# Performance Partnership Pilot Initiative

## City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County, California

Creating a regional service delivery system to improve the education, employment, housing, and physical/mental well–being of opportunity youth

## I. Overview

Millions of young Americans are considered to be what researchers term "disconnected"—neither working nor attending school, or experiencing other forms of disadvantage that threaten their transition to adulthood. In 2014, the U.S. Congress authorized Performance Partnership Pilot for Disconnected Youth (P3) sites "to help state, local, and tribal communities remove institutional and programmatic barriers across multiple federal discretionary programs that serve disconnected youth."[1] Congress defines this group as young people aged 16 to 24 who are experiencing homelessness, in foster care, pregnant, parenting, justice system–involved, unemployed, or at risk of dropping out of school. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) selected the City of Los Angeles' Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) as a P3 site. Nine pilots were awarded to grantees across the country, giving organizations the ability to pool funds from across the discretionary programs of five federal agencies to provide innovative evidence–based interventions to youth. All pilots identified a network of partners to more efficiently provide services and improve outcomes for disconnected youth. Each received a maximum of $700,000 in start–up grant funds to support efforts from fall 2015 through September 2018. In Los Angeles, more than half of the allocation went to a third–party evaluator.
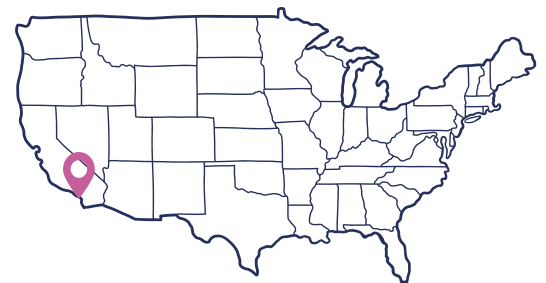
As part of its P3 initiative, the City of Los Angeles galvanized a large cross–section of organizations to streamline and improve regional service delivery systems to improve the education, employment, social health, and housing outcomes for disconnected youth. Organizations included the County of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles Community College District,

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1. Krutko, L. (2008). *Memorandum from the City of San Jose to the Community and Economic Development Committee Re: Final Report on the Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness.* http://www3.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/CommitteeAgenda/CED/022508/CEDC022508_4ba.pdf

as well as community-based and philanthropic organizations. The pilot involved coordinating multiple layers of City and County services for disconnected youth through co-location of services, data-sharing agreements, shared intake and referral forms, and collaborative regional meetings. This process fostered strong partnerships between City and County agencies and led to new policies and programs supporting interventions. The Los Angeles P3 pilot was awarded a short extension and funding ended in 2019, but resulting systems changes and partnerships have sparked an ongoing culture of collaboration in the region.

## County/City Demographic Profile

| | Los Angeles County, CA[2] | City of Los Angeles, CA[3] |
|---|---|---|
| **Size (square miles)** | 4,059 | 469 |
| **Total Population** | 10,039,107 | 3,979,537 |
| **Population Density** | 2,474/sq. mile | 8,486/sq. mile |
| **Race & Ethnicity** | | |
| Asian | 15% | 12% |
| Black or African American | 8% | 8% |
| Hispanic | 49% | 48% |
| White | 26% | 29% |
| Other | 2% | 3% |
| **Workforce & Economic Indicators** | | |
| Unemployment Rate | 3.3% | 3.5% |
| Poverty Rate (persons below poverty line) | 13.4% | 16.7% |
| Child Poverty Rate (<18 below poverty line) | 18% | 24% |
| Median Household Income | $72,797 | $67,418 |

2.    U.S. Census Bureau (2019), American Community Survey, one-year estimates. Los Angeles County, CA - Profile data - Census Reporter.
3.    U.S. Census Bureau (2019), Census Reporter. Industry, CA - Profile data - Census Reporter.

# City/County Governance Structure

The City of Los Angeles is a Mayor–Council–Commission form of government and is the second-biggest municipality in the country, with a population of 3.9 million. Residents elect a Mayor, City Controller, City Attorney, and 15 City Council members. The County is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors who wield immense power and have a budget larger than 32 states. The County is home to 10 million Angelenos and spans an area with 88 different municipal governments, which range in size from a few hundred to nearly 4 million (City of Los Angeles). The County is the only provider of critical key youth services such as probation, foster care, and mental health.

