Using Our Collective Voices
A message from LARRP Executive Director Troy Vaughn

As we move into June, still sailing through uncharted waters, we will continue to navigate the changing tides that COVID-19 brings together. I am so grateful for all those that continue to lay their lives down for the sake of others.

The Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership (LARRP) continues to strategically leverage our growing network. Many of our great organizations are on the front lines of helping individuals and communities manage through the coronavirus. Please know that LARRP is committed to helping our members navigate the impact of coronavirus, particularly those who are returning home to our communities from incarceration.

Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people are at high risk for contracting COVID-19 and often have little or no access to reliable and consistent health care services. The health risks—coupled with the challenge of practicing social distancing in jails and prisons—have led correctional facilities around the country, particularly local jails, to accelerate releases. In many cases, however, people are returning home to the challenging, new reality of life during a global pandemic with very little access to the supportive services they might normally get during their re entry period, e.g., assistance with housing, employment, and transportation. (Please see some of the articles in our news section below)

Trying to access these needed services under normal circumstances is challenging within itself, but now as most providers have shifted to remote service provision, we are faced with other challenges we must solve. Not all returning citizens have access to reliable technology to avail themselves of remote services, and often it is their voices that go unheard. That’s why it is important for us to raise our voices with theirs, so they are not forgotten.

“Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution, but furthest from resources and power.” - Glenn E. Martin

The sound of our collective voices is powerful and we must continue to use it to advocate for the individuals and organizations that need our help. People are worried, but not sure what they can do as individuals to help. Additionally, the problems created by COVID-19 are too big for any one individual or group to tackle, and needs will vary widely by community. We must and we will merge our voices with the voices of our returning citizens.

As you continue fight on the frontlines, know that we are with you. Thank you for your efforts and partnership. We look forward to seeing you on the other side.

In solidarity,
Troy Vaughn
Executive Director

LARRP MEETINGS and EVENTS

LARRP June Virtual General Meeting
Integrated Health Committee Meeting
June 25th
10:00-11:30
To be confirmed!

LARRP held its first virtual General Meeting on May 28th and it was so inspiring and productive to get over 100 of our partners in the same space. We have realized the need to meet every month in this fast changing time.

If you missed the last meeting with updates from Peter Espinoza, Director, LA County Office of Diversion and Reentry, Reaver Bingham, Chief Deputy, LA County Probation on Probation updates and critical information about the new state budget and how it impacts the reentry community and Doug Bond, CEO of the Amity Foundation, you can watch the recording here

PW 68930839g

June 2nd
2:00pm-3:30pm
Meeting ID: 912 7004 6658
Password: 104222

Education Committee Meeting

June 18th
4:00pm-5:30pm
Meeting ID: 971 6780 9439
Password: 175495

Zoom Link - Education

June 25th
2:00 - 3:30
We will have a special presentation on “Making the Business Case to Employers” Panel will include a representative from 70 Million Jobs and others to be announced.

Meeting ID: 829 579 3424

Zoom Link - Employment

Call to Action

We need your voices!

Please join with LARRP, the Center For Employment Opportunities (CEO) and many other CBO’s and advocates by contacting members of congress to advocate for more stimulus funding for returning citizens.

Download and Sign on to the Letter

National Survey for People with Incarcerated Loved Ones During COVID-19

Essie Justice Group and Color of Change are asking for people with incarcerated loved ones to share their experiences of having someone incarcerated during the COVID-19 pandemic through their national survey.

Take the Survey

LARRP June Spotlight

LARRP strongly believes that the therapeutic value of the voices and skills of people with lived experience is essential in planning, strategy implementation, practice reviews, policy development, and leadership for real community transformation and sustainability.

We are proud to announce our partnership with the Council of Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health (CCJBH) to create our Lived Experience Project which will be launched in the coming weeks.

The overarching goal of the project is to build the capacity of individuals with lived experience to inform, influence, educate, and advocate for policy reform both within their community and across the network of nonprofits, government agencies, and faith-based organizations that compose the criminal justice system.

The project seeks to invest heavily in the capacity and leadership skills of cohort members so that they may become sustained and vocal advocates for their community – an outcome that will have a positive ripple effect throughout LA County on both the distribution of resources and access to the power that influences it.

The next CCJBH Council Meeting will be
Friday, June 26, 2020
10:00 AM – 12:30PM
LARRP’s new Lived Experience Project will highlighted in the meeting
Cannabis legalization revenue helps fight COVID-19 on Skid Row

Leafly, May 20, 2020 by Marissa Wenzke

Since 2018, Prop 64 has generated $532.8 million in tax dollars earmarked for social work and public safety in California: child care vouchers; new ambulances; parks equipment; and trail cleanups. On May 14, Gov. Gavin Newsom said legal weed will pay for $296.9 million in social services grants in the 2020-2021 revised budget. Legal cannabis taxes’ impact is growing in 2020 because COVID-19 has blown a predicted $50 billion hole in the state’s budget.

Center for Living and Learning Executive Director Maria ‘Alex’ Alexander manages 18 caseworkers who see 300-500 people per year. Most of her funding comes from Proposition 64.

Read More

Watch the video

LARRP News

LARRP would like to say a special thank you to Takouhi (Tako) Tarkhanyan for her time with us. Tako has been given the opportunity to fulfill her lifelong dream to teach, and she has accepted position as a Teacher.

We wish her well, and all the best as she leaves us. Although she will be moving on, she will always be a member of our LARRP family. While here at LARRP, she played a very valuable role in helping us to lay the foundation in development of our LRRAMP database.

Thank you Tako, and good luck!

