

Impact Report

2022

Serving Los Angeles Youth



L.A. OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH COLLABORATIVE



Contents

Who We Are	1
A Message from the Director	3
A Message from a Young Leader	4
2022 Highlights	5
Partner Spotlight	8
Foster Youth at Work	9
Dayshanae's Story	11
Foster Youth College Advancement Project	13
LAOYC Young Leaders	15
Iziko's Story	17
Thank You to Our Partners & Supporters	19



"The LAOYC is a coalition of shared leadership across sectors that mutually influence one another and collectively share strategies and goals designed to promote cross sector collaboration resulting in improved educational and employment outcomes for our transition age youth."

Steve Patrick
Vice President & Executive Director, Forum for
Community Solutions, The Aspen Institute



Who We Are

OUR MISSION
is to build multi-sector partnerships to improve education and employment outcomes for transition age foster youth to thrive.

WE BELIEVE
Transition age foster youth in Los Angeles County have the knowledge and skills to allow them to **achieve economic mobility and flourish in their personal lives.**

Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative is a collaborative of over **117 partners from public agencies, community-based organizations, foundations, youth, and educational institutions.**

The LAOYC builds partnerships across sectors to improve education and employment outcomes for transition age foster youth (TAY).

We work collaboratively with partners, including government agencies, education institutions, philanthropic and community-based organizations, youth, and private sector employers. We believe we can improve the systems designed to support TAY, through a long-term and sustainable collective-impact approach, utilizing five strategic priorities:

- MAKING CONNECTIONS
- BUILDING CAPACITY
- TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS
- ELEVATING YOUTH VOICE
- PROMOTING AWARENESS

"Completing education and entering the workforce is one of the great challenges facing our community's youth and young adults. Thankfully, the Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative steps in to connect agencies, help share best practices, and lead in advocating for improvement in all education and workforce services for our young people."

MARY KEIPP UCLA YouthSource Center Program Director



Message from the Director

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, this year I stepped away from our work to recover and heal from cancer. My heart is full from the outpouring of love and healing wishes I've received from so many of you. I am also grateful for, and humbled by, the dedication and support of the LAOYC team at the Alliance for Children's Rights, our co-conveners UNITE-LA and John Burton Advocates for Youth, our Young Leaders, our LA County partners, our funders, colleagues and friends. This year has been a testament to true collaboration. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Since the LAOYC was established in 2013, our collective successes and innovations in improving and aligning systems that serve foster youth are impressive. Just a few examples include our co-design and implementation of an automated workforce referral system across all seven LA workforce boards with DCFS, the FAFSA Challenge now sustained by LACOE, and the Young Leaders collaboration with CYC, NFYI, and Journey House to co-create Foster Power. We have come a long way! As we look forward, we will continue to improve access and encourage persistence in both education and the workforce for our transition age youth. It takes this community working together toward holistic stability for young people, so that they can achieve their ambitions and dreams.

In gratitude and community,



Lauri Collier
Director



Message from a Young Leader



Hi everyone, it is me, Brana, the shy extrovert. I am currently a junior at the University of California, Merced majoring in psychology with the hopes of becoming a juvenile probation officer.

Being an LAOYC Young Leader has helped me learn to advocate for myself and my peers. This opportunity has strengthened my ability to be comfortable in leadership, taught me essential public speaking skills, and enhanced my presentation and organizational skills. I have also had the opportunity to learn from my peer group—to be understanding, empathetic, and patient. The OYC team creates a healthy learning environment, and a space to do fun things, to de-stress and team build.

My experience with the LAOYC has provided me with an example of what I can expect from a workplace. Many youth who experience foster care are not familiar with traditional workplace expectations, and this experience is preparing my peer group and me to be successful in meetings.

Work experiences and opportunities provided by the LAOYC—like being part of youth-led advocacy groups—led me to landing a job at my school working with current and former foster youth. This experience has developed my confidence in talking about things that can be uncomfortable to express, and I am very glad to have had that personal growth.

With Love,



Brana Phillips
LAOYC Young Leader

2022 Highlights & Collective Impact



The LAOYC published **29 newsletters** sharing resources and news to nearly **42,000 recipients**, with **38,900+ opens**.



LA County Department of Economic Opportunity's Youth@Work Elevate Program launched with **97 participants enrolled in the first cohort**



Eight LAOYC Career Guide trainings were held for **366 supportive adults** at DCFS and community-based organizations



43 Convenings and Trainings

connected young adults who experienced foster care to system leaders with **3,075+ attendees**.

