

# A PROJECT OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS



June 17, 2021

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Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors and County CEO,

Thank you for your continued service in these challenging times.

We write today in strong support of the request by Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis to allocate \$237 million from LA County's \$1.9 Billion allocation from American Rescue Plan to invest in building a holistic, community-based system of care. Supervisor Solis' tireless work and leadership for the people of the County of Los Angeles has long been an inspiration for us, and her continued support for closing Men's Central Jail is a crucial piece of our county's move toward a more just and equitable future. As laid out in Supervisor Solis' April 9th, 2021 ARP funding proposal to CEO Davenport, the proposed \$237 million in American Rescue Plan funding would provide 3,000 beds to individuals who currently are incarcerated who otherwise would be in alternative care programs or diversionary programs.

LARRP is the largest county wide network of reentry-focused non-profit organizations, public agencies, and advocates that work to ensure that our reentry system meets the needs of our agencies, communities, and the people we serve, both in terms of capacity and public policy. We represent stakeholders across the whole of Los Angeles County. We join with dozens of organizations serving and advocating for formerly and currently incarcerated people to support additional funds being directed to diversion and reentry services, and using the resources being proposed to hasten the closure of the Men's Central Jail.

LARRP's reach and impact have grown tremendously over the last decade, and we have provided structural and functional support to dozens of organizations that are working in the diversion and reentry spaces. As the opportunity to expand resources to continue this work presents itself, LARRP and our members are in strong support of using these funds to provide housing and direct services for the most disenfranchised communities. Work being done with the Black and Latinx communities, as well as with women's incarceration, is promising, and our diverse network would be able to expand upon the services they provide.

We are at a crucial crossroads wherein we can follow the promising and proven steps being taken by non-profits and other service organizations to provide humane and dignified support to so many individuals who society has cast aside. Our tireless work follows the strength and convictions that individuals like Supervisor Solis have exemplified time and time again when faced with these difficult choices. Closing the

Men's Central Jail is not only a crucial step to decarceration, but it would send a powerful message of support to the entire county about the future of racial, social, and economic justice.

As noted in the *MCJ Closure Final Report Executive Summary*, LA County, including the LA Sheriff's Department, has recognized the need to build out community care infrastructure in order to safely decarcerate and close Men's Central Jail. The ARP funding requested in Chair Solis' letter, alongside Measure J, the FIST state pilot project, and AB 109 reevaluation could come together to lay the foundation for funding the necessary community programs to begin the estimated 18-24 month process of closing Men's Central Jail. This investment is also estimated to save upward of 66% of the total daily cost per individual who is incarcerated in a high or medium observation facility. Providing services based on needs over charges will ensure that individuals do not have to enter the carceral system to receive support and assistance. The investment of these crucial funds will help promote community restoration, ensure dignity for those struggling with mental health or substance-use disorders, and reiterate the stance of the county on the Care-First, Jail-Last and Harm-Reduction models.

The work to reduce LA County's reliance on incarceration as the solution to mental illness, houselessness, and poverty has only become more pressing in the era of COVID-19. Reentry service providers have seen spikes in requests for service, loss of housing, and unmet mental and physical health needs, and as we see the end of this pandemic approaching, we must take care to ensure that the future is also bright for the millions of Californians who have been impacted by incarceration. Many individuals who may have qualified for early release had that opportunity denied due to a lack of supportive care capacity in our communities. Dedicating ARP funding to close MCJ and place over 3,000 people with mental illness in community care instead of leaving them untreated in jail is a powerful statement that Los Angeles County is willing to support and fund decarceration of our most vulnerable residents and ensure all have the opportunity to return to their community, truly a "Care First" model.

As a network, LARRP works with organizations like Weingart, the LA Mission, the Amity Foundation, and Paving the Way Foundation in order to push an informed and progressive slate of policies to expand diversion and reentry services. Our network strength at LARRP is our ability to connect a multitude of diverse organizations behind one common goal; to provide the highest quality services possible to our reentry population.

LA County's reliance on incarceration as the primary response to poverty, racism, and mental illness is a practice which has been present for far too long. We applaud the leadership of Chair Solis and Supervisor Keuhl in their continued efforts to see alternatives to this system by ensuring the closure of the Men's Central Jail. The key to being able to close Men's Central Jail for good is a steadfast dedication to build out the community system of care. CBO's across the county are ready and willing to open up more beds, with specialized services for vulnerable populations. This investment from the county now would help thousands of individuals receive specialized care outside of the carceral system and back in their communities.

LARRP has a long history of working toward a future with successful diversion, reentry, and rehabilitative services. The support that this Board, and specifically Supervisor Solis

has cast aligns with the key work we and our network have been engaged in. The road to justice is collaborative, cooperative, and constructive. We look forward to continuing this work alongside the strong assistance and capacity of our network throughout LA County.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at [troyvaughn@lareentry.org](mailto:troyvaughn@lareentry.org), or LARRP's Policy Coordinator, Charles Vignola, at [charles@lareentry.org](mailto:charles@lareentry.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Troy Vaughn', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Troy Vaughn**  
**Co-Founder & Executive Director**  
**Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership**