

Resource

Big Picture Site Assessment

Below are criteria for anticipating your community's readiness for this restorative justice diversion model.

- Presence of aligned community-based organization (anchored in adolescent development and/or restorative practices)
- Presence of allied/interested systems partners
- Degree of racial and ethnic disparities in youth justice
- Clear interest in expanding diversion to include restorative practices
- Presence of a strong local ally network



Presence of aligned community-based organization

See the [Program Fit Questionnaire](#), which is also in 2A: Program Fit.

- Local organization with capacity and interest in implementing this restorative justice diversion (RJD) model, and are: 1) trusted by the communities that will be served, particularly by local youth of color who may have caused such harms and/or be survivors, and people harmed generally; 2) able to work autonomously and independent of the district attorney's office, probation, police, and other legal agencies; 3) able to balance positive youth development and skilled at working with youth, while also orienting around people harmed of all ages; 4) sufficiently trusted by systems partners to receive cases or have the capacity to build that trust
- Leadership is composed of people of color, queer and trans folks, people directly impacted by crime or the criminal legal system, and employs people of color, and folks with lived experience, including youth leadership
- Organization and employees have a liberation framework and a racial justice lens for addressing power and privilege
- Organization has a "power with" view of communities they serve and not a charity or savior model
- Demonstrated experience providing services that are culturally and linguistically responsive. Culturally responsive in terms of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, socioeconomic status, neurodivergence/disability, and other identities and the multitude of intersections thereof
- Experience providing strengths-based and trauma-informed services to youth, particularly youth of color, queer and youth, neurodivergent/disabled youth and systems-impacted youth
- Experience providing strengths-based and trauma-informed services to those who have been harmed and those who have caused harm
- Demonstrated community engagement, ability to foster connections in order to involve families and local community in this RJD process, and ability to connect youth and people harmed with local resources and organizations (for example, if part of the plan is that the young person will go to tutoring, volunteer at an animal shelter, or attend a poetry workshop, the organization can connect them with these resources and points of contact)
- Organization is connected to its community and made connections with community members who may want to participate in restorative processes
- Located in, or shows willingness to travel to and serve youth in the zip code(s) in which youth of color live and are most often incarcerated from

- Willingness to learn and maintain the core elements of this restorative justice diversion model: confidentiality, no net-widening, front-end ideally pre-charge, ending racial and ethnic disparity, orientation around people harmed, strengths-based, relationship building, and community held
- Commitment to implementing the program in ways that prevent model drift and uphold core elements of this model of RJD. Commitment to working with systems partners to only take serious cases with a clear, identifiable person harmed that, if charged, would result in probation or incarceration for the responsible youth
- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality for people harmed, youth, and all participants
- Capacity and willingness to be trained on data collection systems, and capacity to maintain data and case file management systems
- Understanding that diversion is part of the larger context of ending youth criminalization in that it should minimize a young person's contact with the juvenile legal system and not widen the net of the system. Sees diversion as contributing to ending the criminalization of youth of color rather than a way to uphold the status quo.
- Experience with restorative justice
- Intentions in starting this RJD program are rooted in the wellbeing and success of people harmed, responsible youth, their families, and communities, not expanding the footprint of the organization

Presence of allied/interested systems partners

- Strong local political climate favoring alternatives to juvenile detention and probation
- Systems partners willing to refer serious cases to front-end, ideally pre-charge and/or pre-bookings community-facilitated program
- Strong public defender capable of pushing back against youth relinquishing rights/protections in exchange for participation in restorative processes
- Systems partners have some experience with restorative justice
- Systems partners expressed interest in restorative justice and/or restorative justice diversion
- System partners support sanctuary cities/counties
- Systems partners aware of racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile legal system and compelled to change it
- Systems partners willing to spend time in circle and be trained in restorative practices
- Willingness of probation department to share data for evaluation purposes
- A leader/credible messenger from the systems partners who will do some of the work convincing

other systems people to implement restorative justice

- Systems partners with good relationship with one or more community-based organization serving youth of color

Degree of racial and ethnic disparities in youth justice

- High racial and ethnic disparities in youth incarceration/criminalization/diversion/registry
- High racial and ethnic disparities in school discipline

Clear interest in expanding diversion to include restorative practices

- High degree of youth system contact and incarceration
- High rate of youth arrest, charging, and detention
- Harsh penalties and conditions for juvenile crimes
- Lack of diversion generally or lack of diversion for serious crimes
- This model of RJD would not interfere with other restorative justice diversion programs that may already exist locally
- Structurally flawed juvenile legal system/nonexistent juvenile legal system

Presence of strong local ally network

- Presence of community organizers able to hold systems partners accountable to the elements of this restorative justice diversion model (ie. pre-charge and/or front-end referrals, no net-widening, etc.)
- Communities impacted by the system expressed interest in restorative justice or this model of RJD
- Presence of local allied community advocates and agencies willing to support and collaborate with this RJD program and provide supports for RJD participants
- Community willing to spend time in circle
- Identified funders with expressed interest in supporting local restorative justice diversion
- Allied national organizations and networks working locally to end youth criminalization and incarceration in your area, e.g.:

[Open Philanthropy](#)

[Community Justice Network for Youth Members](#)

[Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.](#)

[MacArthur Safety & Justice Challenge](#)

[W. Haywood Burns Institute](#)

[Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative](#)

[Live Free Network](#)

[Fair and Just Prosecution Network](#)

[Youth First Initiative](#)

[Alliance for Safety and Justice](#)