## II. Need for Collaboration/The Challenge

The system for providing effective services to disconnected youth was hampered by poor coordination and alignment across the systems that serve youth, as well as policies that made it hard to target the neediest youth. In 2018, nearly one out of six young people aged 16 to 24 in the City and County of Los Angeles were out of school and out of work.[4] This statistic translates into more than 170,000 disconnected young people in Los Angeles County, of whom 66,400 lived in the City of Los Angeles. These youth often face a lifetime of economic challenges unless they reconnect to educational and employment opportunities. In the complex region of Los Angeles County, youth-serving entities and government departments had overlapping jurisdictions and no mandate to coordinate services or create a service delivery system that best served youth. Furthermore, the relevant City and County agencies had limited time and incentives to collaborate, siloed and fragmented data systems that inhibited the flow of information, and administrative requirements that impeded a holistic approach to serving youth.[5]

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→

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4.  Harrington, Fogg (2016), *Experience Required: The Diminished Employment Prospect of Teens & Young Adults in Los Angeles.* https://www.wiblacity.org/images/reports/DisconnectedYouth2016_Report3-LAExperienceRequired_DrexelUniversity_v2.pdf

5.  U.S. Congress (2014), *Consultation Paper. Changing the Odds for Disconnected Youth: Initial Design Considerations for the Performance Partnership Pilots.* https://youth.gov/docs/P3_Consultation_Paper_508.pdf

# III. The Partners

The City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD), under the leadership of Assistant General Manager Robert Sainz, championed the effort and developed a Partnership Advisory Committee to holistically engage the major partners around integrating youth services. The group included:

- City of Los Angeles
- County of Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Los Angeles Community College District
- Local California State Universities
- Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
- Los Angeles Housing Service Agency
- More than 50 public, philanthropic, and community–based organizations

# IV. The Shared Goal

The Los Angeles P3 collaborative was prioritized across partners to the dedicated leadership of Mr. Sainz, who oversaw the effort. Early in the process, he brought partners together to develop a joint vision and mission to guide the collaborative.

## Vision

All disconnected youth in Los Angeles will secure quality education, training, and employment opportunities.

## Mission

Transform service delivery systems to improve the education, employment, housing, and physical and mental well–being of the region's disconnected 16– to 24–year–old population.[6]

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6.  Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot (2017), 2017–2020 Strategic Plan Serving Disconnected Youth. http://ewddlacity.com/images/reports/p3/071417_P3_StrategicPlan_OPTIMIZED.pdf

# V. How Partners Collaborated

The collaboration was aimed at two levels: collaboration among City and County agencies, and collaboration within City neighborhoods to implement services on the ground. The City's main P3 innovation was that Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA)–funded service providers would serve all youth in need, regardless of whether they were eligible for WIOA or not. No additional money was given to the providers to serve the non–WIOA youth. Rather, YouthSource Center operators were advised to use their network of partners to serve non–WIOA youth. The City used the funding to pay for the third–party evaluator, expert facilitation, and minimal operational elements. Most of the effort was bringing people together to align what already existed to better serve youth. The City divided the project into two phases: a planning phase, during which the collaborative created a strategic plan, and an implementation phase.

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During the course of the project, the City and County set up data–sharing agreements, started a universal intake and referral form, created regional lists of referral partners and resources for service providers, and offered plenty of space for relationship building. A plethora of other operational improvements were made, as well. For example, former disconnected youth were hired as Youth Ambassadors to conduct outreach; City funds provided for emergency housing through the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center; and outreach to homeless youth expanded, in partnership with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Agency.

## Impetus & Levers for the Collaboration

- **P3 federal funding:** The City's EWDD received around $850,000 to provide innovative, evidence–based interventions for disconnected youth—$700,000 as an initial allocation and $150,000 for a short extension.

