

# Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention



# OJJDP

## Pathways to Higher Education: Building Opportunities for Youth Impacted by the Juvenile Justice System

May 11, 2023 | 2:00-3:30 p.m. ET

# Webinar Recording

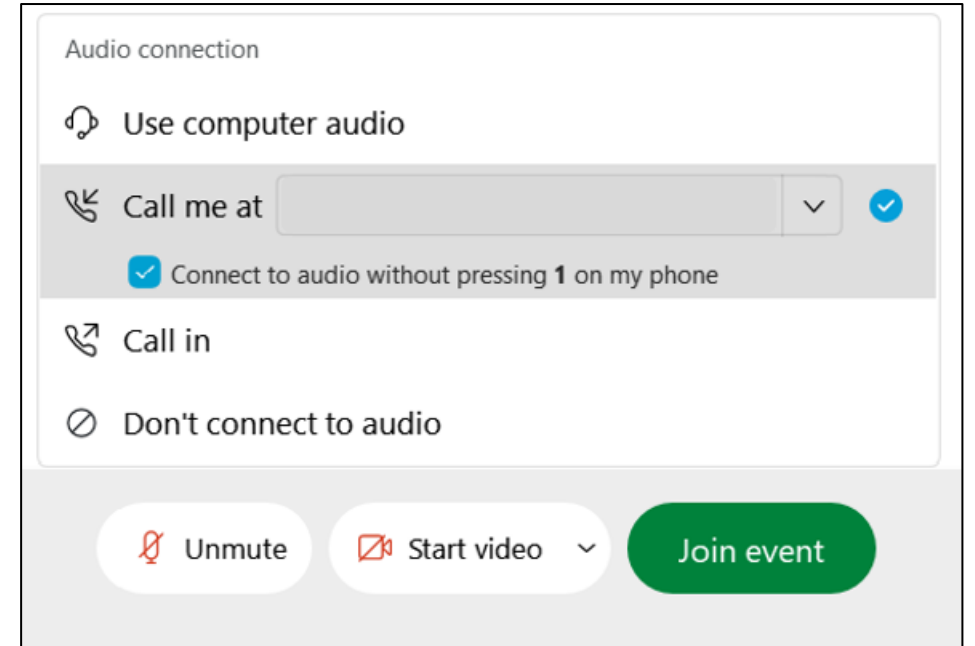


This event is being recorded and will be published on [OJJDP's multimedia](#) page.



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- For optimal audio, please have the Webex system dial your phone line by selecting the “Call me at” feature.
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- All questions will be addressed during the Q&A Session after the presentation.
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# Moderator



**Andrea R. Coleman, Ph.D.**, is a Senior Policy Advisor at the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). She serves as the research liaison facilitating juvenile justice and youth victimization research between OJJDP and the Office of Justice Programs. She also authors publications and advises senior leadership on various juvenile justice policy issues. Dr. Coleman was OJJDP's Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Coordinator and a Compliance Analyst, monitoring states' compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.

Before joining OJJDP, Dr. Coleman was Kentucky's DMC Coordinator and the first Lexington-Fayette County, Kentucky Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Council Coordinator. As the Council's Coordinator, she coordinated local delinquency prevention efforts, Title V Delinquency Prevention, and other Federal programs. She also provided direct services to pregnant and delinquent girls in a group home. Dr. Coleman received her doctorate from Nova Southeastern University in Criminal Justice and a Certificate in Public Sector Leadership from Cornell University.

# Presenter #1



**Jasmine Ying Miller** is a Staff Attorney at Youth Law Center, based in her hometown of Nashville, Tennessee. Her work focuses on the intersection between juvenile justice, child welfare, and education systems, including special education and transitions to postsecondary education for systems-impacted youth. She is interested in leveraging resources across systems to invest in youth and the communities that care for them, with a particular focus on state and federal financial aid programs. Prior to becoming a lawyer, Jasmine was a college counselor working in Metro Nashville Public Schools, where she primarily worked with immigrant and refugee students, first-generation students, and DACA/undocumented students.

# Presenter #2



**Katie Bliss** is the California Higher Education Coordinator at Youth Law Center working to create system change in the juvenile justice landscape through policy and legislative advocacy. Katie advocates to implement college programming and support policy across the state of CA to ensure juvenile justice-impacted youth have direct pathways to higher education.

Katie is also the founder of the national award-winning program, Project Change, located in the San Francisco Bay Area. Project Change at the San Mateo County Community College District is a state model program and the first program in California to provide in-person college instruction inside juvenile detention facilities as well as wrap-around student support services on campus. Katie created Project Change as an English professor at the College of San Mateo and City College of San Francisco. Having been kicked out of high school and incarcerated the majority of her adolescence in juvenile hall, her drive to create pathways to higher education for youth in the juvenile justice system comes from both personal and professional experience.

