LARRP May 2021 Newsletter

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LARRP Meetings * May Spotlight * LARRP Updates * Policy Updates * Partner Events * Recurring Clinics and Workshops * Member Newswire * Information and Opportunities * News * Reports

LARRP Committee Meetings and Events

April General Meeting
May 20, 2021,
10:00 AM
REGISTER - General Meeting April

Integrated Health Committee
May 3, 2021,
1:00 pm
REGISTER Integrated Health

Education Committee:
May 20, 2021
4:00PM- 5:30 PM
Register Education

Housing Committee:
Thursday, May 20th, 2021,
1:30 PM-2:30 PM
Register Housing
May Spotlight
LARRP was all in for Reentry Week

Supervisors Mitchell and Hahn proclaimed last week (April 26-30) Reentry Week in LA County. This is a step in the right direction, and a sign that the reentry community is finally receiving the attention and recognition it deserves! Reentry week was packed with great events from LARRP and our network partners!

Click below
to watch LARRP Executive Director Troy Vaughn inspiring and succinct interview on FoxLA’s Good Day LA

LARRP Managing Director, Joe Paul speaks at "Faith Without Borders - Beyond Mass Incarceration: Reimagination, Restoration and Abolition"

An interview with Dontay Hayes, 2021 LARRP Leadership Training Academy Fellow

What does reentry mean to you?

Dontay Hayes (LARRP LA)
www.larry.org
LARRP Updates

Mariela Alburges
LARRP’s New Director of Strategic Partnerships

Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership is excited to welcome Mariela Alburges as the new Director of Strategic Partnerships. Mariela has been a longtime supporter of our efforts at LARRP through her time at the Drug Policy Alliance and most recently through Reform LA Jails’ Yes on R campaign. Many of you have had the opportunity to work in partnership with Mariela already and are well aware of the breadth of criminal justice reform knowledge she brings to the table in addition to her ability to convene community partners around ballot initiatives and additional people-driven campaigns. A convener at heart and an organizer by formation, we are excited to welcome Mariela to the LARRP family. She will be working closely as a thought partner to our Executive and Steering committees and will be supporting the continued build out of our Issues and Regional committees. In her position, Mariela will assure that the diverse parts of our beloved leadership body and partner network are in communication and work in cohesion to forward our organizational priorities. We at LARRP are honored to have her join our team and we invite you to extend her a warm welcome. Mariela is equally excited and ready to learn and build with you all and welcomes you to reach out at mariela@lareentry.org. Many blessings to you all.

We are excited to Announce that we have two new Steering Committee members!
Jose Ousna and Dr. Etsemaye P. Agonafer

Dr. Etsemaye P. Agonafer is a board-certified internal medicine physician committed to improving the health and well-being of vulnerable individuals and populations—including Veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness and incarceration. She currently provides clinical care in the Inmate Reception Center at Los Angeles County Twin Towers Correctional Facility.

Recently, she completed the National Clinician Scholar Program at UCLA. As a scholar she worked with the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services and UCLA CTSI Community Engagement Research Program to evaluate the partnerships between the Whole Person Care-Los Angeles Medicaid pilot and community-based organizations across the county. With this vast amount of experience we are honored to have her serve as our Integrated Health Co-Chair.

Jose Ousana is not only our newest Steering Committee member, but also our new housing committee chair. He is the first ever Housing Justice Manager for Brilliant Corners, a statewide housing organization, as well as the Principal Consultant for Osuna Consulting and Co-Founder of Restore INK, a nonprofit in Long Beach, California targeted at serving gang impacted and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Prior to founding Osuna Consulting and Restore INK, Osuna was the Director of External Affairs at Homeboy Industries, a position he held as part of the executive management team with the organization. Jose is a current member of L.A. County’s Public Safety Realignment Team, appointed by L.A.County Supervisor Janice Hahn, as well as serving as a commissioner on the Long Beach City Prosecutor’s Multicultural Advisory Commission. We are excited to have him part of our team.

Closing the men’s Central Jail
LARRP's April General meeting centered around the proposal to close the Los Angeles Men's Central Jail. LARRP and our partners have been closely involved with developing the plan which was released at the end of March. If you were not at the meeting, Karen Tamis gave an excellent overview of the plan and we are providing her powerpoint and the final report.

