



R-16

Rex Richardson
Long Beach City Councilmember, 9th District

Date: June 9, 2015

To: Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rex Richardson, Ninth District *RR*
Councilmember Suzie Price, Third District *SP*
Councilmember Dee Andrews, Sixth District *(DA)*
Councilmember Roberto Uranga, Seventh District *(R)*

Subject: Promising Adults, Tomorrow's Hope (PATH) Pilot Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Respectfully request the City Manager and City Prosecutor to work with Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Board to develop the Promising Adults, Tomorrow's Hope (PATH) Program, an adolescent and young adult diversion pilot program in FY16, designed to assist disconnected out-of-school and out-of-work residents, aged 16-24, by combining occupational training, life skills development, mentoring, job placement, and post-secondary education as an alternative to criminal prosecution.

We further request the City Manager to identify budget options in FY16, including but not limited to federal, state, and philanthropic grants, to support a "PATH Young Adult Diversion Coordinator" in the City Prosecutor's office and, separately, the development of a "PATH Young Adult Workforce Strategy" with Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Board targeted at all disconnected young adults.

DISCUSSION

The Problem

Per the 2010 US Census, young adults make up the largest segment of our population in Long Beach and represents our future human capital and workforce. Yet, this age group is facing unprecedented challenges in Long Beach and in our nation, and deserves a greater focus.

Young adults are confronted by a set of economic conditions that have serious, enduring costs for individuals, neighborhoods, businesses, and public safety. At 20.7 percent, the unemployment rate among residents aged 20 to 24 is almost triple the unemployment rate for people of all ages in the City of Long Beach. These young people are facing significantly higher rates of unemployment than the California and U.S. average, as Figure 1 shows.



Figure 1.

	Long Beach	California	U.S.
All ages	7.7%	6.3%	5.4%
16-19 year olds	27.6%	22.6%	17.1%
20-24 year olds	20.7%	16.9%	9.6%

***Statistics per Pacific Gateway*

According to the City Prosecutor's Office, young adults between the ages of 18-24 comprise about 26% of all adult misdemeanors. Not all crimes are appropriate for diversion. However, many of these cases involve first-time offenses, and City Prosecutor Doug Haubert states he believes many of those between 18-24 years of age who commit misdemeanors are amenable to diversionary programs.

Young adults are the most susceptible to violent crime, and represent a significantly disproportionate percentage of victims of violent crime, compared to other age groups. According to Long Beach Police Department crime statistics, since January 2014:

- 50% of murder victims were between the ages of 18-29
- 43% of assault with a deadly weapon victims were between the ages of 18-29
- 38.7% of robbery victims were between the ages of 18-29

Youth violence has a serious, often lifelong, impact on a person's psychological and social development. While individuals between the ages of 18-24 are considered adults, research confirms that brain development continues through the age of 25. What this means is that young adults are more susceptible to peer pressure, more prone to risk-taking and impulsive behavior, and more likely to misread social cues and drastically overreact. All of those things can lead to criminal activity which can have dire long-range consequences, affecting their future ability to gain employment, complete their education, and pursue a range of other important life goals.

The November 2014 passage of Proposition 47 also presents a unique challenge and opportunity for the City of Long Beach. According to City Prosecutor Doug Haubert, the City of Long Beach can expect to see a 17% increase in cases from the year prior to Prop. 47. In the first few months of Prop. 47, petty theft cases have doubled. Many of the new cases will involve adults charged with possession of drugs (e.g., heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, etc.) and many diversion options are already provided by State law. However, there are no state diversion programs for other offenses so local prosecutors have great latitude in creating their own. Except for state funding given to drug diversion programs, no funding currently exists to design or implement locally-based misdemeanor diversion programs.



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The Opportunity

Long Beach is well suited to take on these challenges and make a lasting positive impact on young adults in our city. We have been at the forefront of violence prevention as is evidenced by our selection as a participant in the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Justice for our leadership in the development of the "SAFE Long Beach" Violence Prevention Plan.

In addition, City Prosecutor Doug Haubert, is a national leader on successful community-based prosecution and innovations in criminal justice. He has demonstrated success in a number of community diversion programs, including pre-filing diversion and deferred-judgment diversionary programs. For example, the City Prosecutor's Community Service Worker (CSW) diversion program has resulted in over 100,000 hours of volunteer service cleaning up Long Beach's parks and beaches, and assisting in tree plantings, park buildings, and other neighborhood projects. He has also pioneered educational diversion programs designed to reduce recidivism for first-time, low-level offenders.

Most recently, the City of Long Beach accepted President Obama's My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge, which encourages communities to implement a coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people to ensure that they can reach their full potential, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or the circumstances into which they are born. Milestone 6 of MBK centers on "Reducing Violence and Providing a Second Chance" and provides diversion programs as a best practice that a City can implement.

Not only is the City of Long Beach internally prepared to take on this challenge, but our community partner list is extensive and ready to be actively engaged in increasing successful outcomes for justice-involved young adults. Long Beach is home to over 70 community organizations and partners who specialize in work with young adults, including CSU Long Beach, Long Beach City College, Pacific Gateway, Goodwill, Long Beach Job Corps, and many more.

There are multiple touch points that a person has with the city of Long Beach, including the criminal justice system, and each one of those points provides opportunities for more developmentally responsive interactions. During this period of young adulthood, the brain is also more malleable to appropriate interventions that promote growth. By making the City's criminal justice system more developmentally responsive to the needs of disconnected young adults, we will help change the trajectories of their lives, and simultaneously, make our communities safer and more stable for years to come.

We have a significant opportunity to advance public safety, save valuable public time and resources, and cultivate the human capital of the future by responding to young adults in developmentally appropriate ways through education and workforce development.



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FISCAL IMPACT

The approximate General Fund cost to implementing the pilot program in the City Prosecutor's office is \$120,000, and, per the recommendation, the funding source will need to be identified during the FY16 budget process.

Grant funding will be sought through Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Board for external coordination and support for the diversion program, including occupational training, life skills development, mentoring, job placement, and post-secondary education, as well as the development of the PATH Young Adult Workforce Strategy.