# Poll Questions





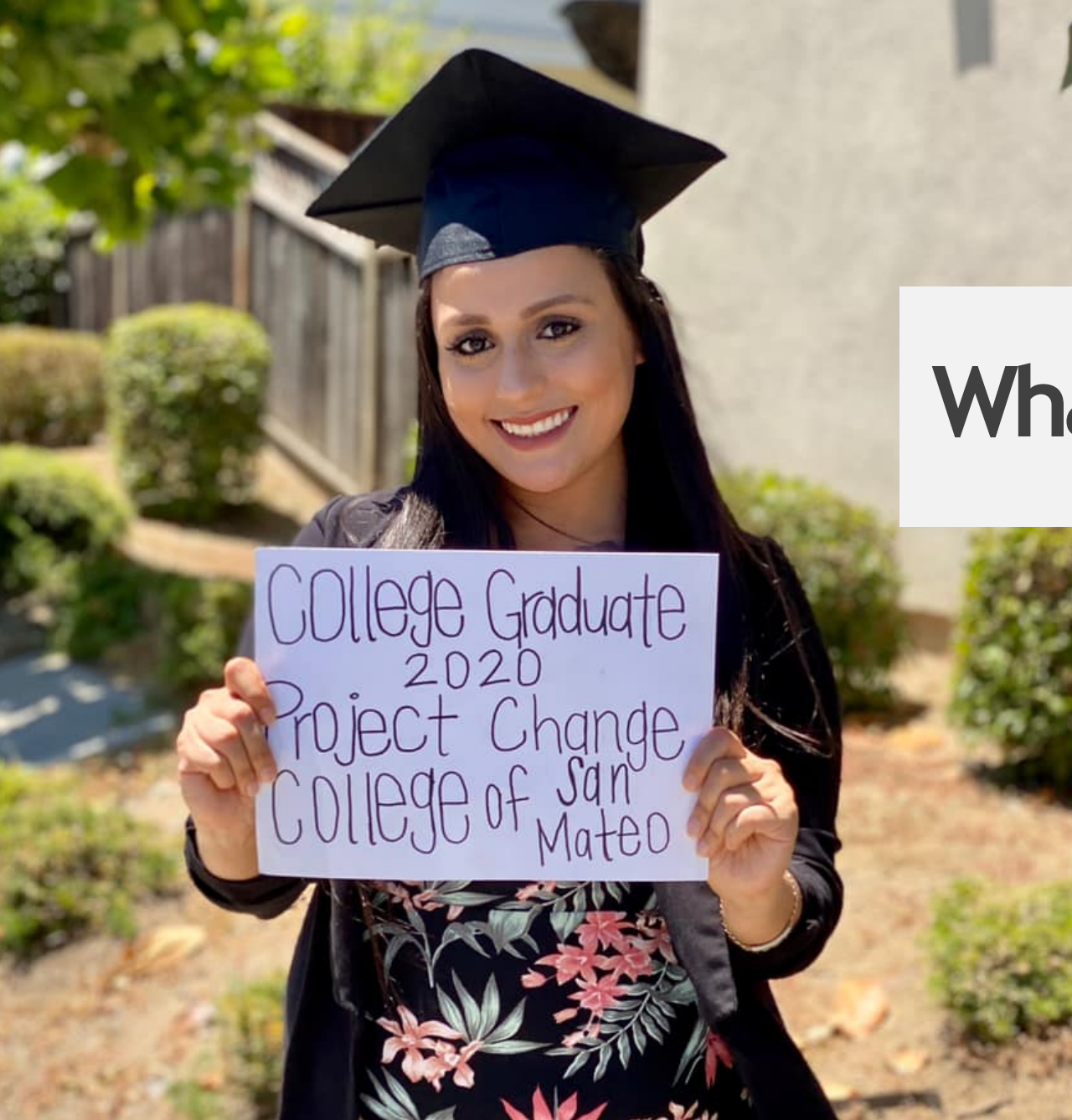
# Pathways to Higher Education

Building Opportunities for Youth Impacted by the Juvenile Justice System

**KATIE BLISS**  
YLC CALIFORNIA HIGHER  
EDUCATION COORDINATOR

**JASMINE MILLER**  
YLC STAFF ATTORNEY





# What is Youth Law Center?

- YLC is a national nonprofit law firm that advocates to transform foster care and youth justice systems so that every child and youth can thrive.
- We use many strategies - legislative and policy advocacy, litigation, technical assistance, and media and communications.

*This presentation is for purposes of general information and education and should not be construed as legal advice.*



Unifying stakeholders across California to create higher education programs for youth in the juvenile justice system.

State and federal advocacy to improve access to financial aid for system-impacted youth.

Using higher education to build and support step down programs and community-based alternatives to incarceration.

# YLC's Pathways to Higher Education Project

Building the Future



California has dedicated \$15 million annually to support higher education for youth impacted by the juvenile justice system.

### **UP TO 45 COLLEGE PROGRAMS**

That support juvenile justice impacted youth in facilities and in the community

### **COURSES IN DETENTION**

Through dual, concurrent, and traditional enrollment

### **TRANSITIONS SUPPORT**

For students transitioning from detention to campus or to an adult correctional facility

