organizations doing similar work under the PYJI umbrella. The time and resources provided through support from The Center have helped funded partners build and strengthen their coalitions, and in turn, mobilize to effect or inform substantial policy change at the local and state levels. Multiple funded partners emphasized the helpfulness of connecting or deepening connections with other organizations engaged in PYJI work, which aided in strengthening partners' statewide alliances and often provided peer learning opportunities. For example, several partners discussed the utility of learning from peer organization De-Bug about their participatory defense model and the application of this model to their own communities. "The PYJI work has allowed us to build deeper relationships with partners from across the state so that we can learn from and support each other's collective work. It has also allowed us to see the state landscape on youth justice and how we can collaborate to create an ecosystem of support and advocacy," reported Alameda County.

¹¹ Of partners that indicated requesting funds from other sources, not all partners specified the amount requested and/or received from these sources. Therefore, actual totals are likely higher than noted here.



Funding Remains a Challenge

Funded partners and coalition members expressed appreciation for the funding provided by Sierra Health Foundation to support their advocacy work in organizing for a healthy justice system. All partners described how the PYJI grant contributed to building and strengthening their local coalition, increasing their organization's capacity to organize, leveraging other funding sources for similar work, and/or culminating in substantial county-level policy change. Several partners also sought and received funding from sources outside of Sierra Health Foundation and its PYJI funding partners to support their reform efforts.

In addressing the funding community in general, several funded partners and coalition members stated that continued funding for organizing and advocacy is needed, particularly due to the gradual nature of youth engagement and organizing; several also shared a critical need for flexible funding, for example, to support general operating expenses and to assist juvenile justice system-impacted youth and their families in meeting basic needs, which in turn strengthens their capacity for meaningful involvement in advocacy efforts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The findings for the third phase of PYJI, with a focus in this report on activities conducted during the first half of 2018, highlight several key areas that reflect notable progress in PYJI partners' and coalition members' advocacy efforts and merit further exploration. PYJI coalitions across the state are facilitating and supporting numerous advocacy, organizing, and youth-development activities to advocate for a healthy justice system; these activities are leading to changes in local advocacy environments, increases in community power, and tangible policy wins. Key areas of growth, development, and achievement by PYJI partners and coalitions during the grant period include the following.

- Collectively engaging nearly 850 youth and family members to actively collaborate in PYJI coalitions across the state. Close to two thirds (61%) of engaged youth have current or previous juvenile justice system involvement.
- Continuing to strengthen organizational and community capacity and power for advocacy, including conducting base-building activities to grow local networks of allies and champions, deepening engagement with juvenile justice system-impacted youth and their families, and engaging in peer-to-peer opportunities to share, collaborate, and learn.
- Continuing to advance progress on the road to local policy reforms, including making important inroads in working with system stakeholders.

- Continuing to achieve policy victories at the local and state levels, including informing policy changes in school and probation systems and contributing to progressive juvenile justice policies.

In addition to examining the evaluation data in the aggregate, the NCCD evaluation team is interested in exploring similarities and differences across the 11 funded partners. While the evaluation team plans to explore these nuances in more detail in the final evaluation report, some similarities that have emerged include an appetite across funded partners for enhancing the capacity of their organization and coalition to advocate for juvenile justice reform; this includes engaging in cross-site knowledge exchange and learning with PYJI peers. Some differences are present too, such as an organization's experience with organizing and advocacy prior to receiving PYJI funding and the openness or readiness of county-level systems to engage with advocates.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for The Center to consider emerged from the evaluation data.

- 1. Continue to fund and support community-led advocacy and reform efforts.** As recommended in the previous interim report, ongoing funding continues to be a priority. Although PYJI partner organizations have accomplished a lot in a short amount of time, the structural inequities they are working to change are rooted in historical systems of oppression. Thus, long-term investments into

the infrastructure of community-led reform efforts are necessary to see a meaningful return.

- 2. Support organizations' capacity building for organizing and advocacy in ways/formats that are most useful to individual grantees.** Allow for flexibility in spending and innovative approaches when supporting funded partners' needs for increasing capacity. In some cases, this support may take the form of TA provided under a more formal structure, and in other cases this may be best accomplished through peer-led TA or peer learning.

- 3. Continue to encourage and inspire other funding organizations/foundations to shift their practices related to supporting community organizing and advocacy.** As in the previous interim report, some PYJI partners continued to describe a need for some foundations to shift their approach to funding community organizing and advocacy. Partners again shared a need for funders to prioritize, respect, and uplift community voice and expertise, with a focus on youth voice, when supporting these efforts.

