



# MONICA RODRIGUEZ

## LA CITY COUNCILWOMAN, 7TH DISTRICT

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Press Contact: Laura Mckinney [\(213\) 703-0980](tel:2137030980) [laura.mckinney@lacity.org](mailto:laura.mckinney@lacity.org)

### **Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez Secures \$1.4 Million and the Creation of the City's First Youth Development Department**

**LOS ANGELES (May 20, 2021)** — Today, the \$1.4 million budget allocation for the Youth Development Department marks the beginning of systemic change that delivers greater equity and justice for young people in the City of Los Angeles.

In March of 2018, Councilwoman Rodriguez introduced legislation to establish a Youth Development Task Force. The Task Force launched on December 11, 2019 with nine members that were appointed by the City Council and the Mayor.

The Task Force was tasked with assessing youth programming in City departments, community based organizations and other youth-serving agencies. The first Brown Act compliant meeting was held on April 17, 2020. The recommendations from the youth task force presented to the Economic Development and Jobs Committee on February 9, 2021 overwhelmingly called for a stand alone youth development department and supported Councilwoman Rodriguez's call, since the beginning of her term, for the creation of the department.

"Youth in historically underserved communities face barriers to success caused by decades of underinvestment, and exacerbated by the pandemic," said Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez. "The Youth Development Department will be the catalytic change that delivers increased program options for young people, greater accountability of tax payer dollars and will streamline access to ensure equality for all young Angelenos regardless of their zip code."

"With the creation of the Youth Development Department the City has taken a huge step forward to ensure that all young people living in the most vulnerable communities have the resources and opportunities they need to have a bright future," said Lou Calanche, Executive Director, Legacy LA.

"The establishment of a Youth Development Department is a result of years of organizing and persistence. It is a step in the right direction for the city of Los Angeles, to make a down payment on youth development," said David Turner, Coalition Manager, Brothers, Sons, Selves (BSS). "However, much more is needed to get the department, both budget and infrastructure-wise, to where it needs to be."

There are 800,000 youth ages 10-25 in Los Angeles, 200,000 who currently live in poverty, with 68,000 disconnected from school and job opportunities, and over 3,000 who are homeless. Youth in historically underserved communities face barriers to success due to continued underinvestment. Stanford economists have predicted the learning loss experienced due to the pandemic will result in a 6-9% earning loss over their lifetimes. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified what we already knew -- access to resources and programs are not available equitably.

Looking back 10 years at 1.2 million arrests, persons ages 10 to 25 made up 32% of those arrests. During the pandemic, violence in Los Angeles and cities across the nation is skyrocketing. This time calls for innovative and bold solutions to achieve our shared public safety goals, addressing root causes and providing alternatives for young people. We can't invest in suppression efforts alone.

Currently, the City of Los Angeles has youth programming spread across 26 departments not including what is provided by LAUSD. These programs serve approximately 2.3 million youth in the City. Without a centralized approach there is no way to know if duplicate programs are offered, no metrics tracking the success or impact of the programs and no proactive sourcing of funds from non-City sources. The City needs a standalone department with a singular focus on youth ages 10-25, a population that has been overlooked in strategic investments and programming.

The budget announcement today marks the beginning of systemic change in the way the City of Los Angeles prepares young Angelenos for their future. The department functions will include, but not be limited to, coordinating with regional agencies and providers of youth services, serving as a one-stop-shop for the public to access youth services, and reviewing youth programs to ensure efficient use of City resources. Additionally, as the state divests from jailing young people in the Division of Juvenile Justice, we need the structured capacity to receive the investments proportionate to the population we serve.

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*Los Angeles City Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez serves as the City's Chair of Public Safety and represents the 7th Council District in the Northeast San Fernando Valley which include the neighborhoods of Sylmar, Mission Hills, Pacoima, Lake View Terrace, Sunland, Tujunga, North Hills, Shadow Hills, and La Tuna Canyon.*