### **PROMOTE NEW MODELS**

Alternative sentencing, early release, and step down programs

### **BUILD COMMUNITY**

First initiative of its kind in the nation; needs a strong community of practice

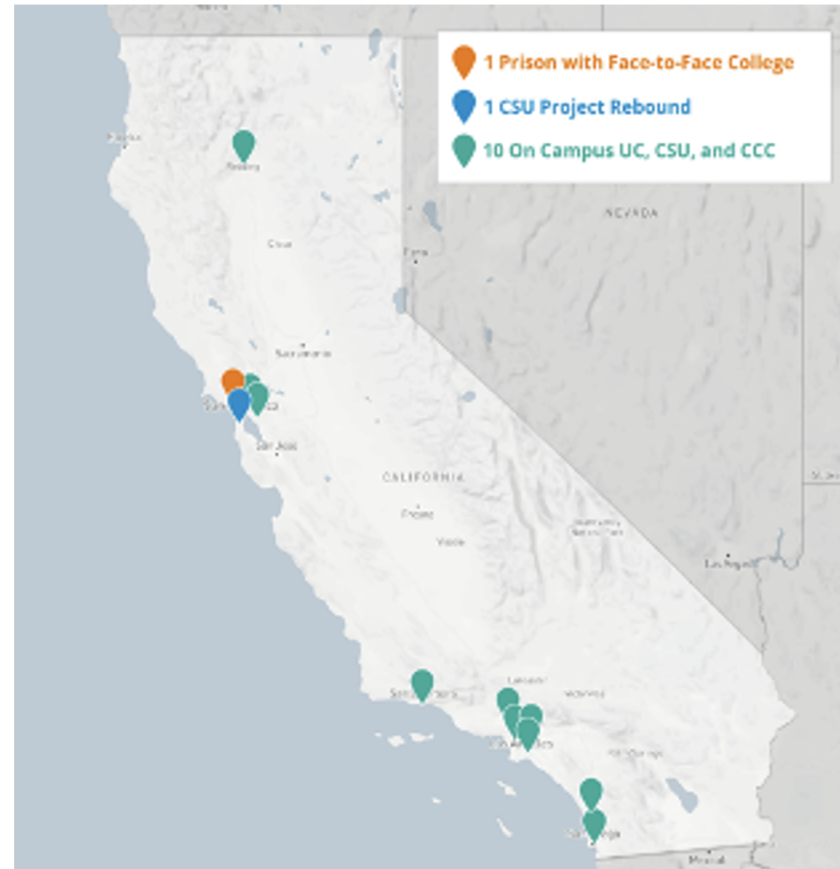
### **STUDENT-CENTERED DATA**

Five-year research study to be conducted to measure successes and gaps

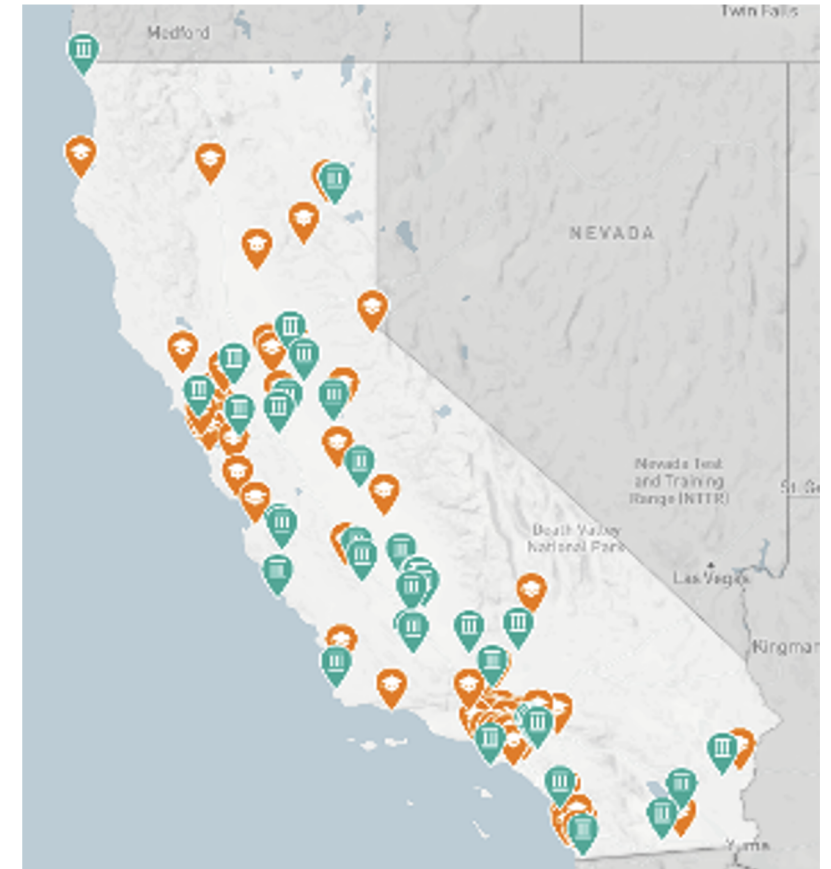
# Origins of the Movement

Programming in California grew out of an increased interest in serving adults incarcerated in prisons and jails, and as an extension of work related to access to higher education for foster youth. Youth in the juvenile justice system have needs that overlap with both populations, in addition to their own unique needs.

## 2014 Programs for Justice-Involved Students



## 2023 Programs for Justice-Involved Students



# Today's Presentation

1

Seeing and Serving Youth  
in the Juvenile Justice  
System as Students

2

Myths & Misconceptions About  
Higher Education Access &  
Financial Aid (and what you  
*really* need to know).

3

Model Higher Education  
Programming for Youth in the  
Juvenile Justice System





# Our Youth Are Leaders & Scholars

Seeing and Serving Youth in the Juvenile Justice System as Students





# Overcoming Barriers to Quality Education (Part 1)

Youth impacted by the juvenile justice system have overlap with other populations who experience challenges accessing education and higher education such as:

- Foster youth
- Homeless youth
- Youth with disabilities
- Youth of color
- Low-income youth
- Pregnant and parenting youth

# Overcoming Barriers to Quality Education (Part 2)

Additional challenges unique to involvement with the juvenile justice system include:

- Lack of educational stability
- Lack of appropriate educational services in facilities
- Lack of clarity about which entities are responsible for education
- Lack of transition support which can result in students dropping out of school when released from a facility
- Discrimination by school districts against youth with prior juvenile justice history
- Misinformation about lack of higher education or job opportunities for youth impacted by the juvenile justice system



# Youth Aspire to Higher Education & Employment

68%

of youth in the juvenile justice system aspire to go to college and beyond

88%

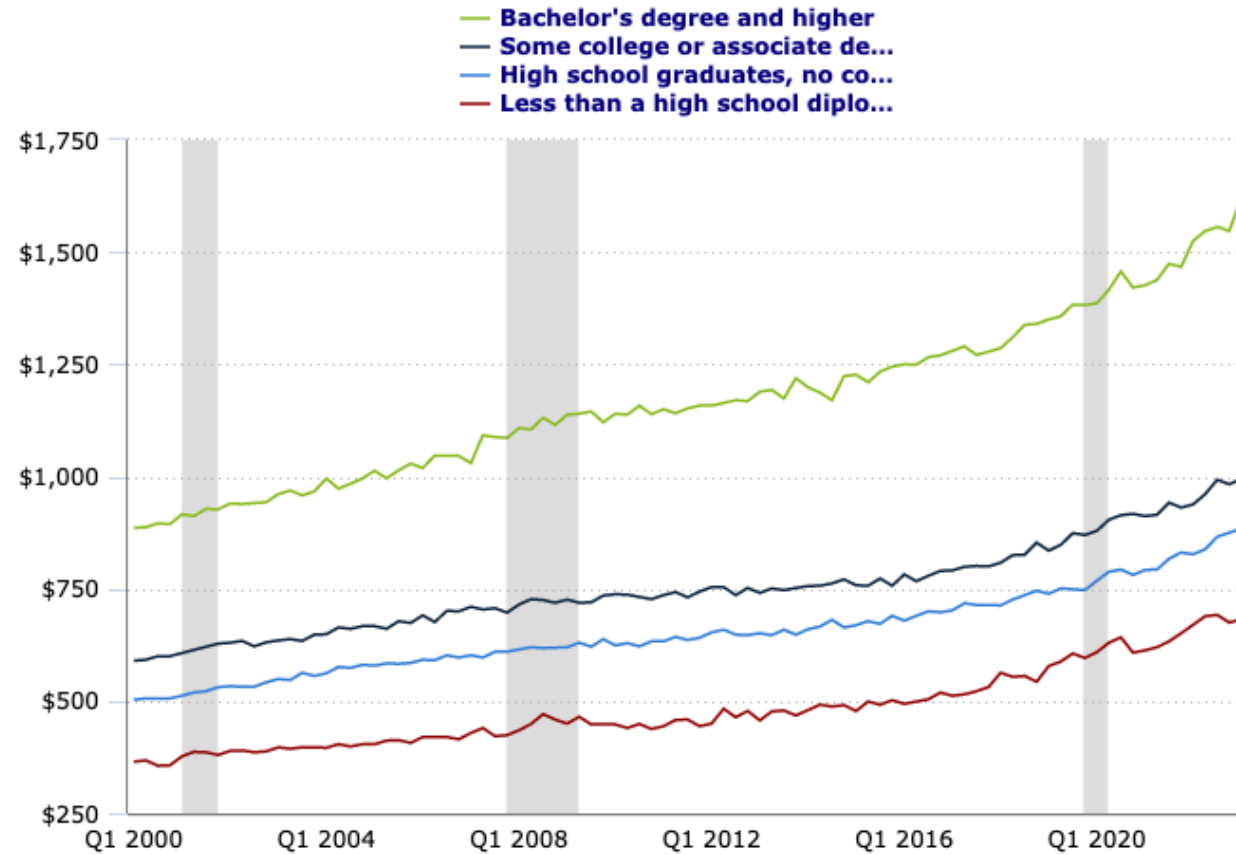
of youth in the juvenile justice system expect to hold a steady job in the future