- **Existing partnership between the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the City's WIOA youth service providers:** The City and the LAUSD had an existing partnership wherein LAUSD Pupil Service and Attendance Counselors (PSAs) were co–located in the City's YouthSource Centers in high–need areas of the City. This cross–agency partnership was extremely successful and led to more youth reconnecting to services. The P3 initiative was an opportunity to expand the model to County agencies and other providers.

# Structure of the Collaboration

The City established a Partnership Advisory Committee and six work groups to support the planning and implementation of the work. These groups provided the structure to efficiently engage multiple levels of City and County staff who had the knowledge, technical ability, and power to make decisions and highlight challenges.

- **The Partnership Advisory Committee** provided for communications across the governmental entities and largely consisted of representatives of local elected officials overseeing youth development work in the Los Angeles region.

- **The Operational Working Group** focused on the delivery systems for P3, specifically how to create enrollment and referral processes and bring together partners at the provider level.

- **The Adhoc Data, Evaluation, and Research Work Group** helped define outcome measures, create data-sharing agreements, work with the local management information system on access issues, and facilitate the evaluation.

- **The Adhoc Policy and Waiver Work Group** identified a list of more than 20 waivers that would facilitate more streamlined services for youth. In addition, this group identified systemic barriers present at different agencies that could change without a waiver to improve services.

- **The Steering Work Group** was responsible for the overall coordination and communication of work group activities.

- **The Adhoc Strategic Plan Work Group** was responsible for developing a strategic plan for the youth-serving systems and services in Los Angeles for 2017 to 2020.

**Monthly regional monthly partner meetings** were held in seven regions where six to 10 partner agencies would come together to collaborate. During these meetings, staff from the different groups shared information about their available services, identified existing challenges, and collaborated to navigate service paths for youth. The regional meetings built trust across City and County agency staff and buy-in to the systems-change strategy. The regional meetings continue to this day and are a self-sustaining legacy of the project.

# VI. Keys to Success

- **Shared commitment and goals:** The City began the initiative, but the collaboration created the path forward by developing a shared vision, mission, and goals.

  » **Formal, memorialized commitments from the County and City:** The County Board of Supervisors passed a Board motion to publicly demonstrate commitment to the mission. The motion ordered every County department to participate and be actively involved throughout the process. Furthermore, a P3 rating was added to County agency directors' pay structure to incentivize them to collaborate. The City passed a similar resolution.

- **Strong champions and leaders:** Mr. Sainz was a passionate leader for this work who was well-connected across City and County agencies. The Partnership Advisory Committee created champions at the City and County levels who gave P3 priority and visibility across the region. Leadership included Richard Verches and Otto Solorzano in the County, Selena Barajas at the LAUSD, and Mike Fong with the Los Angeles Community College District. This dedicated group of individuals helped to keep P3 at the forefront of agencies' goals and garnered support across the region.

- **Trust and open communication:**

  » **Regular meeting cadence:** Working group meetings provided the structure for multiple workflows to take place simultaneously and to engage more people with subject matter expertise across the region.

  » **Regional meetings to engage line-level staff:** A facilitator ensured these meetings were well-run and worthwhile to attend. This level of decentralization was critical given the size and complexity of Los Angeles.

- **Strong data systems to track progress:**

  » **Flash reports:** The City's formal evaluator led the Data, Evaluation, and Research Work Group and created "Flash Reports" that outlined progress toward goals that supported accountability.

  » **Formal program evaluation:** The P3 funding mandated a third-party evaluator to collect data, track success, and formally evaluate the project. The County shared data with the evaluator that could serve as a control group.

- **Clear processes and accountability structures:** LAUSD counselors were co-located in YouthSource Centers, were funded by the City, and were true boundary spanners. This created an ongoing collaboration environment in which mutual commitment was developed and collaboration was sustained (at least in that location).