See the Powerpoint

**Men's Central Jail Closure Plan**

[Image of a circle with reasons for closing the jail]

1. Inhumane Facility for All People Involved
2. Poor Health, Social, & Legal Outcomes
3. High Cost & Liability
4. Racial Inequity
5. Growing Mental Health Population

LARRP's COVID 19 Virtual Town Hall

On Monday April 19, 2021 LARRP sponsored a virtual town hall on COVID 19 on April 19th, featuring LARRP's Integrated Health committee co-chair, Dr. Etsemaye P. Agonafer with the collaboration of the LARRP LEADERS: Integrated Team. It was a very informative and engaged event.

Dr. Etsemaye gave an informative presentation about the COVID 19 virus and vaccines, and after the presentation the audience participated in the Q & A section.

See the Meeting Recording [HERE](#)

Access Passcode: eJK&9X

Reentry Wellness Hour

Last month LARRP conducted its very own first Reentry Wellness Hour in collaboration with The Phoenix, D.O.O.R.S Community Reentry Center, HOPICS, Office of Diversion and Reentry, and the Los Angeles County Probation Department.

The Phoenix, a sober active community that harnesses the transformative power of connection and movement, conducted an amazing workout that included meditation, yoga, and HIIT workouts for D.O.O.R.S clients, community service providers, and the broader community.

The D.O.O.R.S- HOPICS team gifted all participating D.O.O.R.S clients a $100 Visa gift card to thank them for being clients and participating in our event and shared the wonderful resources offered at the center which include housing, employment opportunities, legal support, education, parenting classes, anger management classes, career counseling, and much more.

If you're interested in learning more about the D.O.O.R.S Community Reentry Center contact Evelyn Garcia at evelyn@lareentry.org

LARRP Policy

Priorities and Updates

April was a very active for the LARRP Policy Team, with our cosponsored bills moving through Sacramento and critical issues advancing in the LA County Board of Supervisors (BOS).

On April 20, the BOS passed three motions that directly impact the reentry community.

1. The **Creation of a ‘Care First, Jails Last’ Capital Project Fund**, introduced by Chair Hilda Solis and Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, is a step towards our ongoing efforts to close Men's Central Jail, but we have yet to see a clear commitment to investing in community based placements, which is key to jail closure. Chair Hilda Solis authored a motion to solidify County support for Senate Bill 731 (Durazo).
motion to solidify County support for Senate Bill 731 (Durazo),

2. The Sunsetting Convictions bill, LARRP’s top priority legislation that the entire network has been advocating tirelessly for.

3. And finally, Supervisors Holly Mitchell and Janice Hahn authored a motion to designate April 26-30th "Reentry Week". This key recognition has enabled us to lift up events and programs that center our returning citizens and community needs, further amplifying the key work that you are contributing to the reentry space in LA. Supervisor Mitchell has long been a vocal advocate for LARRP’s work and for improvements to the reentry system as a whole, so we would like to give special thanks to the work she has engaged in.

LARRP has also finalized our annual list of 2021 State Legislative Policy Priorities.

The Policy Team combed through and considered hundreds of bills, and this list is the final collection of bills that our Steering and Executive Committees have marked as the highest-priority state legislation being deliberated in Sacramento. These bills cover a wide range of critical reentry issues, from sentencing reform, to housing, employment and restitution of civil rights. One such bill, SB 416 (Kalra) is an incarcerated student bill of rights, which serves to ensure that students in CDCR custody have access to quality accredited educational opportunities. These are bills that LARRP will serve as a key supporter on, sending letters and providing testimony when needed. And we may be calling on you and your organization to assist us with calls, letters of support, or community outreach to further demonstrate the importance of this work.

Policy Priorities

Policy Priorities - In Depth Analysis

Partner Events

Evening for Equality
Tuesday, May 4th at 6:00 PM

with special guests Senator Alex Padilla and Congresswoman Barbara Lee with special musical performances from Estelle, Peppermint, Justin Tranter and so many more!

Access to the event is free for our community, please feel free to share the invite with your friends and family! We hope you’ll consider purchasing a ticket to support Equality California’s critical work and ensure that we can continue to provide events like Evening for Equality open to the community. You may purchase tickets or make a donation by visiting eqca.org/e4e.

Community Town Hall on the next Chief Deputy and Deputy Director of the Probation Department
May 6, 2021
5:30PM-6:30PM

As part of the process, the Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources is asking for community input regarding the qualifications and attributes that the new Chief Deputy and Deputy Director should possess. To share your input, please join the discussion.