Source: Sedlak & Bruce, 2017, "Survey of Youth in Residential Placement: Youth Characteristics and Backgrounds." <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/grants/250753.pdf>

# Benefits of Higher Education

**Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers 25 years and over by educational attainment, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted**

Click and drag within the chart to zoom in on time periods



Hover over chart to view data.

Note: Shaded area represents recession, as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



**Yes, youth  
impacted by  
juvenile justice  
can go to college.**

What You *Really* Need to Know

*Myth:* Postsecondary education is only for people who have always been good at school.

***Fact:*** Community colleges, technical schools, and other open-access institutions serve students with many different types of educational backgrounds.

## Practice Note

All youth impacted by the juvenile justice system should receive information about postsecondary education opportunities whether for now, for the future, for themselves, or for a friend or family member.

# What is College? (Part 1)

Postsecondary education can be:

- Four-year university degree
- Two-year degree preparing students for transfer
- Two-year degree preparing students to enter directly into the workforce
- Certificate programs preparing students to enter directly into the workforce
  - May be as short as a few months

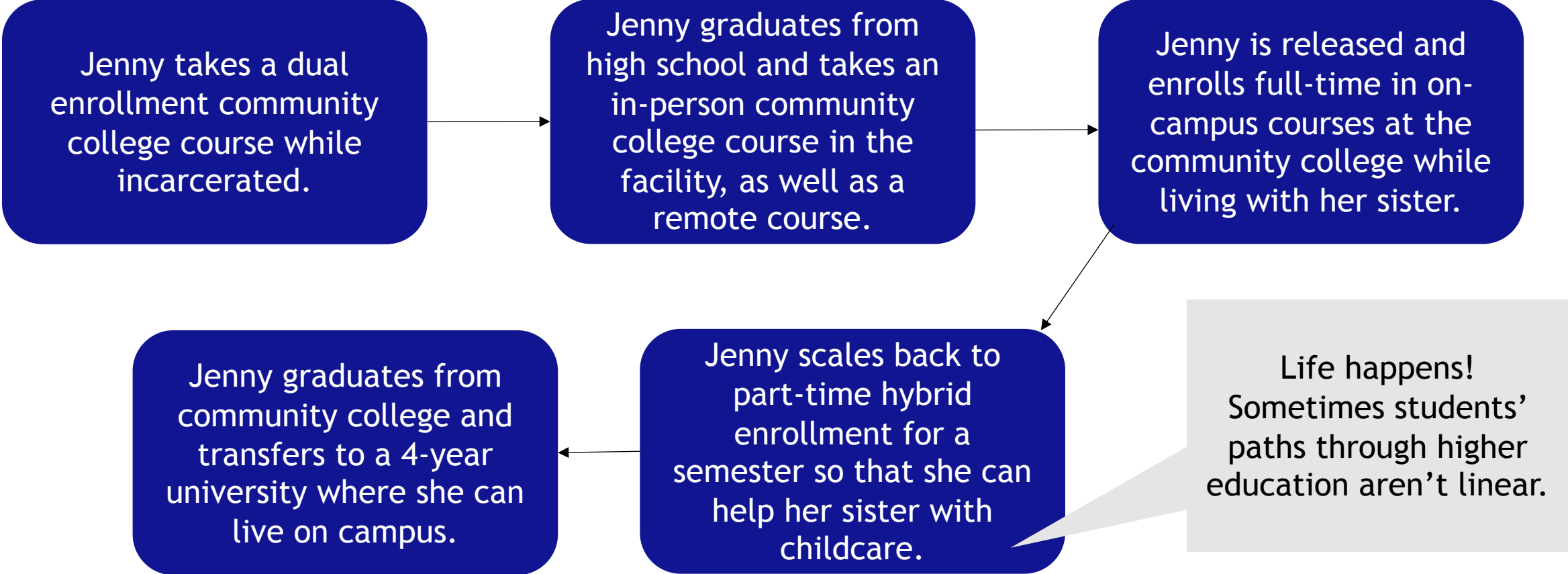
# What is College? (Part 2)

Students can attend:

- In person while residing on campus
- In person while residing off campus or at home
- Remotely
- Hybrid
- Full or part time
- Through dual enrollment in high school



# Flexible pathways to college completion can begin while students are incarcerated or detained.



*Myth:* It's really hard to get into college.

***Fact.*** Most colleges accept the vast majority of applicants, and some accept all applicants.

# College Application: Admissions Requirements (Part 1)

- Admissions requirements vary between states and institutions
- Community colleges and technical schools are typically “open access,” meaning:
  - Only requirement is graduation from high school or high school equivalency such as GED, HiSet, or other state approved test
  - Some states may not require graduation from high school
    - **But** students who do not have a diploma or equivalency have more limited access to federal financial aid

# College Application: Admissions Requirements (Part 2)

- 4-year colleges typically require:
  - Student meets certain GPA threshold OR
  - Student meets certain SAT/ACT threshold OR
  - Student has combination of GPA and test score
- More and more institutions are requiring only a GPA and no test score for admission
  - Test scores may still be used for course placement and/or to qualify for honors programs or specific scholarships
- Sometimes 4-year colleges require completion of certain courses
- Different requirements for transfer students
  - Generally, little to no consideration of high school performance

# College Application: What are the required components?

- Basic demographics/contact information
- Choice of major/course of study
- Information about high school grades and courses
- Standardized test score (maybe)

Essays, recommendations, and extracurriculars are typically only considered by selective institutions (state flagships, certain private colleges) or for consideration for honors programs/certain scholarships.

# Example Admissions Requirements

## Nashville State Community College

Graduate from a state approved high school, home school, or receive high school equivalency (GED/HiSET)

## Eastern TN State University

2.3 GPA OR

17 ACT

\*Test scores not required for admission but are required for scholarships.