93% of training attendees agreed or strongly agreed that the training was *"useful to their professional growth."*

The LAOYC Young Leaders participated in **123 convenings**, a 25% increase over last year, with 4,424 practitioners and youth attendees.



John Burton Advocates for Youth advocated for new statewide funding:

LA County will receive **\$11.8 million dollars** in new funding for foster youth support programs across LA County's public institutions.

This brings LA County's former foster youth transitional housing budget to **\$15.1 million** (from three funding sources) and housing navigation budget to **\$4.6 million**.



LA County Office of Education (LACOE) launched a countywide financial aid foster youth dashboard.

2022 Partner Spotlight

FOSTER YOUTH AT WORK

Launch of the Elevate Program — Department of Economic Opportunity

The LA County Department of Economic Opportunity collaborated with the OYC's Foster Youth at Work campaign partners to provide input on a proposed robust subsidized work experience program. As a result, in 2022, the Youth@Work Elevate program incorporated OYC's recommendations to provide 500 of LA County's foster youth, youth experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ+ youth, and system-impacted youth, ages 17-24, with pathways to unsubsidized jobs in high-growth and emerging sectors. Participants receive 400 hours of personal enrichment training, paid mentoring and work experience with high-growth and in-demand jobs while earning \$16.04 an hour. The 2nd cohort began in January 2023.

"DEO is committed to a future where all youth experience a meaningful first job or step into a rewarding new career with the support and resources needed to succeed. Youth are the key to LA County's future and we're empowering our most underserved youth to unlock their full potential."



Kelly LoBianco

Director, LA County Department of Economic Opportunity

FOSTER YOUTH COLLEGE ADVANCEMENT PROJECT (FYCAP)

Dismantling Barriers to Financial Aid for Probation Foster Youth

The Foster Youth Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Challenge aims to increase financial aid completion rates among high school seniors in foster care. Financial aid attainment is key to improving degree attainment. Since its launch in 2017, FYCAP partners effectively increased the rate of completion from 33% to 68% within three years.

Despite these successes, an equity analysis revealed that foster youth in probation had disparate outcomes. Committed to eradicating this disproportionality, LACOE and the Probation Department partnered with the LAOYC FYCAP partners to develop new strategies that increased the financial aid application completion rate of these students from 37.7% to 72% in 2021-22, surpassing the general student population at 57%.

"Youth transitioning out of Probation's foster care system often can't picture a life that includes college or other postsecondary education opportunities. That was why it was necessary for Probation's Independent Living Program (ILP) to rethink how we engage the young people we serve and support efforts to complete financial aid applications."



Jed Minoff

Director, L.A. County Probation

LAOYC YOUNG LEADERS

Co-creation of LA Foster Power

A coalition of youth from LAOYC Young Leaders, National Foster Youth Institute (NFYI), Journey House, and California Youth Connection (CYC) formed LA Foster Power, a political and social youth movement led by young people currently or formerly in foster care.

Members convene quarterly to create an agenda for change, which addresses the issues and barriers that older foster youth face when exiting care and beyond.

The agenda highlights four themes—Education, Mental Health, Housing, and Access to Resources—with recommendations for federal, state, and local policy solutions.

"True transformative change comes from those that have been impacted by the issue itself. LA Foster Power is revolutionizing the way organizations collectively organize in LA. At the same time, it's empowering our members to direct and lead."



Jose Canizal

National Organizing Manager, National Foster Youth Institute

Foster Youth at Work

engages public workforce and child welfare agencies in L.A. County in devising collaborative, systemic solutions to improve foster youth connection to work readiness training, early work experiences, and pathways to sustainable careers.

“The Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative has been a key partner in helping us develop data-informed service strategies and leverage regional tools to serve better young people and their families, and establish stronger partnerships with institutional stakeholders”



Nick Schultz
Executive Director
Pacific Gateway Workforce
Innovation Network

Campaign launched by
the LAOYC in 2013

Convened by
the Alliance for Children's
Rights and UNITE-LA

Increase of Participant Slot Cost for Youth@Work

LAOYC partners provided recommendations to the city and county workforce boards urging an increase in the “slot cost”—the amount of funding allocated for each program participant in our subsidized work programs. As a result, the slot cost per youth was increased by 33%, allowing workforce centers to expand their capacity to increase youth participation. The county also increased youth participant hours from 120 to 160 hours of work experience.