State Advocacy 1-2-3 Webinar Series

The Peer Action League (PAL) State Advocacy 1-2-3 is a series of three webinars on the basics and details of how consumer peers and others can liaison at the State level in a meaningful and consequential manner for a peer-driven transformation of the California behavioral health system.

PAL State Advocacy Web #1:
Role of Peers to Key State Advisory Bodies
May 25, 2021, 1-2:30PM

Register

PAL State Advocacy Web #2:
Function of State Legislative & Advisory Bodies
Voices From Inside
Covid-19 in the California Prison System

May 6, 2021, 5:00 pm
Drawing upon the letters from incarcerated people to Mervyn M. Dymally written in the 1970’s this community event seeks to have an authentic dialogue by creating space for formerly incarcerated women to share their experiences and lead the discussion about the contemporary carceral state.

This event will feature 4 women with lived experience from LARRP’s - LEADERS Training Academy: Genea Richardson, Chichi Locci, Cynthia Blake and Laura Hernandez

RSVP

Recurring Clinics and Workshops

NEW! Court Relief for Criminal Records

Housing Rights Workshops
Legal Clinics

hosted by the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) and the D.O.O.R.S team

- Expungement and Early Termination of Probation Workshop: Every 1st Wednesday of the Month at 1:00pm (More Info)
- Citations/Tickers Workshop: Every 2nd Wednesday of the Month at 10:00am (More Info)
- Fair Chance Hiring Workshop: Every 4th Wednesday of the Month at 1:00pm (More Info)

Questions: Call D.O.O.R.S Center reception desk at 323-730-4442

Download Flyer

Records

Last Tuesday of Each Month 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Attendees of this Webinar will find out:
- how Reductions of Charges, Expungements, and Certificates of Rehabilitation may increase their opportunities for employment and job licensing.
- the criteria to qualify, how to apply if eligible, and be provided resources in their community that can be helpful in their rehabilitative journey.
- In addition, a lawyer from the Inland Empire Latino Lawyers Association will be present to answer questions and provide information on the free legal services they offer for eligible individuals. Registration required.

More info and register

Member Newswire

New Opportunities Organization

This month LARRP would like to introduce an exciting, the New Opportunities Organization (NOO) which is a community-based organization founded to close the opportunity gap for adult age community members and incarcerated/formerly incarcerated individuals.

NOO connects participants to opportunities with its holistic transition programs that blend high school education, vocational training, employment, and social support. The Student Support and Reentry Team; made up of social workers, paraprofessionals and mentors, are able to offer a range of services. These services include but are not limited to; counseling, life skills workshops, and individualized case management. The Reentry and Student Support team collaborate with NOO’s community partners, teachers, and staff to serve as continuous allies.

NOO, through its critical partnerships with multiple American Job Centers were awarded two Prison to Employment (P2E) grant initiatives which acted as a catalyst for participants in support services (i.e monetary, career counseling), vocational training and support to find and maintain gainful employment. Even more recently, NOO hosted a virtual high school graduation with over 17 graduates from Men’s Central Jail (MCJ).

New Opportunities offers educational and student/reentry support to individuals inside of three (3) correctional facilities in Los Angeles County that include; Men’s Central Jail (MCJ), Twin Towers Correctional Facility (TTCF), and Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF – Women’s Jail). New Opportunities also offers educational, student, and reentry supportive services at 9 locations across Los Angeles and Orange Counties located in Hawthorne, East Los Angeles, Gardena, Lancaster, Alhambra, Santa Fe Springs, Inglewood, Boyle Heights, and Garden Grove.
Information and Opportunities

New Funding Opportunity: Resources for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking, Sexual Assault, and/or Stalking

Monday, May 3, 2021 from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM PST

Please join us for a meeting highlighting an upcoming funding opportunity for new shelter, housing location and rental assistance resources for survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, and/or stalking.

REGISTER

Save the Date
Los Angeles Continuum of Care Program NOFA Kick-off webinar

Monday, May 17, 2021
10:30 am – 12:00 pm.

As the Collaborative Applicant for the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC), LAHSA and the LA CoC Board have been preparing for this year’s anticipated release of the CoC Program Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 competition. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) expects to release the NOFA sometime in the early summer of 2021.

To improve the LA CoC’s application score and better respond to HUD’s priorities, LAHSA and the LA CoC Board will be introducing significant changes this year to how projects eligible for renewal are evaluated and ranked for HUD funding consideration, and also to the criteria used locally for reallocating funding from underperforming projects in whole or in part.