## University of TN Chattanooga

2.85 GPA + 18 ACT/940 SAT

OR

2.5 GPA + 21 ACT/1060 SAT

AND completion of 16 required courses.

## University of TN Knoxville (State Flagship)

“Holistic admissions”- factors considered include academics, extracurriculars, optional essay and optional letters of recommendation.

Middle 50% ACT is 24-30

*Myth:* People interested in trades shouldn't go to college.



***Fact:*** Community colleges and technical schools are the nation's primary resource for career and technical education.

# Community Colleges & Technical Schools

- In some states, there are separate public systems for community colleges and technical schools, and in others, they are unified.
- Coursework can include:
  - Automotive technology
  - Manufacturing technology
  - Building and construction technology
  - Healthcare training, such as phlebotomy, dental assisting, practical nursing, pharmacy tech
  - Truck driving
  - Barbering, Aesthetics, Cosmetology

## Practice Note: Be Cautious of For-Profit & Private Technical Schools!

- Common programs include salon/cosmetology/barbering, commercial drivers' license, auto tech, and arts programs like film/graphic design
- Ask questions & exercise caution!
  - *Example: Aveda Institute's Tuition is almost \$20,000 and its total "Cost of Attendance" is \$37,000 vs. a cosmetology program at Tennessee College of Applied Technology, which costs \$6,861.*

*Myth:* Youth in the juvenile justice system can't get financial aid to go to college.

***Fact:*** Youth in the juvenile justice system are, generally, eligible for federal financial aid resources.

# What is Financial Aid?

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## Types:

- Grants and Scholarships: money you don't have to pay back
- Work Study: a part-time job on or off campus administered through an institution
- Loans: money you do have to pay back

## Sources:

- Federal Financial Aid
  - Biggest source is Pell Grant
- State Financial Aid
- Institutional Aid
- Private Grant/Scholarship Programs

# Financial Aid Application

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- FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid) is the application for federal student aid.
  - The maximum Pell Grant amount for 2023-2024 is \$7,395
  - Most states and colleges also distribute state and institutional aid through this application
- Some states may have additional applications or requirements to receive state financial aid
  - *Practice Note:* Check to ensure that students in facilities are able to meet the requirements for consideration for state aid - for instance, submitting a GPA or test score to the state if required.

# Youth with Juvenile Justice Experience are Eligible for Financial Aid

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- Prior juvenile justice history does **NOT** impact eligibility for federal financial aid.
- There is **NO BAR** on access to federal financial aid based on prior convictions or adjudications for drug offenses.
- Youth in juvenile justice facilities can access Pell Grants without any restrictions, *unless they have an adult criminal conviction*.
- Youth detained in juvenile justice facilities who have a criminal conviction can *still* access Pell if they are enrolled in an approved Prison Education Program.
  - Note that, generally, a very small proportion of youth in juvenile facilities are there pursuant to an adult criminal conviction.



Youth's Contact with the Juvenile Justice System	Youth Federal Financial Aid Eligibility
Youth has prior involvement with the juvenile justice system	Youth is eligible for the same federal financial aid resources as any other student; <i>there are no restrictions on aid eligibility based on prior involvement with juvenile justice system.</i>
Youth is currently involved with the juvenile justice system but is living in a community-based setting (for instance, residential treatment, group home, kinship/foster care placement, or at home on supervision)	Youth is eligible for same federal financial aid resources as any other student; <i>there are no restrictions on aid eligibility for youth involved in the juvenile justice system who reside in the community.</i>
Youth is currently detained or committed to a juvenile justice facility pre-trial or pursuant to a juvenile adjudication	Youth are eligible for all federal student aid except for student loans.
Youth is committed to a juvenile justice facility pursuant to a criminal conviction in an adult court.	Youth are eligible for Pell Grants if they are enrolled in an approved "Prison Education Program." Youth are eligible for all other federal student aid except for federal student loans.

# New FAFSA Coming Soon

- FAFSA is currently being revised, will be released December 2023.
- Look out for new trainings and walkthroughs about the revised FAFSA.
- A new paper FAFSA form for incarcerated adults will be available.
  - This form is meant to provide an option for incarcerated adults who do not have access to internet to fill out the FAFSA. Students are not required to use the form.
  - ***Students in juvenile justice facilities should not use this form.***
  - If you have questions about who should use the form, email [PEP@ed.gov](mailto:PEP@ed.gov).

*Myth:* Youth in the juvenile justice can't afford to go to college unless they take on massive debt.

***Fact.* With appropriately designed programming and high-quality guidance and support, youth in the juvenile justice system can afford college and may even be able to graduate without debt.**

# How Much Does College Cost? (Part 1)

- Big Takeaway: low-income youth typically do not need to pay money for *tuition and fees* at a public community college or technical school.
  - Maximum Pell Grant for 2023-2024 is \$7,395
- How much *additional* money is available to help cover youth's *living expenses* while in school will vary from school to school and state to state.
  - Reentry counseling that matches students with housing resources, food stamps, Medicaid, and other sources of support can help students offset living expenses.

## Nashville State Community College (TN)

- Tuition and Fees: \$4,294 (in-state)

## Pasadena City College (CA)

- Tuition and Fees: \$1,104 (in-state)
- \*Many students eligible for a fee waiver, in which case cost is \$0

## Kalamazoo Valley Community College (MI)

- Tuition and Fees: \$3,196 (in district) or \$5,283 (in state, out of district)

# How Much Does College Cost? (Part 2)

## Nashville State Community College (TN)

- Tuition and Fees: \$4,294 (in-state)

### Potential Financial Aid Sources:

- Pell Grant: Up to \$7,395
- Tennessee Hope Scholarship (if 3.0 or 21 ACT): \$3,200
- Aspire Award (Supplement to Hope for low-income students): \$500
- Tennessee Student Assistance Award (for low-income students while funds last): \$2000
- Chafee Education & Training Voucher (“ETV”) (for youth in foster care after age 16): \$5000

## Pasadena City College (CA)

- Tuition and Fees: \$1,104 (in-state)

\*Many students eligible for a fee waiver, in which case cost is \$0

### Potential Financial Aid Sources:

- Pell Grant: up to \$7,395
- Cal Grant B (for low-income students with 2.0 GPA): \$1,648
- Cal Grant Supplement for parenting students- \$6000
- Chafee ETV (for youth in foster care after age 16)- \$5000

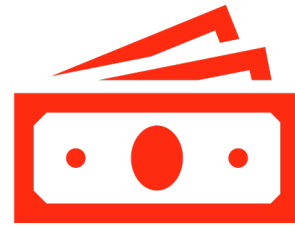
# Picking a Postsecondary Program

- For many students, figuring out what institution can meet their needs is the most important part of the application process.
  - Academic & Career Interests
  - Student Support
  - Clear pathways towards degrees
  - Financial Aid
- Much of the concern about minimizing student debt can be controlled for by applying, on the front end, to the most affordable institutions.
  - For most students, the most affordable institutions will be in-state public colleges.