Refined the Youth@Work Automated Referral System

Refined and implemented in partnership with the LA County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), the Automated Referral System (ARS) is a web-based system now connecting DCFS and the seven LA County workforce development boards (WDBs) to ensure that youth are matched with the appropriate workforce program, including LA County's subsidized youth employment program Youth@Work.

This past fiscal year, DEO reports:

- 920 youth in foster care were referred to paid work experience
- 67% (617) enrolled in Youth@Work
- 53% (330) completed 100 hours or more of paid work experience

Launched a Community of Practice

To better understand the challenges workforce agencies face in implementing the Universal Referral Process, Foster Youth at Work partners launched a Youth Centered Design Community of Practice (CoP) to assess current practices and develop solutions to improve foster youth enrollment in workforce programs. Findings from this community assessment and focus groups were presented to DEO and DCFS. DEO has since utilized this feedback to improve its systems and processes.

Looking to the future, LAOYC will continue to uplift and share findings from the CoP to all youth workforce centers in L.A. County through monthly meetings of staff who serve as foster youth liaisons, and publish a case study on best practices for youth engagement.

Published LAOYC Career Guides

The LAOYC Foster Youth at Work campaign published two guides—one for young adults and another for supportive adults—on the array of employment services available to benefit youth in foster care. Eight training sessions were held for 366 supportive adults at DCFS and community-based organizations, where participants learned how to use the interactive guides to discuss first jobs, resumes, and career exploration.

Developed and Created a Video Series in partnership with Gladeo

The LAOYC partnered with Gladeo, a next-generation career navigation platform, to create five videos featuring former foster youth. The videos highlight the ups and downs of their journeys to their current careers in entertainment, engineering, health, and technology, and shed light on the value of strong connections and support.

PARTNERS



Alliance for Children's Rights

California Department of Rehabilitation

Foothill Workforce Development Board

iFoster

L.A. City Economic Workforce
Development Department

L.A. County Department of Children
and Family Services

L.A. County Office of Child Protection

L.A. County Department of Economic
Opportunity

Pacific Gateway Workforce Development Board

SELACO Workforce Development Board

UNITE-LA

Verdugo Workforce Development Board

Foster Youth at Work

YOUTH STORY



Dayshanae Johnson



LAOYC Young Leader Dayshanae Johnson is extremely passionate about foster youth advocacy. Through the Youth@Work program, Dayshanae was connected with Yo! Watts—a Youth Source Center located in Southeast Los Angeles—where she developed both technical skills and valuable work experience that, she shares, have been vital to her success.

Dayshanae reported that her time in the program taught her how to write a resume, scan and send documents, make calls, organize events, and collaborate with others. Through this meaningful work experience, she reported she had the opportunity to meet new colleagues who helped create a supportive environment to learn and grow in. “Many of the staff members often supported a lot of us youth by understanding our busy lives and allowing us to have flexible schedules,” recalls Dayshanae.

She believes that her experience with Yo! Watts opened her eyes to how imperative it is to give back and to be a part of a greater effort to support those who are in need of resources. She has carried this commitment to improving her community through to her own advocacy work with the LAOYC. Over the past year, Dayshanae has advocated for additional support for youth who have not graduated high school and are struggling with employment, and will continue to use her work experience to advance opportunities for other systems-impacted youth.

Foster Youth College Advancement Project (FYCAP)

Campaign launched by the LAOYC in 2017

Convened by John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)

FYCAP is committed to increasing postsecondary educational attainment for youth in the foster care system, whether it be career technical education or a 2-year or 4-year degree.

"FYCAP is critical to the success of our young people as they transition to adulthood. Children in our foster care system need every type of support and they deserve to have opportunities to make choices about where their future will take them. FYCAP gives our families and children the chance to make those dreams come true."



Kym Renner, Deputy Director
LA County Department of Children and Family Services

Advanced Efforts to Support Foster Youth with Postsecondary Matriculation

Senate Bill (SB) 12 requires social workers and probation officers to identify a postsecondary support person to assist youth, ages 16 and older, with their college and financial aid applications. LA County's SB 12 workgroup, which included representatives from JBAY, DCFS, Probation, LACOE, and the Office of Child Protection developed additional strategies to better support the vision and requirements of SB 12, including, but not limited to successfully advocating to amend the statewide Transitional Independent Living Plan & Agreement (TILP) form.

