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### November 17, 2021: District Attorney Gascón Announces the Launch of Pre-Filing Diversion Program for Youth

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Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón today announced the launch of a victim-centered, pre-filing diversion program for youth.

"This program will help repair the immense harm that criminal behavior inflicts on our community by giving crime victims the opportunity to actively participate in the restorative justice process," District Attorney Gascón said.

"While victims cannot generally attend the juvenile court process, through restorative justice, we can give crime victims a chance to be a meaningful part of the process to determine appropriate restitution and resolution," said Jessica Ellis, executive director of Centinela Youth Services and the Everychild Restorative Justice Center.

"At CCEJ's core, we believe that no one is disposable and individual transformation is possible through healing," said Reena Hajat Carroll, executive director of the California Conference for Equality and Justice. "Restorative justice is the tool we need to fully employ to make our world a better place."

"YDD is excited to be collaborating with the District Attorney and service providers Centinela Youth Services and the California Conference for Equality and Justice to expand opportunities for young people to be connected with services that support their development while offering opportunities to take accountability for their actions through a process that also supports those who have been hurt and their needs," said Refugio Valle, director of the Los Angeles County Office of Diversion & Reentry's Division of Youth Diversion and Development. "Supporting youth development and healing is a key to increasing public safety."

Eligible candidates may avoid criminal charges by agreeing to participate in an individually tailored program designed to address the underlying issues that contribute to criminal behavior, such as mental health needs or substance use.

Community-based service providers will assess participants, connect them to immediate needs services, prepare them for restorative justice conferences with crime victims and monitor the completion of the agreed-upon terms of their program.

Victims and survivors will have a voice in determining participant agreements while also having an opportunity to be heard and healed in a meaningful way.

The Restorative Enhanced Diversion for Youth (REDY) program will provide services to youth under the age of 18.

This restorative justice model has proven to support public safety and community healing.

It also addresses racial disparity within the criminal legal system and mass incarceration by diverting young people, whose brains are still developing, away from jails and prisons, increasing their likelihood for rehabilitation instead of recidivism.

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