When choosing postsecondary partners for in-facility programming, juvenile justice stakeholders should consider:



Flexibility



Affordability



Value



# Flexibility

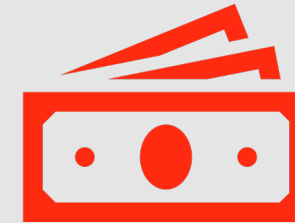
- Is programming applicable aimed at different types of career paths, or is there only one track?
- Is programming easily transferable to other public institutions?
- Can courses be scheduled to be completed in shorter time periods than a semester?
- Can students continue their studies after release?



Unlike incarcerated adults, students in juvenile justice facilities are typically only there for relatively short periods of time; thus, students taking college classes need flexibility and support for ongoing connection to higher education.

# Affordability

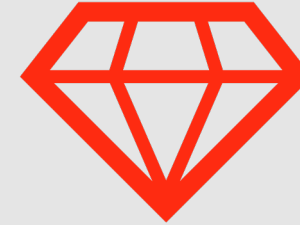
- Is programming affordable (and preferably free) for students inside facilities?
- Is it affordable outside of facilities, or would students need to take on significant debt to remain enrolled at the same institution once released?
- What financial aid supports can the partner commit to offering students who transfer to campus-based programming?



The ideal partner will be affordable for students in facilities *and* in the community.

# Value

- Is the in-custody programming offering students credit towards a high school diploma (dual enrollment) or a postsecondary credential?
- Does the institution offering the program treat students in facilities as equals with students who are not involved with the juvenile justice system?



Best practice is to work with institutions who will enroll and support students in credit-bearing courses that are equivalent to those offered to students who are enrolled in on campus programming.

# College Affordability Guidance (Part 1)

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- There are state and federal financial aid programs and rules that allow certain categories of youth to access more resources or to fill out aid applications without parental information.  
*Example:* youth with experience with foster care, unaccompanied homeless youth or unaccompanied youth who are self-supporting and at risk of homelessness, youth who are experiencing unusual circumstances and are unable to contact their parents, or for whom it would be unsafe to contact their parents
- Youth in the juvenile justice system have significant overlap with these categories, particularly with youth who have experience with foster care.

# College Affordability Guidance (Part 2)

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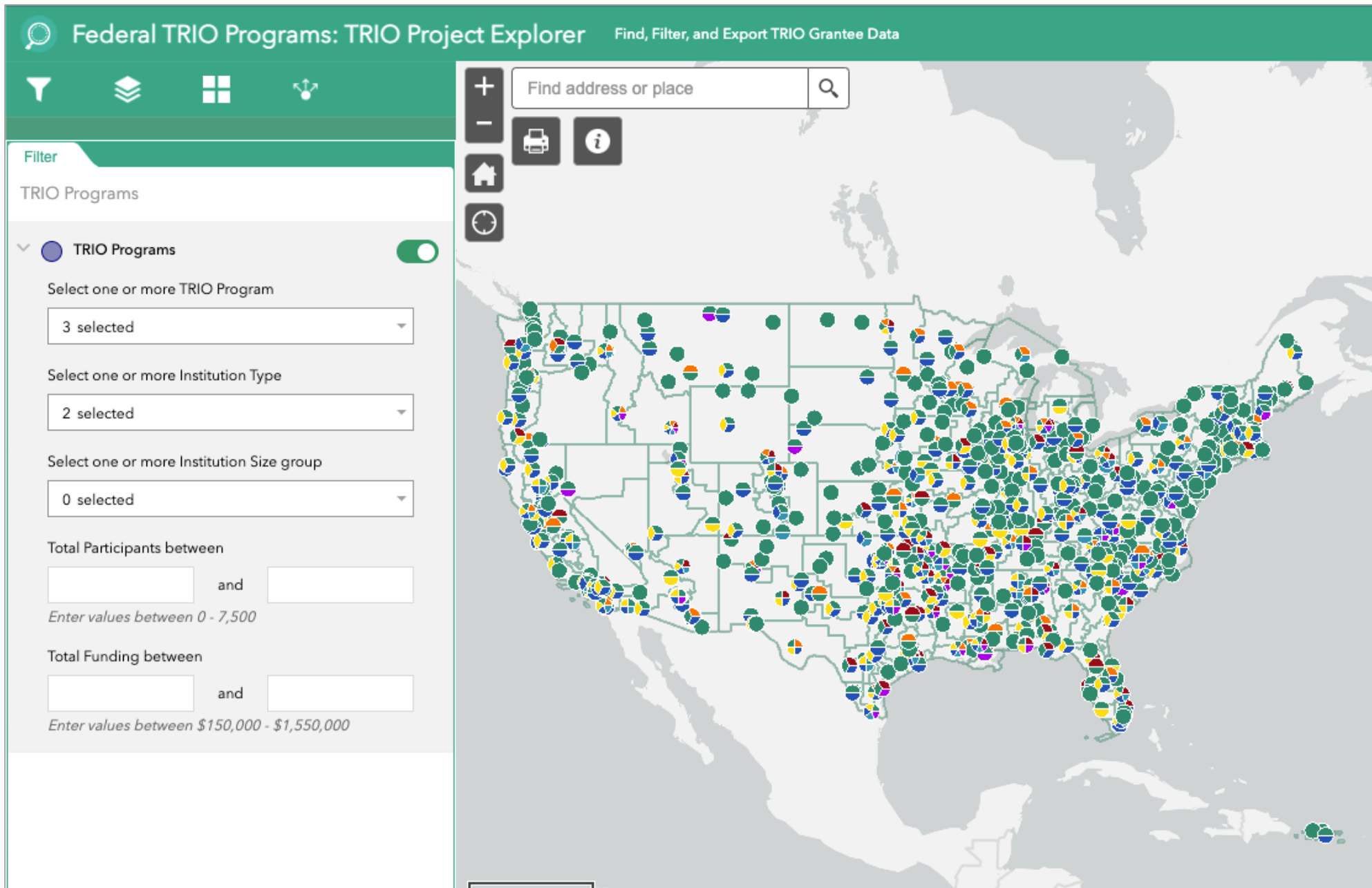
- Youth in the juvenile justice system who are undocumented or DACA recipients are not eligible for federal financial aid, but may be eligible for in-state tuition, state aid, institutional aid, or private scholarships.
- **In order to maximize financial aid opportunities for youth in the juvenile justice system, youth and the adults who support them must have access to financial aid experts.**

# College Completion Support

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Many colleges have campus support programs for first-generation/low-income students, students of color, foster youth and/or other underrepresented students.