Increased Training for Caregivers on College Planning

Building on DCFS's caregiver training requirement enacted in 2020, the Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE) program implemented a statewide requirement for FKCE facilitators to provide the Turning Dreams into Degrees curricula for caregivers. Part 1 of the training, for caregivers with youth in the 6th-10th grades, launched in May 2021 reaching 1,027 new caregivers in 2022. In addition, JBAY partnered with Foster Parent College to develop Part 2 of the online training for caregivers with youth in the 11th and 12th grades.

Funding Secured for Foster Youth College Support Programs

JBAY successfully advocated for \$48 million in new state funding for foster youth college support programs: \$30 million in additional ongoing state funding to expand the NextUp program at California Community Colleges statewide with \$18 million in ongoing funding established across the CSUs and UCs. This will expand access to college retention services for foster youth.

LA County will receive \$11.8 million dollars in new funding:

- \$7.6M is going to ten new community colleges
- \$4.2M went to the five CSUs and one UC campus

Efforts are underway to support the implementation of NextUp funding and programming both in LA County and statewide.

Advocated for Improved Housing Resources for College Students and Foster Youth

The Higher Education and Homelessness Workgroup (HEHW), co-convened by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), JBAY, LACOE and El Camino College, provided recommendations to address college student homelessness that were successfully integrated in the Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project.

JBAY also successfully advocated to secure \$34 million in additional funding in the state budget to address homelessness among former foster youth. This brings LA County's former foster youth transitional housing budget to \$15.1 million (from three funding sources) and housing navigation budget to \$4.6 million.

PARTNERS



Children's Law Center of California

First Star

Foster and Kinship Care Education
Los Angeles Community College District

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Los Angeles County Office of Education

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Los Angeles County Probation Department

Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection

Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity

Los Angeles Unified School District

National Center for Youth Law

UNITE-LA

United Friends of the Children

All 30 campus-based foster youth support programs across Los Angeles County's public and private colleges and universities

LAOYC Young Leaders

THE LAOYC YOUNG LEADERS PROGRAM is a one-year training program for youth in leadership development and advocacy. Through regular meetings, trainings, and active participation in local efforts, members are empowered to use their collective experience to become impactful agents of change in the Los Angeles community.

"It really is an honor to work with the LAOYC Young Leaders. I want to hear from youth about what they think is needed and what ideas they have about how we can change the system."



Brandon Nichols
Director
LA County Department
of Children and Family Services

Campaign launched
by the LAOYC in 2015

Convened by
Alliance for Children's
Rights



Advanced Efforts to Support Foster Youth with Postsecondary Matriculation

Measure of America (MOA) released a report, Building Bright Futures for Youth in Los Angeles: Spotlight on Young Women, that provides an in-depth look at youth disconnection in LA County. The LAOYC Young Leaders served as youth advisors in the development of the report and were represented by **Taneil Franklin** on the panel for the report launch. The report found that the youth disconnection rate in Los Angeles County in 2020 was 13%, or 156,200 young people. LA County had a higher disconnection rate than California as a whole, at 12%. The report, which has a special focus on young women, demonstrates the need for more appealing choices in the workforce, pay improvement for young women in entry level jobs, and increased health and well-being support for young women, particularly for young mothers.

Expansion of Housing for Youth Formerly in Foster Care

THP-Plus—a supportive housing program for former foster youth, ages 18 – 25—is the only funding stream dedicated to serving former foster youth for 36 months. An LAOYC Young Leader testified before the LA County Board of Supervisors to expand housing equity for former foster youth.

The motion passed, authorizing DCFS to increase the minimum monthly rate paid for THP-Plus housing to \$2,882 per participant, a \$682 increase from the previous rate. This increase will bolster the sustainability and effectiveness of LA County's THP-Plus program by improving providers' abilities to secure safe, quality housing units for youth, and to offer critical supportive services.

Advocated for the California Youth Apprenticeship Program

The LAOYC Young Leaders partnered with the California Opportunity Youth Network (COYN) to provide testimony at the Senate Committee on labor, public employment and retirement to highlight the importance of multiple pathways toward economic self-sufficiency and fulfillment for youth.

