



LIFT Youth Partnership Program

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Current Program Overview:

Interface Children & Family Services' LIFT (Lead. Inspire. Focus. Transform.) Youth Partnership Program is aimed at diverting youth from initial or subsequent contact with the juvenile justice system using approaches that are evidence-based, culturally relevant, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate. Current LIFT programming focuses on underserved communities in the Oxnard area, in collaboration with the Oxnard Police Department (OPD), Ventura County Probation Agency (VCPA), Oxnard School District, and Oxnard Union High School District.

The program provides diversion and alternative sanction options, including assessment-driven case management, mentoring, family mediation, skill-building, and counseling, all grounded in a cognitive-behavioral intervention framework. Each participant receives a customized, evidence-based, age-appropriate, and trauma-informed treatment plan, which is adapted as their needs evolve. The evidence-based programming includes The Change Companies® Interactive Journaling® curriculum for individual and group interventions, Seeking Safety, Motivational Interviewing, and Circle Keeper restorative practices. Additionally, youth and their families are referred to Interface's Mental Health & Trauma Treatment department or other local mental health and community resources as needed.

Through close coordination, Interface, OPD and VCPA designed a three-tier system for pre-charge diversion that comprises a caution/warning option and a 90-day age-appropriate, trauma-informed, evidence-based service program. Referrals are made by Oxnard PD field officers and School Resource Officers using the established three-tiered system:

- **TIER 1: Warn and release.** This first level uses minimal intervention, involving police officer warning or encouragement, and aiding the youth in arriving at a safe place (typically home) immediately after the engagement. Most first-time, low-level offenses will fall into this tier and help avoid net-widening.
- **TIER 2: No conditions.** Oxnard PD officers can also refer youth to Interface for services voluntarily, and no citation is written.
- **TIER 3: Conditions and/or Services.** Oxnard PD officer determines that a citation is warranted, and the youth must fulfill certain conditions (restitution, community service, etc.) and/ or be referred to Interface and other support services, from skill building to substance abuse treatment. Citations are held in abeyance pending successful program completion.

In addition to law enforcement referrals, school personnel may make Tier 2 referrals for youth who have been expelled, suspended, or are at risk of suspension due to chronic absenteeism, family conflict or violence, possession of alcohol, or other related challenges.

All referred youth are eligible for the range of services such as case management, which includes a centralized intake, comprehensive needs assessments, services navigation, and monitoring of youth involvement from enrollment, through service participation, and six (6) months post program completion. Case management assessments identify each referred youth's unmet needs/risk factors. Based upon assessment results, and student input, customized case plans are created; age appropriate, trauma-informed services are determined; and linkages with access to services are provided.

During the program's pilot, which ran from July 2021 to June 2024, LIFT served 358 at-promise youth in Oxnard through nine high school campus wellness centers. This included 188 Tier 2 and 170 Tier 3 referrals. Youth were identified by school personnel and the Oxnard Police Department's Juvenile Diversion Services Division. Of those referred, 62% successfully graduated from the program, and 107 citations from Tier 3 referrals were diverted. Although the program officially launched in 2021, its first year was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which delayed full implementation until November 2022.

Program Evaluation:

Interface has developed a highly effective approach to evaluation, data collection, and quality control. Interface's staff monitors participant progress through pre- and post-tests, evaluates the implementation of evidence-based practices for fidelity, and conducts quarterly reviews. The results are utilized to assess program effectiveness, make necessary program adjustments through continuous quality improvement (CQI), and inform decision-making supporting the programs' long-term sustainability. Program data is entered into Welligent, which serves as the agency's HIPAA-compliant electronic health record system.