- The most prevalent of these programs are federally funded TRIO programs, which exist in all 50 states.
- In recent years, there has been growth in campus support programs for formerly incarcerated students and students with experience with the juvenile justice system.



Source: <https://ope.ed.gov/programs/trio/trioexplorer/>

# Why are campus support programs important?

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- Campus support programs can help students navigate applications, financial aid, and enrollment
- Campus support programs also help students stay enrolled in school through services such as:
  - Academic counseling and tutoring
  - Funding for emergency expenses
  - Assistance with applying for public benefits or housing
  - Food, transportation, and basic needs support
  - Mentoring & peer support
- While the services offered by campus support programs are not all directly tied to financial aid/student debt, services that help students pass their classes and make progress towards their degrees help students graduate more quickly and efficiently.





# Model Program

California's Rising Scholars Network

# California's Rising Scholars Network

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- Currently in the process of launching 45 community college programs specifically for youth with experience with juvenile justice system
- This will add to the 21 programs that currently exist
- Beyond “college-in-prison” models:
  - All in-facility programming integrates with on-campus programming
  - Built around a core of in-person instruction, supplemented by supported hybrid or remote instruction for students in advanced coursework
  - Some jurisdictions considering step-down programs that incorporate on-campus course attendance as youth progress through treatment
- Programming is designed to serve all students in a detention facility - current high school students, high school graduates, students in short-term detention, and students in longer-term commitments.

# Guiding Principles

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Postsecondary programming is available to ALL students.



We do not ask IF students can succeed, but HOW the stakeholders can create the structures and support to ensure that they do succeed.



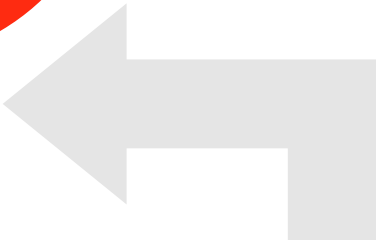
Goal of education is to connect students to communities, to help students avoid detention, and to facilitate reentry.

# Community-Based Programming

A high school student takes a dual-enrollment class and earns credit for high school and for college.

A student receives college & financial aid counseling as part of transition and re-entry planning.

A high school graduate enrolls in college courses.



Formerly incarcerated youth, youth on probation, and youth in community-based placements are all referred to campus support.

# Key Partners

Probation Department  
(Juvenile Facility Operator)

County Office of Education  
(K-12 Education Provider)

Community College



# Course Selection

All courses are **for credit** and are transferable to 4-year universities.

Focus on offering coursework applicable to multiple academic and career pathways, for example:

- Introduction to College/Freshman Seminar
- General Education classes on written communication, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking
- These courses are often appropriate for dual enrollment

As programs grow and student interests develop, can offer more advanced coursework in students' majors or career pathways.

Students who have not previously experienced academic success *can succeed* in college courses with appropriate support and guidance - we see it every day!



# Program Staffing

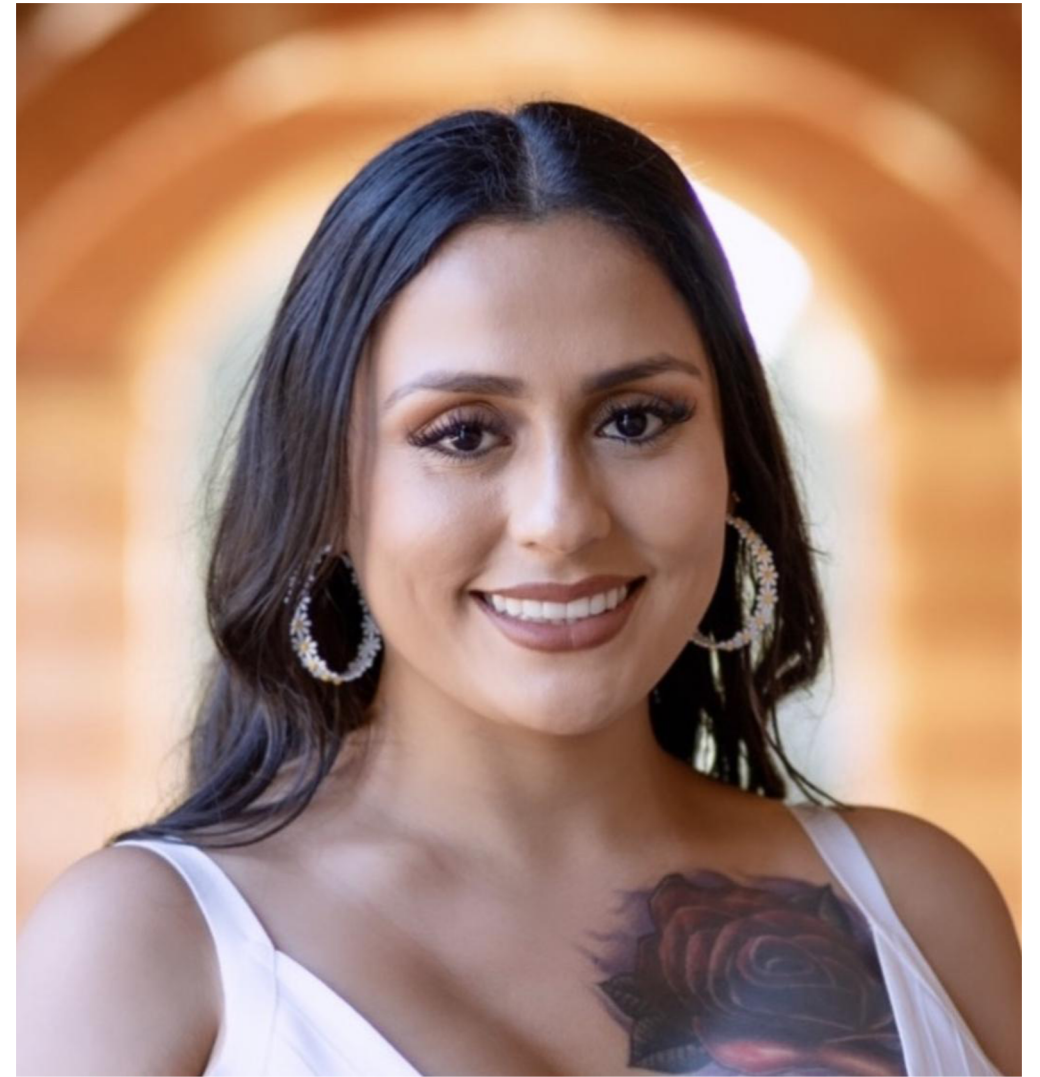
- Dedicated community college lead employed by the college who coordinates, designs, and implements programming with stakeholders.
- Dedicated Retention Specialist and counselor employed by the community college to help students navigate academics and college and financial aid bureaucracy.
- Existing instructors from community college who collaborate on in-facility programming.
- Dedicated point of contact from Probation and K-12 partner to coordinate services in/out of the facility.
- Regularly scheduled professional development training for teaching and supporting this student population.
- *Best Practice:* Invest in system-impacted young people who can then become staff running the program.