LAHSA will seek community feedback on proposed changes in the coming weeks and months and will hold a NOFA Kick-off webinar on Monday, May 17, 2021 from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm. All CoC Program recipients and subrecipients are encouraged to attend.

Defy Ventures Entrepreneurship Bootcamp Program

The Defy Ventures Entrepreneurship Bootcamp is a 14-week program for people with criminal histories who want to explore entrepreneurship and develop their small business idea into formal business concept and pitch. The program is designed for adults (18 and over) who are stable in their reentry (employed and housed), have been out of custody for at least 6 months and have time to invest in the program. There is no cost for this program.

Recruitment and Admissions Timeline:
- June 1 - 1st Virtual Info Session led by Defy Staff
- June 1 - Online Application Opens
- June 15 - 2nd Virtual Info Session led by Defy Staff
- July 12 - Classes Begin

More Info: quan@defyventures.org
Apply here: https://forms.gle/RCz33SY8mCec8Nzs9

Participation Needed for Research Regarding Formerly Incarcerated Youth

My name is Chase Ochrach and I am a Counseling Psychology Ph.D. candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study focused on how people who were incarcerated during adolescence have made sense of their experience. The study involves completing an online survey, which takes approximately 25-35 minutes to complete. Should you choose to participate in the study, you will be compensated with a $15 gift card for your time. I anticipate findings from this study can be used to improve mental health services provided to adolescents involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, the juvenile justice system. I am hoping that findings from this study might help public officials better understand the mental health needs of people who have been impacted by juvenile justice system involvement.
Freedom
Currently has beds available at their FSP housing site for both men and women.

www.asteptofreedom.org

It's time to apply for a JFLA student loan!

Limited funding is available for full time students. JFLA will be lending a maximum of $7,500 per year to full time students. Please see the chart below for the maximum loan amount for your program. Click here to learn more about our education loans.

Apply Today!

Current JFLA loan recipients: If you would like to re-apply for another loan, please email info@jfla.org. Please do not use the online application.

NEWS

Feature News Story

This month’s feature news article is about President Joe Biden’s proclamation on Second Chance Month. Obviously from the article below, it is one thing to make proclamations and another thing to turn them into reality, but the proclamation itself says a great deal. And there might be situations where being able to quote the President of the United States would be helpful!

A Proclamation on Second Chance Month, 2021
President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

“America’s criminal justice system must offer meaningful opportunities for redemption and rehabilitation. After incarcerated individuals serve their time, they should have the opportunity to fully reintegrate into society. It benefits not just those individuals but all of society, and it is the best strategy to reduce recidivism. During Second Chance Month, we lift up all those who, having made mistakes, are committed to rejoining society and making meaningful contributions.

“My Administration is committed to a holistic approach to building safe and healthy communities. This includes preventing crime and providing opportunities for all Americans. It also requires rethinking the existing criminal justice system.

Biden administration needs to walk the walk on second chances for prisoners

USA Today, Erica Zunkel and James Zeigler, May 1, 2021

President Joe Biden declared April Second Chance Month, sending a strong signal to the tens of thousands of men and women serving extreme sentences in our federal prisons.

But talk is cheap, and while the administration’s rhetoric is promising, second chances remain few and far between in a federal criminal system where the Department of Justice continues to thwart the administration’s goals by opposing the release of individuals who are rehabilitated and do not pose a risk...
requires rethinking the existing criminal justice system—whom we send to prison and for how long; how people are treated while incarcerated; how prepared they are to reenter society once they have served their time; and the racial inequities that lead to the disproportionate number of incarcerated Black and Brown people.

“We must commit to second chances from the earliest stages of our criminal justice system. Supporting second chances means, for example, diverting individuals who have used illegal drugs to drug court programs and treatment instead of prison. It requires eliminating exceedingly long sentences and mandatory minimums that keep people incarcerated longer than they should be. It means providing quality job training and educational opportunities during incarceration to prepare individuals for the 21st century economy. And it means reinvesting the savings from reduced incarceration into reentry programs and social services that prevent recidivism and leave us all better off.

Read the entire proclamation

More News Stories

California is releasing 76K inmates early, including violent felons

KTLA5, Apr 30, 2021
With little notice, California on Saturday is increasing early release credits for 76,000 inmates, including violent and repeat felons, as it further trims the population of what once was the nation’s largest state correctional system.