# VII. Challenges & Lessons Learned

- **Poor data entry and collection by some partners:** YouthSource Center staff did not enter all youth served into the system or complete all data fields needed to adequately track progress and make referrals. The CalJOBS data system is notoriously time-consuming to navigate, and many partners did not see the value in data entry or did not have the technical skills to do so. This caused an undercount that was estimated to reduce the number of youth reported as served by 31%.[7]

- **Reluctance to use a shared data system:** To enable collaborative case notes across agencies and improve service provision for youth, the City offered to open its youth workforce development data in CalJOBS to County agencies that also serve disconnected youth. Most County departments did not choose to utilize this opportunity, as it would take time and initially create additional work for staff. After the County agencies refused to access the City's data, the City requested access to County departments' youth-level data; none were willing to open their data to YouthSource staff.

# VIII. Collaboration Impact

A formal evaluation of P3 programs nationwide held up the Los Angeles P3 program as a model, stating: "Los Angeles used Federal P3 funding as the catalyst for sustained systems change…The Los Angeles, California, pilot approached P3 as an opportunity to change the system for providing services to disconnected youth. It resulted in the development of a strategic plan that would guide the system for serving disconnected youth in the future."[8]

- **Los Angeles P3 youth participants were three times as likely to complete a secondary education degree or certificate** within a year of exiting the program, or to return to school if they had not completed secondary school.[9]

- **Participants were significantly more likely to be employed at the end of the program compared to a comparison group of youth.**

- **Universal referral form and process** were created for staff in the County's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to generate referrals in February 2019.

- **The program developed and maintained a consistent assessment process across youth centers** that revised the intake process for all youth entering the region's youth centers.

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7. Moore, Rubino, Malka, Iskowitz, Gustanski (2017). *Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot (LAP3) Formative Evaluation Report.* https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/LA%20P3%20Formative%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf

8. Brown (2020), *Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3): Sustaining Systems Change Efforts and Coordinated Services for Youth.* https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/P3%20Sustainability%20Brief.pdf

9. Moore, Chapman, Iskowitz (2018), *Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot Impact Evaluation, California State University Northridge.*

# Lasting Systems Change

Federal funding has ended, but City, County, and partners' budgets now include funding to sustain the collaboration. Partners recognize the value of coordination and allocate staff, time, and resources to ensure its survival.

- **Regional P3 meetings continue monthly** and have been expanded across the County. Meetings are understood to be "the meeting to attend" to meet all youth–serving service providers in a region.

- **Created the Reconnecting Los Angeles Youth (ReLAY) Institute** to facilitate collaboration amongst the many agencies and organizations that serve youth, provide cross–agency training and capacity building, and centralize and coordinate research and promising practices for serving disconnected youth. This effort marked the first time the five local California State Universities came together to create such a venture. California State University, Northridge, as the host campus for ReLAY, committed to covering much of ReLAY's start–up costs and operations. The City and County of Los Angeles also committed funds.