Investing in a college's capacity to assist students with applications, enrollment, and academic counseling pays dividends. Students have the guidance they need to succeed in college, while probation and the K-12 education provider can focus on collaboration with the college, rather than trying to become experts on higher education policy.





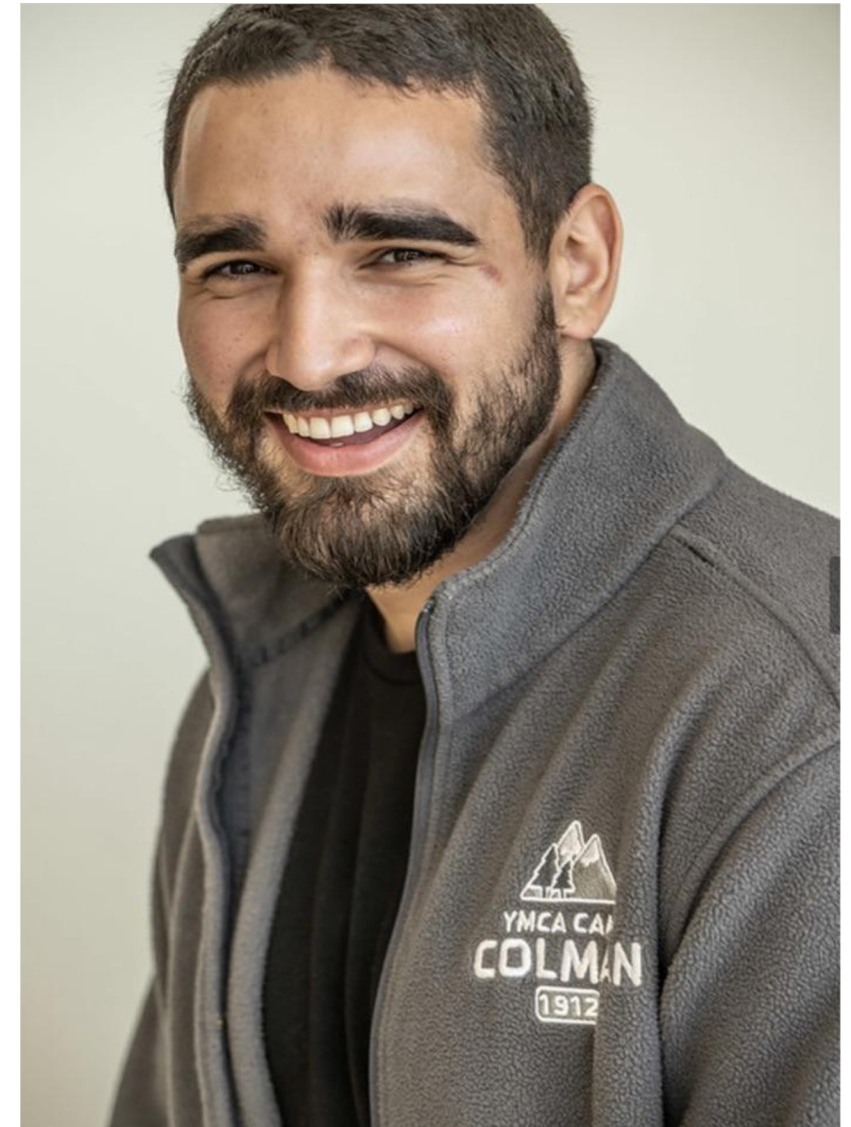
Jacqueline Rodriguez, College of San Mateo Project Change Alum, Graduate of UCLA (BA in English/Pre-Law) and Underground Scholars Alum



2023: Youth Law Center Pathways to Higher Education Project Advocate



Nick Jasso, College of San Mateo Project Change Alum, Graduate of UCLA (BA in Sociology), Underground Scholars Alum



2023: Program Coordinator, College of San Mateo Project Change





Elisabeth Ocampo, College of San Mateo Project Change Alum, Graduate of San Francisco State University (BS Finance), Project ReBound Alum

2023: Project Manager of Finance, DPR Construction



10 Years Later...



# Takeaways

- Students with past and current involvement with the juvenile justice system can and do succeed in postsecondary education.
- Postsecondary education can serve students with different educational backgrounds and academic and career interests.
- Students with past and current involvement with the justice system **are eligible** for federal financial aid.
- Effective postsecondary models for serving youth impacted by the juvenile justice system differ from those designed for adult prisons.
- On campus programming is just as important as in-facility programming for ensuring student success



# Thank You

Katie Bliss

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# Questions and Answers





# OJJDP's NTTAC Contact Information



OJJDP's National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC)

<https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/nttac>

[ojjdptta@usdoj.gov](mailto:ojjdptta@usdoj.gov)



# OJJDP's JUVJUST and Upcoming Events

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

<https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/>

Sign up to receive the OJJDP JUVJUST listserv!

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View upcoming events!

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# OJJDP's TTA360

Have a Training or Technical Assistance need?  
Submit a request for help via OJJDP's TTA360 Platform:

<https://tta360.ojjdp.ojp.gov/>



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Past webinar events are archived on [OJJDP's multimedia page](#) and [OJJDP's YouTube channel](#). Please take a moment to view the page for additional webinars on juvenile justice and child victimization prevention-related topics.

For the transcript and support materials, please contact the OJJDP TTA Help Desk at [OJJDP.TTA@usdoj.gov](mailto:OJJDP.TTA@usdoj.gov).

# Attribution and Disclaimer

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