To meet those needs, the Governor allocated \$65 million, over three years, to establish the California

Youth Apprenticeship Program which will award grants to expand or develop new or existing apprenticeship programs to serve a specified target population. This expansion would benefit opportunity youth: youth who are disconnected from school or work; youth who experience homelessness or housing insecurity; youth involved with the foster care of justice systems; or face other barriers to labor market participation.

Created a Holistic Stability Framework

In January 2022, the LAOYC Young Leaders began developing a framework to address the key areas of stability youth need while in foster care and long after—such as housing stability, economic stability, supportive relationships, health and wellness, and education. The Young Leaders are now working closely with other youth organizations and DCFS to build out their framework and develop objectives for each priority area, with a goal of advancing holistic stability. These objectives will be used to inform future strategies to prioritize transition age youth and bring structural change to DCFS.

PARTNERS



- California Mentoring Partnership
- California Youth Connection (CYC)
- California Opportunity Youth Network (COYN)
- City of Los Angeles Youth Development Department
- Coalition for Responsible Community Development
- Education Coordinating Council (ECC)
- Foster Together Network
- Housing Justice Collective
- Journey House
- Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture
- Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
- Los Angeles LGBT Center
- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
- Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection (OCP)
- Los Angeles County Youth Commission
- National Foster Youth Initiative (NFYI)
- National Center for Youth Law
- Reproductive Health Equity Project (RHEP)
- United Friends of the Children

LAOYC Young Leaders

YOUTH STORY



**Iziko
Calderon**

STORY



“The OYC has broadened my network and impacted my path towards a meaningful career. To me, a young leader is a youth with a desire for improvement and change for the better of a community and that’s what we are.”

A creative artist, LAOYC Young Leader, Iziko Calderon joined the leadership program in 2022 with a vision to make the world a better place. As a Young Leader, Iziko talks to policymakers and systems leaders about the real-life issues faced by transition age foster youth, with the goal of creating sustainable, effective change throughout LA County.

Through the LAOYC Young Leaders program, Iziko is gaining a better understanding of the LA County governing process and the child welfare system through increased involvement in the local and state democratic process. Iziko says that they have learned that it is possible for young people and systems leaders to work together to advance change.

In their time with the Young Leaders, Iziko has influenced the LAOYC’s goals and priorities through visioning sessions and workgroups with DCFS, DMH, Children NOW, and other partners.

Iziko was especially inspired by a meeting with the Department of Mental Health and the LA Youth Commission, where they felt like their ideas and experiences were truly heard and recognized as a catalyst to create youth-centered solutions to youth-facing problems. They explain that this experience made them want to work in social justice spaces, using their work with the LAOYC as their North Star.

Iziko is part of the NextUp program at LA Southwest College and now has an internship with El Nido Family Centers. They are connected to a job resource center to explore career options in social justice, and plans to pursue their interests using their experiences as a young leader to guide their journey.

Thanks to our partners and supporters



We are proud to recognize the many public agencies, community-based agencies, young leaders, networks, and foundations that have championed our collective work in the past year.

OUR FUNDERS

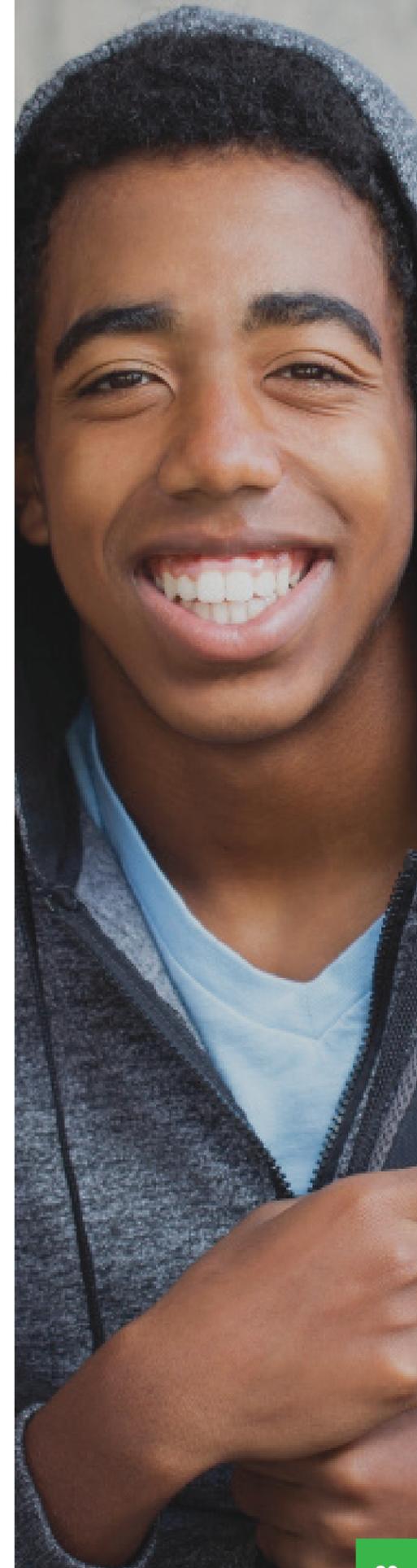
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 The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions
 Ballmer Group
 The Carl & Roberta Deutsch Foundation
 Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**
 Goodwin Family Memorial Trust
 May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
 Pritzker Foster Care Initiative**
 The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
 Stuart Foundation