- **An automated web–based referral process (ARS)** was launched in 2020 to streamline how the County connects youth to workforce services. The implementation mandated data–sharing agreements, memorandums of understanding, and joint access to a web system by City and County staff. The next step is to expand this to other agencies.
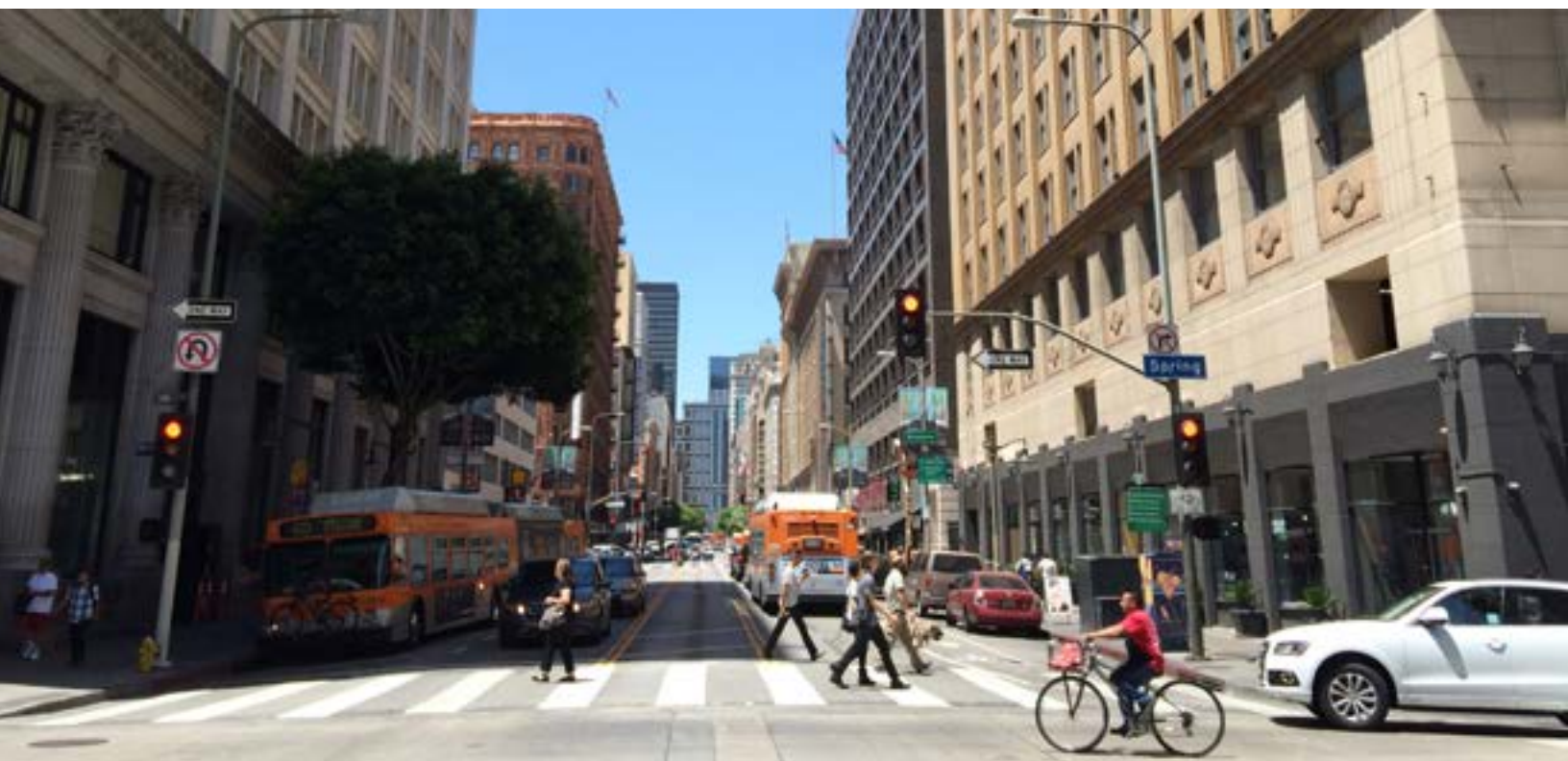
## RESOURCES

**2017—2020 Strategic Plan Serving Disconnected Youth:**

http://ewddlacity.com/images/reports/p3/071417_P3_StrategicPlan_OPTIMIZED.pdf

**Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot Impact Evaluation:**

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342611391_os_Angeles_Performance_Partnership_Pilot_LAP3_Impact_Evaluation

**Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot (LA P3) Formative Evaluation Report:**

LA P3 Formative Evaluation Report.pdf (clasp.org)

**Implementation of the Performance Partnership Pilot for Opportunity Youth and Support for the L.A. Compact:**

http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/118094.pdf

**Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth: Four Years After Initial Authorization:**

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/ETA_P3_InterimImplementationReport_June2020.pdf

**Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3): Sustaining Systems Change Efforts and Coordinated Services for Youth:**

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/P3%20Sustainability%20Brief.pdf

**ReLAY Institute: About Us:**

Available at https://relayinstitute.org/

**Experience Required: The Diminished Employment Prospect of Teens & Young Adults in Los Angeles:**

https://www.wiblacity.org/images/reports/DisconnectedYouth2016_Report3–LAExperienceRequired_DrexelUniversity_v2.pdf

**Consultation Paper. Changing the Odds for Disconnected Youth: Initial Design Considerations for the Performance Partnership Pilots:**

https://youth.gov/docs/P3_Consultation_Paper_508.pdf