READ MORE

The Facts on Marijuana Equity and Decriminalization
Why it’s time to end the federal criminalization of marijuana

Center for American Progress By Akua Amaning, April 20, 2021
Why it’s time to end the federal criminalization of marijuana

Decriminalization refers to the elimination of criminal penalties for the use, possession, or sale of drugs. There are many legitimate reasons to support the decriminalization of marijuana, but the prime motivating factor for many is to redress the injustices caused by decades of harsh enforcement of marijuana crimes—particularly against people of color.

READ MORE

SJ County loses $220 million because of old criminal records, legislation proposes relief

The Record, Laura S. Diaz April 30, 2021
A criminal reform bill is making its way through the State Assembly that could help San Joaquin County win $220 million in relief funding. The bill is part of a federal initiative to compensate states for the costs of removing old criminal records, which could help the county specifically address the racial disparities in its justice system.

READ MORE
A criminal reform bill is making its way through the California State Senate that could automatically seal criminal records after a person has completed 2 full years out of the criminal justice system...

...Californians for Safety and Justice estimated that San Joaquin County loses $220,000,000 a year, contributing to the state’s $20.8 billion gross domestic product loss because of old criminal records and the obstacles for individuals to reintegrate into society successfully.

Second-chance hiring is a win-win for employers and communities

The Washington Examiner, by Megan Rose, April 29, 2021

Few things are sadder than witnessing a person lose hope.

Policing Los Angeles: The Forces At Work And The Scope Of Their Power
There’s LAPD and LASD — and 70 more(!) police departments operating in Los Angeles County.

The LAist By Frank Stoltze, Gina Pollack and Brianna Lee, Apr 20, 2021

San Diego County district attorney moves to lift all gang injunctions

San Diego Union-Tribune, By David Hernandez, April 28, 2021

MAT Often Not an Option for Opioid Users in Justice System
— Medicaid expansion seems to have helped, but not a lot

by Kara Grant, Enterprise & Investigative Writer, MedPage Today April 16, 2021

JPMorgan expands program to get jobs for people with criminal background

BankDive, by Dan Ennis, April 27, 2021
JPMorgan announced it is investing an extra $12.5 million in community organizations in Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Chicago, Delaware and Nashville, Tennessee, that give training, financial health resources, legal advice and job leads to people with criminal pasts. That commitment builds on a $7 million pledge announced in 2019.
DA George Gascón, Survivors Of Violent Crime, And The Meaning Of Justice

WitnessLA, April 27, 2021 by By Trino Jimenez

I am a father, brother, husband, and a man of deep faith. I am also a survivor of a violent crime. In 1986, someone brutally murdered my brother Julio. Although the man who killed Julio was caught and held accountable, 30 years later, I had still never once cried or truly grieved over my brother’s death. Julio’s death was simply too painful to even discuss. Then, in 2017, the Re:Store Justice program allowed me to communicate directly with the man responsible. I learned about his traumatic and violent childhood, another side of the story. It did not justify the crime, but it helped me make sense of it. Our frank communication gave me more closure than anything the criminal justice system delivered.

READ MORE

‘2020 was a tinderbox’: murders rose in US neighborhoods of color last year

The Guardian, by Weihua Li and Beth Schwartzapfel of the Marshall Project, 8 Apr, 2021

A strained social safety net, rising tensions and mistrust between police and communities of color played part, experts say. Despite a statewide stay-at-home order, Los Angeles recorded 332 killings in 2020, a precipitous jump – 95 more lives lost to murder than the year before.

READ MORE

Reports

Loyola University Report

This report analyzes how LASD “deputy gangs” have negatively impacted policing in Los Angeles and infected the fairness of legal proceedings in Los Angeles Superior Court.

READ THE REPORT

Slamming the Courthouse Door:

Prison Policy Initiative, by Andrea Fenster & Margo Schlanger, April 26, 2021

Twenty-five years ago today, in 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the Prison Litigation Reform Act. The “PLRA,” as it is often called, makes it much harder for incarcerated people to file and win federal civil rights lawsuits. For two-and-a-half decades, the legislation has created a double standard that limits incarcerated people’s access to the courts at all stages: it requires courts to dismiss civil rights cases from incarcerated people for minor technical reasons before even reaching the case merits, requires incarcerated people to pay filing fees that low-income people on the outside are exempt from, makes it hard to find representation by sharply capping attorney fees, creates high barriers to settlement, and weakens the ability of courts to order changes to prison and jail policies.
READ THE REPORT