OUR PARTNERS

A Sense of Home
 Alliance for Children's Rights**^^
 Antelope Valley America's Job Center of CA (JVS)
 Antelope Valley College
 Anthony & Jeanine Pritzker Family Foundation
 Archdiocese Youth Employment
 Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions
 Bridges from School to Work
 Brotherhood Crusade
 Cal Poly Pomona
 Cal State University, Dominguez Hills
 Cal State University, Long Beach
 Cal State University, Los Angeles
 California Department of Rehabilitation
 California Opportunity Youth Network
 California Youth Connection
 CASA – LA
 Cerritos College
 Children's Hospital Los Angeles
 Children's Law Center of California
 Citrus College
 City of Los Angeles Economic & Workforce Development Department**
 City of Los Angeles Youth Development Department
 Coalition for Responsible Community Development**
 College of the Canyons
 Compton College
 Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
 DemocraShe
 Doing Good Works
 East LA College
 El Camino College
 Extraordinary Families
 Faith Foster Family Network, 3FN

First Place for Youth**
 First Star
 Foothill Workforce Development Board
 Foster and Kinship Care Education
 Foster Care Counts
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 Foster Nation
 Foster Together Network
 FosterMore
 Friends of the Children – Los Angeles
 Glendale Community College
 Glendale Youth Alliance
 Goodwill Southern California
 Happy Trails for Kids
 Hillside
 Hire Opportunity Coalition
 Housing Justice Collective
 iFoster**
 John Burton Advocates for Youth**^^
 Journey House
 L.A. Compact
 LA Tech
 Learn4Life
 Long Beach City College
 Long Beach Forward
 Long Beach Health and Human Services
 Long Beach Unified School District
 Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services**
 Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity**
 Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources
 Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
 Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
 Los Angeles County Office of Education**
 Los Angeles County Probation Department
 Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board
 Los Angeles County Youth Commission
 Los Angeles Harbor College
 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
 Los Angeles LGBT Center**
 Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot
 Los Angeles Pierce College
 Los Angeles Reproductive Health Equity Project
 Los Angeles Southwest College
 Los Angeles Trade Tech College
 Los Angeles Unified School District
 Los Angeles Valley College
 Loyola Marymount University
 Mount Saint Mary's University
 Mt San Antonio College
 Music Forward Foundation
 National Center for Youth Law
 National Foster Youth Institute
 New Ways to Work
 Office of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass
 Olive Crest
 Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network
 Para Los Niños
 Pasadena City College
 Peace4Kids
 Public Counsel
 Ready To Succeed
 REDF
 ReLAY Institute (ReConnecting Los Angeles Youth)
 Rio Hondo College
 Safe Place for Youth
 Santa Monica College
 School On Wheels
 Seen & Heard
 She Ready Foundation
 South Bay Workforce Investment Board**
 South East Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board
 South Los Angeles Transit Empowerment Zone (Slate Z)
 St. Anne's Family Services
 Sycamores
 The Academy Project
 The Community College Foundation
 The Emporium
 The Imprint
 The RightWay Foundation
 Think of Us
 UCLA YouthSource Center
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 United Friends of the Children**
 University of California, Los Angeles
 University of Southern California
 Verdugo Workforce Development Board
 Walden Family Services
 Wayfinder Family Services
 Wellnest Los Angeles
 West Los Angeles College
 Yes2Jobs
 Yo! Watts

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L.A. OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

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