

Meeting Date: June 25, 2026
Agenda Item No. 8
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From: [Belen Hernandez Garcia](#)
To: [FGG, Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Alejandro Martinez](#)
Subject: [External] Letter of Support: Department of Youth Development (DYD)
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 4:54:29 PM
Attachments: [Department of Youth Development Letter 11 JUN 2026.pdf](#)

Dear County Clerk and Supervisor Offices,

Please receive the attached letter on behalf of 17 organizations expressing their support for a Department of Youth Development Feasibility Study.

We are available if you have any follow-up questions. Thank you

Best Regards,

Belen Hernandez
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Mid-City Community Advocacy Network
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June 11, 2026

San Diego County Board of Supervisors
 1600 Pacific Highway
 San Diego, CA 92101

Re: Support for a Department of Youth Development Feasibility Study

Dear Chair and Members of the Board:

We write as a coalition of organizations committed to the safety, health, and future of San Diego County’s young people to urge the Board to allocate \$250,000 in the County budget to explore the creation of a Department of Youth Development (DYD). A DYD would establish a care-first approach for youth under 26, centered on prevention, healing, mentorship, community-based services, and restorative justice rather than a controlling, punitive and carceral system that harms youth and worsens their outcomes.

San Diego already has important foundations to build on. The County’s Ending Girls’ Incarceration initiative, its partnership with the Vera Institute of Justice, and the work of the Juvenile Justice Ad-Hoc Subcommittee all point toward the need for a coordinated, youth-centered structure that can align strategy, oversight, and implementation. A feasibility study would allow the County to evaluate benefits, costs, implementation options, and lessons

learned from reforms in Los Angeles and elsewhere before making a long-term structural investment.

The Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development offers a strong model. It launched its Department of Youth Development in 2022 and built a supportive ecosystem with community partners to provide mentoring, leadership training, career preparation, and mental health resources. Their annual report also cites an estimated cost of \$13,646 per youth and savings of approximately \$37,070 per youth through diverted arrests and avoided future adjudications, showing that youth development can be both humane and fiscally responsible.

A San Diego DYD would help move the County from fragmented and harmful responses to a unified public safety strategy rooted in youth well-being. It would create regional care networks, expand community-based diversion, elevate lived-experience leaders, and strengthen the County's ability to prevent harm before it occurs. Just as importantly, it would ensure that impacted youth and community members have a real role in shaping the systems that affect them.

We respectfully ask the Board of Supervisors to take the first step by funding the feasibility study for a Department of Youth Development in the budget. This investment would demonstrate San Diego County's commitment to development, not detention, and to a future where young people can thrive in their communities. We, the undersigned organizations, request that you allocate 250k in the budget this June 2026 to conduct a Feasibility Study for a Department of Youth Development in San Diego County. Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

A Reason to Survive (ARTS)
Center on Policy Initiatives
Civic Mapping
Community Budget Alliance
Epiphany Women In Focus
Freedom2succeed
Majdal: Arab Community Center of San Diego
Mid-City Community Advocacy Network
Our Time To Act
PWC
San Diego Organizing Project
San Diego Youth Services
The AjA Project
The Kinship Fund
Youth Empowerments Finest
Youth to End Solitary SD
Youth Will

CC: Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Ebony N. Shelton