LARRP Team

Congratulations to Steering Committee member Amber Roth as she joins WERC Los Angeles as their new Executive Director. Amber will continue serve on the Steering Committee in her new role.

And we are also thrilled to announce that Mark Casanova and Valerie Garcia will be joining us as Steering Committee members representing Homeless Healthcare Los Angeles (HHCLA).

PARTNER EVENTS
Governing Council Meeting
Monday, June 1st
1:00 pm- 2:30 pm
Click here for agenda

A free training for Social Services Providers
Statewide to Strengthen Collaboration & Information Sharing
Wednesday June 3rd 2020
10:00am to 12:30pm
RSVP

Direct from the Governor’s office: reopening guidelines, IBank loans for nonprofits, and other resources
Wednesday, June 3, 2020
11:00 AM
While some nonprofits are serving more people than ever before, others such as performing arts are closed for months or will be closed for years. Many nonprofits have some staff working onsite and other staff working from home.
In this live event, leaders from the Governor’s Office will explain what the reopening stages mean for different types of nonprofits and will describe the California state loan program through the IBank. We will also hear how the Governor is making full use of the nonprofit community – and supporting nonprofits – in both the crisis and the recovery.
RSVP here (Registration required)

Online Workshop:
“Why Psych Wards Are Not An Alternative to Prisons”
Sponsor: Community Alternatives to 911, Youth Justice Coalition.
Thursday, June 4th, 6-7 p.m.
Join ZOOM meeting:
Meeting ID: 981 1151 4776

NEWS
Featured News Story
Featured this month is a series of 3 groundbreaking Opinion pieces by the LA Times Editorial Board

Coronavirus shows us the danger and inanity of our prison state
By The Times Editorial Board
May 29, 2020
So it’s time to ask: Why did we build and pack prisons in the first place? Why did we create institutions that are inherently unsafe and unsanitary?
No, criminals aren’t rampaging across California because of our zero-dollar bail policy
By The Times Editorial Board
May 27, 2020
Read More

Freed inmates face brutal lives of poverty and homelessness. Don’t blame coronavirus
By THE LA Times Editorial Board
May 28, 2020
Read More

More News Stories

Criminal justice system should consider public health during COVID-19
ABA May 29, 2020,
By Amanda Robert
Several national organizations issued joint recommendations earlier this week for how the criminal justice system can incorporate public health approaches when responding to the novel coronavirus crisis.
Read more
Guidelines

The Pandemic Has Emptied Prisons. We Examine The Effects, As Well As the Challenges To Reentry
KPCC Airtalk, May 21, 2020
Hosted by Larry Mantel
Guests:
- Alex Villanueva, Los Angeles County Sheriff;
- Jackie Lacey, Los Angeles District Attorney
- Peter Espinoza, director of the LA County Office of Diversion and Reentry; former Los Angeles Superior Court judge
- Gregory Boyle, Jesuit priest; founder of Homeboy Industries
- Ingrid Archie, civic engagement coordinator at A New Way of Life Reentry Project
Listen Here

CSUF Graduates of 2020: Project Rebound student sets her sights on criminal justice reform
Orange County Register, May 28, 2020
By Susan Gill Vardon
Read more

What kind of society clusters people together and then charges them money for hygiene?
Jails and prisons concentrate society’s ills. They have become centers of addiction, mental health breakdown, rape and gang recruitment. One judge labeled California’s prisons as “criminogenic” — fostering rather than slowing criminality...

...And of course released inmates may return to their homes infected with serious disease.
Surely we can do better. No nation on the planet locks up so great a proportion of its people or gets so little benefit — and so much damage — from its efforts.

Read More
In short order, the coronavirus pandemic has ushered in a sweeping and historic emptying of California’s overcrowded prisons and jails, as officials have dramatically lowered the number of people held in custody to avert deadly outbreaks.

Read more...

In Surprise Move, Newsom Calls for an End to California’s Youth Prison System

May 14, 2020, The Chronicle of Social Change
Jeremy Loudenback, Senior Editor
With coronavirus pummeling Californians’ health and economy like a modern day plague, few expected a line item buried in an otherwise deficit-driven budget that Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) announced Thursday: After decades of the state running what was once the country’s most vast and notorious youth prison system, the end could be near for the Division of Juvenile Justice.

Read more

Officials mishandled coronavirus outbreaks at Lompoc and Terminal Island prisons, lawsuits claim

LA Times, May 17, 2020
By Alex Wigglesworthstaff

Read more

Let Our People Go

A letter from inside Marion Correctional Institution is the voice of those locked in cages and discarded during this pandemic.

NYTimes, May 13, 2020
By Michelle Alexander, Contributing Opinion Writer

READ!!

Reports

HOW RACE, CLASS, AND PLACE FUEL A PANDEMIC

How Race, Class, and Place Fuel a Pandemic

Race Counts
Authored by: Maria Cabildo, Elycia Mulholland Graves, John Kim, and Michael Russ

Los Angeles’s long history of housing segregation and the use of freeways to divide communities of color has not been a barrier to the virus; it has been fodder for its spread. The mandate to shelter in place challenges residents in these under-resourced communities. Organized community-level mutual aid mobilization is bridging gaps in government response, but more is needed.

Read more and see the interactive map

REPORT - Voting in Jails
The Sentencing Project, MAY 07, 2020
Nicole D. Porter
As localities consider voting best practices, a new report from The Sentencing Project highlights jurisdictions around the country that actively support ballot access for residents detained in local jails through absentee voting or jail-based polling sites. These initiatives should serve as models to be adopted by all jail systems in order to ensure that individuals housed there do not forfeit their rights of citizenship.

Read the Report